PRESS RELEASE

Acterra Collaborates with Bay Area Chefs for Virtual Cooking Event Addressing Climate Change

Former Top Chef contestant Tanya Holland of Brown Sugar Kitchen, Michelin-Starred Brandon Jew of Mister Jiu’s, the duo behind the world’s only Ohlone restaurant, LUNA Mexican Kitchen in the South Bay, and vegan Filipino chef Reina Montenegro present their favorite plant-based holiday dishes

PALO ALTO – October 14, 2020 – In a virtual event (titled “Holiday reFresh”) on November 1, 2020 at 4:00 pm Pacific Time, Acterra is bringing together chefs from all across the Bay Area; Each will showcase their favorite plant-based dishes in advance of the upcoming holiday season. The live demonstrations will be moderated, and audience members can submit their questions directly via an online portal.

Acterra, a 50-year non-profit based in Palo Alto, is hoping to drive awareness around how meat and dairy consumption negatively impacts our environment. As shown in the latest United Nations report, the issue is clear: Moving towards plant-based diets and reducing meat consumption could “significantly boost the planet’s ability to fight climate change.” More than 100 scientists from 52 countries who contributed to the report say it can decrease emissions from livestock and the fertilizer required to raise them, as well as help curb deforestation.

For residents in the San Francisco Bay Area, the urgency is palpable. As we witness more severe wildfires, and some of the highest temperatures on record, the fight is right in one’s backyard. Importantly, data shows that food consumption has an outsized role to play; The University of California at Berkeley has estimated that nearly 20 percent of the average Bay Area resident’s carbon footprint comes from food.

“We know there is a close connection between climate change and our diet,” said Jack Broadbent, Executive Officer, Bay Area Air District. “When we are making simple changes to reduce our personal GHG’s, eating more plant-based meals can reduce greenhouse gas emissions while improving our health – a win-win for us and the environment.” The Bay Area Air District is the sponsor of this event and a series of other food sustainability educational events in partnership with Acterra.

“Despite the urgency, it’s not realistic to expect entire communities to stop eating meat,” says Lauren Weston, Executive Director, Acterra. “There are underlying issues that require broad policy change, which will take time. But already we have an opportunity to make incremental changes that have big impact. We hope our virtual cooking event can inspire people to move meat to the side of their plate and focus instead on the bounty of the season with plant-based holiday recipes from acclaimed Bay Area chefs.”

In addition to live cooking demonstrations, attendees will receive practical tips and tricks on how to embrace a more plant-forward diet, reduce food waste and reap the benefits of induction cooking.
Meet the Chefs:

- **Tanya Holland** is the executive chef and owner of Brown Sugar Kitchen in Oakland, California. She is the author of *The Brown Sugar Kitchen Cookbook* and *New Soul Cooking* and competed on the 15th season of *Top Chef*. Tanya also hosted Food Network’s *Melting Pot* and appears on the new HBO Max show *Selena + Chef* featuring Selena Gomez.

- **Brandon Jew** is the executive chef and owner of Mister Jiu’s in San Francisco, California, which was awarded a Michelin star in 2016. He was SF Magazine’s Chef of the Year (2016), as well as a James Beard nominee for Best Chef West in 2018 and 2020. He has appeared on shows including *Ugly Delicious* and *Mind of a Chef* and featured in publications such as the New York Times.

- **Reina Montenegro** is the chef and owner of Chef Reina, an online storefront that is aligned with her plant-based, cruelty-free lifestyle. After a decade in the corporate world, she decided to follow her passions, becoming a caterer and personal chef in 2012. Self-taught, she was the first to open a vegan Filipino restaurant in the Bay Area, achieving success with Nick’s Kitchen, Nick’s on Mission, and Nick’s on Grand before launching Chef Reina.

- **Vincent Medina** and **Louis Trevino** are the chefs and co-founders of Cafe Ohlone in Berkeley, California, the world’s only restaurant serving the cuisine of Northern California’s indigenous Ohlone people, using pre-colonial and often hand-gathered ingredients. Their pioneering work has been profiled by publications such as NPR, Bon Appetit, Vice and the New York Times.

- **Julio Juarez** and **Jo Lerma-Lopez** are the chef and owner (respectively) of LUNA Mexican Kitchen in the South Bay. “LUNA”, an acronym for Local, Unrefined, Natural and Authentic, means the restaurant sources all of their ingredients from vendors with sustainable practices. In 2019, they were honored as a Bib Gourmand restaurant by Michelin and voted Best Mexican Restaurant in San Jose/South Valley by the Metro, and Best Mexican Restaurant in Silicon Valley by the Mercury News.

- **Lenore Estrada** is the co-founder and owner of Three Babes Bakeshop in San Francisco. Their pies have been recognized on The Today Show and in such publications as Saveur, Food & Wine, Jezebel, Esquire, and NPR. Raised in a large Mexican family in California’s Central Valley, Lenore takes pride in working closely with local farmers and varying her pie fillings with the season. Recently, she co-launched SF New Deal, a local nonprofit that puts restaurants back to work during COVID to prepare and deliver meals to those in need.

**Holiday refresh is free to attend.** For those that are able to, we ask that you consider making a donation as well. Please visit [www.acterra.org/holiday-refresh](http://www.acterra.org/holiday-refresh) to register for the event.

*Thank you to the event sponsor, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and their Spare the Air program. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District aims to create a healthy breathing environment for every Bay Area resident while protecting and improving public health, air quality, and the global climate. The Air District supports education, incentives and partnerships (such as this one) to help establish the Bay Area as a leading area for greenhouse gas emissions reductions. For more information on their work, please visit: [www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov)*

*Acterra’s Healthy Plate, Healthy Planet program launched in July 2020 to help Bay Area eaters understand the connections between our everyday food choices, our personal health, and our shared climate, focusing on plant-rich diets and reducing food waste. For more information, please visit: [www.acterra.org](http://www.acterra.org)*