

By Tony Burton • Dec 11, 2024

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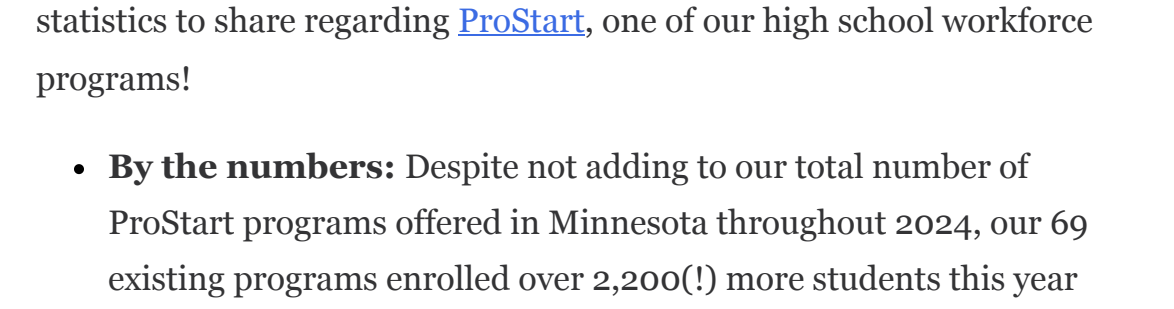
We would like to thank our 2024 Workforce Insider Sponsor - [Aimbridge](#) - for their contributions and commitment to Minnesota's hospitality workforce this year.

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## Our Impact Measured: ProStart Data Collection Released



NRAEF Data Collection Results for the 2023-2024 School Year

**This just in!** Thanks to our friends over at the National Restaurant Association Education Foundation (NRAEF), we now have amazing statistics to share regarding [ProStart](#), one of our high school workforce programs!

- **By the numbers:** Despite not adding to our total number of ProStart programs offered in Minnesota throughout 2024, our 69 existing programs enrolled over 2,200(!) more students this year compared to last year!

- **That's not all:** Since 2022, we have more than DOUBLED the number of students enrolled in our ProStart Programs across the state, with each program enrolling on average 188 students. Now, nearly 13,000 students across the state are enrolled in ProStart, just one of our several workforce development programs!

**Why it matters:** The future of our hospitality industry depends on a highly trained workforce to continue to provide world-class service across Minnesota. Programs like ProStart are making that future possible.

- **Yes and:** Thanks to intel provided to HMEF, our ProStart instructors have confirmed that over 2,000 of our current 13,000 ProStart students are already working in the industry.

**The bottom line:** Our ProStart Programs are not only fueling the hospitality workforce of tomorrow, they're training thousands in the workforce of today.

- **Does your local school district provide ProStart programming?** If not, they should! Learn more about ProStart [here](#), and inquire about how to start the program in your neck of the woods by emailing [Victoria](#).

## Executive Chef Marque Collins Joins Stars of the Future Lineup



**Prepare your tastebuds:** Minnesota is buzzing with excitement as renowned local chef, Marque Collins, prepares to take the stage as a mentor at the upcoming [Stars of the Future](#) event, hosted at the [Four Seasons Minneapolis](#) by the [Hospitality Minnesota Education Foundation](#).

- **About Collins:** Collins, the Executive Chef of Tullibee at the Hewing Hotel, is celebrated for his innovative approach to Scandinavian-influenced cuisine. His commitment to utilizing local, seasonal ingredients has earned him a reputation as one of the most talented chefs in the Twin Cities.

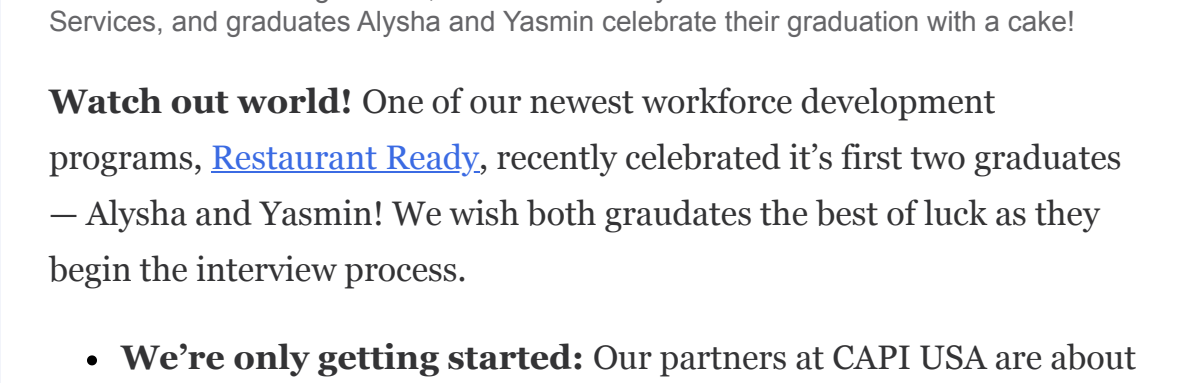
*"Stars of the Future is all about investing in the next generation of culinary talent." Marque Collins described when asked why people should attend the event. "These students are hungry to learn and ready to succeed. By coming together as a community, we give them the support they need to thrive, ensuring the future of our industry is in great hands."*

**The bottom line:** You don't want to miss this incredible opportunity to connect with industry leaders like Marque and make a difference for hospitality's future workforce. Purchase your tickets today [here](#).

