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Florida International University's Tirza Diaz De Villegas Creates Winning Gourmet Dipping Sauce in Red Robin's Savory Scholar Contest

Red Robin and Food/Lifestyle Expert Katie Lee Present Award at the Food Network New York Wine & Food Festival's Blue Moon Burger Bash

GREENWOOD VILLAGE, Colo., Oct. 19, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Tirza Diaz De Villegas is enjoying the sweet – and savory – taste of victory, as she was declared the winner of the [Red Robin](#) Savory Scholar Gourmet Dipping Sauce Contest at the Food Network New York Wine & Food Festival's Blue Moon Burger Bash on Friday, Oct. 18. Diaz De Villegas' Tirza's Tangy Cilantro & Garlic Sauce, which includes Heinz® Mayonnaise, garlic, onion, lemon, cilantro and Greek yogurt, was selected as the favorite Steak Fry dipping sauce by attendees at the event and Katie Lee, earning her a \$5,000 scholarship and the chance to have her sauce served in Red Robin® restaurants nationwide next year.

(Photo: <https://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20131019/NY00571>)

(Logo: <https://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20120522/NY11686LOGO>)

"It has been such a rewarding experience participating in Red Robin's Savory Scholar Contest, and I am so thrilled my dipping sauce has been selected as the winner," said Tirza Diaz De Villegas. "What an amazing opportunity this has been to jumpstart my career in the hospitality industry."

Red Robin's Savory Scholar Gourmet Dipping Contest, held from Aug. 26 through Sept. 9, included more than 100 sauce entries from students at Florida International University's (FIU) Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management. Each FIU student created a dipping sauce that could accompany Red Robin's signature Bottomless Steak Fries. The recipes were evaluated by Red Robin and Heinz chefs, and food and lifestyle expert and author [Katie Lee](#). Three finalists were named and each served his or her gourmet dipping sauce at the Blue Moon Burger Bash. Attendees at the event voted for their favorite dipping sauce and Lee announced Diaz De Villegas as the winner on stage.

"Tirza's Tangy Cilantro & Garlic Sauce had a unique blend of mayonnaise, garlic, onion, lemon, cilantro and Greek yogurt and pairs perfectly with Red Robin's Steak Fries," said Lee. "Congratulations to Tirza for making an award-winning sauce!"

"As the gourmet burger authority, we also know what it takes to create a great accompaniment to that burger – crispy steak fries and a craveable dipping sauce, which

Tirza has given us with her Tirza's Tangy Cilantro & Garlic Sauce," said Denny Marie Post, Red Robin's senior vice president and chief menu & marketing officer. "We're thrilled to provide Tirza with the opportunity to have her sauce on our menu next year."

"We are pleased that Red Robin provided our students with a platform to prove their innovation and creativity, as they prepare to become the future leaders of the industry," said Mike Hampton, dean of Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management at FIU.

For more information about Red Robin and to find a restaurant location, visit www.redrobin.com.

About Red Robin Gourmet Burgers, Inc. (NASDAQ: RRGB)

Red Robin Gourmet Burgers, Inc. (www.redrobin.com), a casual dining restaurant chain founded in 1969 that operates through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Red Robin International, Inc., is the Gourmet Burger Authority™, famous for serving more than two dozen craveable, high-quality burgers with Bottomless Steak Fries® in a fun environment welcoming to guests of all ages. In addition to its many burger offerings, Red Robin serves a wide variety of salads, soups, appetizers, entrees, desserts and signature Mad Mixology® Beverages. There are more than 480 Red Robin® restaurants located across the United States and Canada, including corporate-owned locations and those operating under franchise agreements. Red Robin... YUMMM®! Connect with Red Robin on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About Katie Lee

Best-selling author and food and lifestyle expert Katie Lee describes her style as casual, comfortable, with a touch of couture. In addition to her *Comfort Table* cookbooks, she writes a column for *SELF* published her first novel *Groundswell* in 2011. Katie sits on the Celebrity Board for Feeding America, and when not working or volunteering, she enjoys surfing and traveling. You can find her on Twitter @KatieLeeKitchen.

About the Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management

Florida International University's Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management has been distinguished as one of the top hospitality programs in the U.S. More than 2,000 undergraduate and graduate students from across the United States and around the world choose FIU for its outstanding reputation, advantageous campus locations, expert faculty, rich curriculum, and fast-track career opportunities in the international hotel, foodservice and tourism industries. In August 2006 FIU unveiled the first US School of Hospitality and Tourism in Tianjin, China. The Marriott Tianjin China Program is FIU's largest international program, with a capacity for up to 1,000 students. For more information about Florida International University's School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, visit <http://hospitality.fiu.edu/>.

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