



For Immediate Release

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DC-Area Chefs Create Edible Ensembles for Chocolate Fashion Show

More than 700 local foodies and fashionistas attend annual Sweet Charity event

Washington, D.C., April, 2009 – The Heart of America Foundation and Albert Uster Imports announced today that their 8th Sweet Charity event, showcasing the culinary and pastry talents of the D.C.-area's finest chefs, is taking place on Monday, May 11, 2009 from 6 pm to 9pm at Mandarin Oriental, Washington, D.C. Award-winning chefs will demonstrate their mastery of cocoa and couture when they unveil their wearable creations at the event's infamous Des Alpes Chocolate Fashion Show. Event attendees will be able to sample delicacies from the area's top chefs and view the Des Alpes Chocolate Fashion Show, which features 15 models dressed in chocolate and edible accessories.

Sweet Charity is co-hosted by Albert Uster Imports (AUI), a fine gourmet food company, and the Heart of America Foundation (HOA), a D.C.-based nonprofit that combines volunteer service and literacy to support the needs of at-risk children nationwide. Proceeds from Sweet Charity will go to help HOA's Books From The Heart™ program to provide books to children living in poverty who have few or no books of their own.

"Sweet Charity provides an opportunity to not only bring together the local D.C. community for an exciting evening, but also raise vital funding to help Heart of America continue to transform children's lives, one book at a time," said Angela Halamandaris, President and Co-Founder of the Heart of America Foundation. "We have distributed over 1.5 million books to children across the country and the proceeds of this event will enable us to continue to fulfill our mission in the local D.C. area."

Numerous local celebrity chefs are participating, including Chef Anil Rohira, Corporate Pastry Chef of Albert Uster Imports; Chef Shaun McCarty, Executive Pastry Chef of Brasserie Beck; and Fabrice Bendano, Pastry Chef of Adour. More than 40 chefs will display their skills with both sweet and savory foods in live demonstrations and tasting stations throughout the event. Attendees will also be able to partake in silent and live auctions, and an open bar.

"Sweet Charity gives our local culinary talent a unique opportunity to show off their creativity in an innovative way and to benefit a great organization," said Philipp Braun, President and CEO of Albert Uster Imports. "Every year, more and more chefs want to participate in Sweet Charity because they all love a good cause and a chance to demonstrate their culinary mastery of chocolate."

About The Heart of America Foundation®

Founded in 1997, The Heart of America Foundation’s mission is to provide disadvantaged children with the tools they need to read, succeed and make a difference in life. The Heart of America Foundation’s programs uniquely combine volunteer service and literacy. Heart of America is volunteer-led and peer-driven, operating with a small staff and hundreds of volunteers.

About Albert Uster Imports, Inc.

Albert Uster Imports is an importer and distributor of over 1,000 high-quality ingredients, semi-finished and finished gourmet products. Predominantly known for its Swiss Des Alpes Chocolate (and all things sweet), the company branched into savory as well as frozen lines, becoming a well-rounded, fine gourmet food house that it is today. The wide range of services include: excellent customer service, recipe and menu development, a comprehensive website www.auiswiss.com, an online store, newsletters, continuing culinary education classes and a database of over 500 recipes.

About Mandarin Oriental, Washington D.C.

Mandarin Oriental, Washington D.C. will redefine luxury as Washington, D.C.’s most sophisticated hotel. Transitional in design, with stylish oriental flair, the hotel will provide an unparalleled guest experience, with Mandarin Oriental’s legendary reputation for award-winning service.

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