

## Acclaimed Cleveland chef who helps ex-offenders create culinary careers honored with S.J. Dilenschneider Community Award

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**CINCINNATI** – The Scripps Howard Fund honored Brandon Chrostowski, an acclaimed Cleveland chef and founder of a program that gives formerly incarcerated individuals a second chance, with the annual S.J. Dilenschneider Community Award.

The award honors the late S.J. Dilenschneider, a longtime executive with Scripps-Howard newspapers. A panel of judges selected Chrostowski from nominees recommended by Scripps' local television stations across the country.

The award, including a \$10,000 cash prize, is given to an individual or group of individuals in Scripps' local markets who exemplify the spirit of Dilenschneider and The E.W. Scripps Company (NASDAQ: SSP). Civility, leadership, community spirit and mentorship are among the criteria used to select the winner.

Chrostowski's passion for helping ex-offenders with reentry began after he was given a second chance. Facing a lengthy prison sentence at 18 years old, Chrostowski said he got forgiveness from a judge and mentorship from a chef. He used his experience to pay it forward.

"There's lot of people who deserve a shot at a great life and unfortunately, because whatever it is – criminal past, skin color, religion – they don't get this, and to me that's inhumane and so in this sector of the world, we're trying to make sure that is not the case," Chrostowski said [in an interview with WEWS News 5](#), the Scripps-owned television station in Cleveland.

After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America and receiving training at some of the world's finest restaurants, Chrostowski founded [EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute](#), a 501(c)(3) organization. Established in 2007, the six-month program, conducted at EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute, gives ex-offenders the tools they need for a career in the restaurant industry. Students also receive assistance with finding employment, receive free housing, basic medical care and a support network to set them up for long-term success.

The Institute graduates 75 students a year, many of whom gain employment in dining establishments across the country. According to a survey conducted by [Case Western Reserve University professor Chris Laszlo](#), graduates of the program boast a 95% employment rate and less than 1% rate of recidivism after 10 years, compared to the usual rate of 83%.

"Mr. Chrostowski's vision of creating a support system that provides everyone, regardless of their past, with opportunities for a successful future is commendable," said Meredith Delaney, president and CEO of the Scripps Howard Fund. "An example of S.J. Dilenschneider's legacy – Mr. Chrostowski mentors and inspires his students to do good in their communities."

Since its founding, EDWINS has grown to include an award-winning French restaurant, butcher shop, bakery and Edwins Too – a culinary incubator for aspiring chefs and entrepreneurs.

Chrostowski was named a [James Beard Award](#) finalist in 2023 and a semifinalist in 2022, both in the "Outstanding Restaurateur" category.

News 5 Cleveland surprised Chrostowski with the S.J. Dilenschneider Community Award on June 13 at EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute.

[Watch the surprise here.](#)

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#### **About the Scripps Howard Fund**

The [Scripps Howard Fund](#), a public charity established by [The E.W. Scripps Company](#) (NASDAQ: SSP), is dedicated to creating informed and engaged communities through journalism education, childhood literacy and local causes. At the crossroads of the classroom and the newsroom, the Fund is a leader in supporting journalism through award-winning journalism education programs; scholarships, internships and fellowships; funding to advance diversity and inclusion; and support of First Amendment causes. The Scripps Howard Awards stand as one of the industry's top honors for outstanding journalism. The Fund's annual "If You Give a Child a Book ..." childhood literacy campaign has distributed thousands of new books to children in need across the nation. The Fund partners with Scripps brands to create awareness of local issues and support organizations that build thriving communities. The Scripps Howard Fund administers funding for the Scripps Howard Foundation, a private foundation established in 1962 to advance charitable causes important to The E.W. Scripps Company and the Scripps and Howard families.