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## **Renowned Chef and Author Lidia Bastianich Visits August Martin High School, Cooks Up Some Fun with Culinary Students**

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### **NEW YORK, NY –**

Internationally-renowned Italian chef, Emmy Award-winning television host of Lidia's Kitchen, restaurateur, author, and Queens resident Lidia Bastianich visited this week with culinary students and faculty at August Martin High School (AMHS) in Jamaica, Queens. Working from student-selected original recipes of Chef Lidia's, the young chefs, their instructors, and Chef Lidia herself collaborated on two tasty appetizers.

The recipes – a beef bruschetta with arugula and homemade spicy giardiniera, and a cheesy zucchini crostata – were executed to perfection, then enjoyed by the students, faculty, and staff. Afterward, the culinary kids voted on which of the two would be featured at The Child Center's annual gala, to be held on May 14 at The Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers. The theme of this year's event is "Finding Your Voice." The bruschetta won by a single vote!

The gala marks a celebration of the organization's 65 years of service to thousands of children and families of New York, and the honoree at this milestone occasion will be Lidia Bastianich. In December, Chef Lidia visited one of The Child Center's Head Start programs in Woodside, reading from her children's books and engaging the young children in a lively demonstration on fresh herbs.

"As a Queens resident, immigrant, woman, and mother, Lidia Bastianich really embodies what The Child Center is all about," said Chief Executive Officer Traci Donnelly. "The culinary – and life – lessons she shared at August Martin this week are inspirational to me personally, but they also greatly honor our mission as an agency."

Saran Shields, Program Director for The Child Center at AMHS, works closely with the culinary students every single day. "Lidia's Bastianich's visit evoked a range of emotions for our students: they were moved, motivated, and validated by her genuine interest in their career goals and words of advice," she said. "Being around someone so famous and accomplished may have intimidated them at first, but in the end, they shone with pride in their two successful dishes."

"I loved visiting August Martin High School," said Lidia. "When you start to see children come out of their shells, take the reins (or the chef's knives) and really go for it, it gives you a great feeling -- you really are helping them to find their voices. There is vast potential in these young chefs."

**About The Child Center of NY:** *The Child Center of NY's mission is to strengthen children and families with skills, opportunities, and emotional support to build healthy, successful lives. Founded in 1953, it is a multiservice organization that annually reaches close to 30,000 children from birth through young adulthood at nearly 70 school and community locations. The Child Center works in five main program areas: early childhood education; behavioral health; prevention and family support; health homes and integrated care; and youth development. The Child Center is based primarily in Queens but also serves children and families in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan, and Long Island. To learn more, please visit [www.childcenterny.org](http://www.childcenterny.org).*