



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Women Start New Lives With Culinary School Graduation, Thanks to CareerSource South Florida and the AGAPE Network

Miami, FL — May 1, 2025 — Seven women are celebrating the completion of the culinary skills training program, a transformative course designed to empower women facing challenges such as substance abuse or poverty. The program, a collaboration between CareerSource South Florida, Miami-Dade College and the AGAPE Network, offers more than just cooking lessons – it provides a holistic approach to help women rebuild their lives, develop new skills, and enter the workforce with a fresh sense of purpose.

The graduation ceremony, held at AGAPE, marks the successful completion of the regionally recognized 8-week culinary training course. Designed to provide students with a solid foundation in culinary techniques, the program combines expert instruction, real-world kitchen experience, and integrated behavioral healthcare to ensure that each participant has the tools and support needed for success.

“This program has been life-changing for these women,” said Rick Beasley, Executive Director of CareerSource South Florida. “Many of these women are mothers, juggling the responsibilities of caregiving while working hard to improve their mental health. This key intervention has not only opened doors to new opportunities but has also brought about a dramatic shift in their lives for the better.”

The culinary program equips participants with the skills necessary to enter the food service and hospitality industries. Upon graduation, CareerSource South Florida steps in to connect the women with local employers in these sectors, helping them secure stable, rewarding jobs in the community.

In fact, five of the seven women graduating from this cohort have already secured employment offers—even before receiving their diplomas—giving them the security of earning a degree and beginning a new job at the same time. In Miami, the impact of substance abuse is significant, with women being disproportionately affected as they represent 52% of opioid-related hospitalizations.

“I encourage other women struggling with substance abuse to reach out to AGAPE and explore their options,” said one program participant. “For me, overcoming mental health challenges was the first step toward wanting to get an education. Both were about

seeking help, advocating for yourself, and being determined. Through this program, I've found a new career and a renewed sense of purpose.”

The next cohort of culinary students is scheduled to begin on May 5, 2025, and is now accepting applications. In addition to culinary training, CareerSource South Florida offers job training and certification in the rapidly growing tech field, providing further opportunities for women interested in technology careers.

About CareerSource South Florida

CareerSource South Florida is a public-private partnership that establishes state and federally funded workforce development and training policies for Miami-Dade County. CareerSource South Florida provides high quality, customized employment and training solutions to workers and employers in support of economic development. Services are available to everyone at no cost through a network of centers located throughout the region. For more information on CareerSource South Florida, including valuable resources for businesses and job seekers, please visit www.careersourcesfl.com.

About AGAPE Network

The AGAPE Network is a Miami-based organization dedicated to supporting women in recovery. Through its inpatient and outpatient services, AGAPE provides the care and resources needed to empower women to rebuild their lives, overcome challenges, and achieve long-term success.

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