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Chef Kerish Robles Tapped by UVI Cell to Head New Culinary Arts Program

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Chef Kerish Robles By. UVI

The University of the Virgin Islands, Center for Excellence in Leadership and Learning (UVI CELL) has hired local chef and educator, Kerish Robles as program manager for UVI CELL's new Culinary Arts Program, UVI has announced.

The Culinary Arts Program is currently in the development phase and will be housed at the former West Bay Supermarket location on St. Thomas. The program addresses the restaurant industry labor shortages and the need for formal training in the Culinary Industry. The program will offer certification courses through the American Culinary Federation, industry short courses, and community cooking classes. It is expected to launch in the Spring of 2022.

“I’m excited for our community and our future students as Chef Kerish is the ideal person for this role,” stated UVI CELL Director, Dr. Suzanne Darrow-Magras. “She is a culinary expert and a dedicated teacher with an entrepreneurial spirit. She is committed to furthering the skills of residents and understands the importance of career and technical education in the territory,” continued Dr. Magras.

According to the release, Chef Kerish as she is affectionately known brings over 17 years of experience as an Innovative Professional Certified Chef. She was born and raised on St. Thomas then graduated from the International Culinary Institute at the Art Institute of Atlanta with a degree in Culinary Management. Notably, she was one of two to secure the coveted spot as Junior Chef, making them the first Junior Chefs on the U.S. Virgin Culinary Team. This opportunity paved the way in most recent years for youth to compete as junior chefs on the team.

Chef Kerish previously served as a Certified Career and Technical Education Educator at the high school level for 7 ½ years, instructing in the areas of Culinary Arts, Business, Hospitality and Tourism, and Family and Consumer Science. During this time, she created a hands-on Culinary Program that provided students with the opportunity to creatively experience various aspects of the field, gain industry certifications and collaborate with other high school students locally.

“I am honored to have been selected for the role and I look forward to exceptional things happening in the Culinary Program,” said Chef Kerish. “The Virgin Islands and St. Thomas, in particular, has had a long-standing need for a program that offers formal training and credentialing to beginners and industry professionals. I look forward to sharing the knowledge and experiences I have attained over the years to positively impact the lives of those in my community,” continued Chef Kerish.

UVI said that outside of her career, Chef Kerish is known for her various community outreach events for the territory, giving seminars and classes on all things food to include the art and science of food, finance, management, and nutrition. She also works with various volunteer organizations locally and abroad.

For more information on the Culinary Arts Program, contact Chef Kerish at (340) 693-1355. Information on additional employment opportunities available at the Culinary Arts program can be found at <http://careers.uvi.edu>.