- 🎅 **Santa came early!** Use code 'hohoho' for 15% off single tickets, or 'mistletoe' for 15% multi-attendee tickets! Discounts end Friday, December 13 at 11:59 PM.

[Get Your Tickets!](#)

## Restaurant Ready Celebrates First-Time Graduates



Pictured from left to right: Tatia, Restaurant Ready instructor from Lutheran Social Services, and graduates Alysha and Yasmin celebrate their graduation with a cake!

**Watch out world!** One of our newest workforce development programs, [Restaurant Ready](#), recently celebrated it's first two graduates — Alysha and Yasmin! We wish both graduates the best of luck as they begin the interview process.

- **We're only getting started:** Our partners at CAPI USA are about to graduate two more Restaurant Ready participants later this month!

**What is Restaurant Ready?** For those unfamiliar, Restaurant Ready is a national program dedicated to helping people acquire the basic job and life skills necessary to pursue jobs in the restaurant and hospitality industry and jumpstart a pathway to independence.

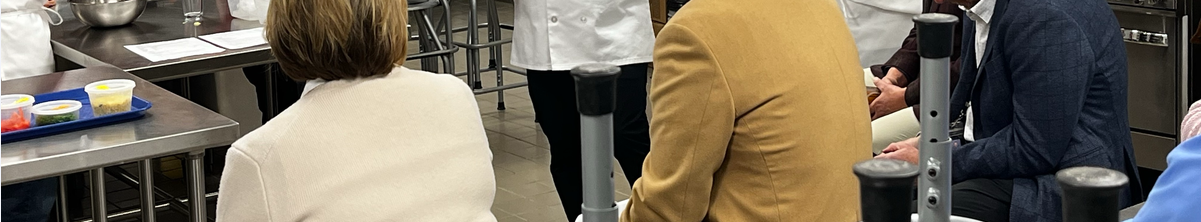
**How it works:**

- **Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)** partner with the National Restaurant Association Education Foundation (NRAEF) and their State Restaurant Association (SRAs) to provide training in six work-ready competency areas defined by the hospitality industry. These competencies are designed to help participants acquire the skills, discipline, and confidence to start a job and stay employed.
- **The State Restaurant Association** links individuals to local employers and community-based organizations provide wrap-around services to eliminate any barriers to success.

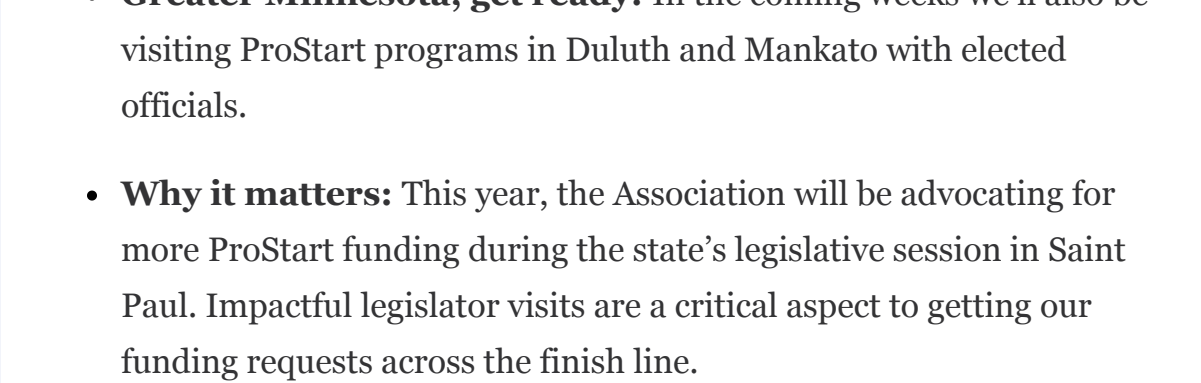
**Restaurant Ready Program Goals**

- Establish the hospitality industry as a suitable place for first jobs, and as a model of employment, development and advancement.
- Foster collaboration between community organizations, state restaurant associations, and employers to help get your open entry-level positions filled with quality employees.

**Are you an operator interested in learning more?** Reach out to [Victoria](#) to get started!



## State Legislators Get the ProStart Experience



**What happened:** Over the last couple of weeks, states legislators from Shakopee, Burnsville, and Minneapolis visited some of our ProStart schools to see up close how the program works, how the hospitality industry benefits from it, and what the enrolled students are learning thanks to its curriculum.

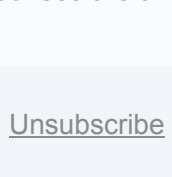
- **Greater Minnesota, get ready!** In the coming weeks we'll also be visiting ProStart programs in Duluth and Mankato with elected officials.
- **Why it matters:** This year, the Association will be advocating for more ProStart funding during the state's legislative session in Saint Paul. Impactful legislator visits are a critical aspect to getting our funding requests across the finish line.

**How you can help:** There are many ways to help us grow ProStart.

- If your community has a ProStart program, reach out to your state legislators to explain to them how important the program is to your community and the future of hospitality in our state.
- If your community doesn't have a ProStart program, reach out to your elected officials and explain to them how ProStart is an established workforce development program teaching over 13,000 high school students across the state, and your community could benefit from it too if more funding is authorized at the state level.

**Get involved:** Reach out to [Hanna](#) or [Victoria](#) to learn more about how you can help grow ProStart across the finish line this spring.

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