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### COOKING MATTERS® MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR LITTLE ROCK'S AT-RISK YOUTH

**LITTLE ROCK, AR (July 26, 2017)** – Representatives from Little Rock Kitchen Cabinet and Little Rock Police Department briefed Mayor Mark Stodola and Little Rock City Directors on the success of the Cooking Matters curriculum used in Little Rock's OK (Our Kids) program. Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters program is an evidence-based, 6-week course that teaches adults and teens how to shop for and prepare nutritious meals on a budget. Little Rock Kitchen Cabinet, a group of 90 restaurant owners, chefs and food industry advocates, provided funding and instructors for the 6-week course.



OK program graduates show off their Cooking Matters certificates of completion.

Graduates were awarded their Cooking Matters certificates of completion and chef jackets by Vice Mayor Kathy Webb, executive director of the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, and City Director Capi Peck, Ward4, owner of Trio's restaurant and founding member of Little Rock Kitchen Cabinet.

Participants commented on the value of the Cooking Matters program saying, "Since I took this course, I want to continue my training and enroll in the Pulaski Tech's Culinary Arts Institute."

The OK Program is a mentoring and leadership development model that focuses on African-American males 12 to 18 years old and is sponsored by the City of Little Rock and the Little Rock Police Department. The program's primary goals are to help young men develop leadership and critical thinking skills, promote academic excellence, and reduce the high rates of incarceration and homicide.

Those interested in introducing the Cooking Matters curriculum to their programs should contact Alex Handfinger, Cooking Matters program director, at [alex@arhungeralliance.org](mailto:alex@arhungeralliance.org).

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#### About The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign, is a non-profit collaborative network of more than 480 hunger relief organizations across Arkansas. Our founding members include the Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas in Jonesboro, Harvest Regional Food Bank in Texarkana, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in Norfork, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank in Bethel Heights and River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith. The Alliance is dedicated to reducing hunger through direct relief, education and advocacy. We invite you to visit [www.ARhungeralliance.org](http://www.ARhungeralliance.org) for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.

#### About Cooking Matters and Cooking Matters at the Store

These unique nutrition education programs, developed by Share Our Strength, a national non-profit dedicated to ending childhood hunger, teach low income adults, teens and families the skills they need to plan, shop for and prepare economical, healthy meals on a budget. Participation in a Cooking Matters course decreases an individual's chance of remaining food insecure by 50 percent. Cooking Matters is sponsored nationally by Walmart.

