The University of New Haven Campus Dining by Sodexo Partners with Havenly Treats to Create Employment Equity Partnership Program

Together they champion the inclusion of refugee and immigrant women in quality to foster inclusive growth, innovation, and equity

West Haven, CT, Mar. 1, 2021 — Sodexo Campus Dining Services at the University of New Haven has formed a partnership with Havenly Treats, a New Haven based non-profit food business, whose mission is to help refugee and immigrant women prosper, uplift their families, and shape their communities through a 6-month fellowship. Havenly Treats fellowship is for refugee and immigrant women, offering them culinary training, the opportunity to learn English, obtain their Servsafe food handling certification, develop their financial and digital literacy, and prepare them for the workforce beyond the café.

In 2019 Hala Ghali, a Syrian refugee, was the first Havenly Treats Fellowship alumnus to join The University of New Haven’s Campus Dining team. Hala works as a baker and has been cross-trained on multiple stations. Hala has excelled in her job and says she enjoys her coworkers and appreciates the flexible schedule. “It’s the perfect job for me,” said Ghali. “I feel very supported in a long-term sense, and I’m thrilled to watch the program grow and hope that one day it will be open to not only Arab women, but all refugees.”

As the partnership between The University of New Haven’s campus dining team and Havenly Treats grows, Hala agreed to become an ambassador between the two entities. With Campus Dining having just hired their second fellowship alumnus, Hala will help them become acclimated with the work environment, develop her skill set, and become a fully integrated member of the workforce.

Ultimately, the goal is to establish Havenly Treats’ fellowship as a feeder program into long-term employment with campus dining. The University of New Haven Campus Dining General Manager, Juan Dominguez, also hopes to certify Havenly Treats Café as an authorized vendor so their pastries and baked goods can be purchased and offered in the various dining locations across campus. This would allow the partnership to come full circle by supporting participants while they’re in the fellowship program and providing them with full-time employment opportunities upon completion of the program.

Aside from the social and economic benefits, this partnership enables sustainable sourcing by utilizing a local vendor. Additionally, it fosters diversity and inclusion.

“I was connected to Havenly Treats when they approached the University of New Haven looking to sell their product to the campus community,” said Dominguez. “Once I learned more about the organization, our priority quickly shifted to focus on long-term employment opportunities. This partnership is providing our team with an invaluable opportunity to embrace diversity and inclusion. We’re all becoming more well-rounded and educated about one another.”
Havenly Treats Executive Director and Co-Founder, Caterina Passoni, and Fellowship Director, Camila Guiza-Chavez never imagined such a beneficial venture. “We hope to continue growing our partnership with Juan and his team,” said Passoni. “In the future we’d love to be able to use our alliance with Sodexo as a model for other potential employer partnerships throughout the community. This is an exciting opportunity for the fellowship program, it can really become something great. I’m proud of Hala and have enjoyed watching her grow throughout the experience.”

Sodexo has been providing campus dining services at the University of New Haven for approximately 20 years, currently operating two resident dining halls and eight retail dining locations across campus.

For more about Havenly Treats please visit: https://havenlytreats.com/

About Sodexo North America
Sodexo North America is part of a global, Fortune 500 company with a presence in 64 countries. Sodexo is a leading provider of integrated food, facilities management and other services that enhance organizational performance, contribute to local communities and improve quality of life for millions of customers in corporate, education, healthcare, senior living, sports and leisure, government and other environments daily. Sodexo is committed to supporting diversity and inclusion and safety, while upholding the highest standards of corporate responsibility and ethical business conduct. In support of local communities across the U.S., in 2020, the Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation mobilized 10,000 Sodexo volunteers to distribute 4.1 million meals to help 5.9 million children and adults meet their immediate food needs. Since 1996, the Stop Hunger Foundation has contributed $36.7 million to help feed children in America impacted by hunger. To learn more about Sodexo, visit us.sodexo.com, and connect with us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube.