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**BENIHANA CELEBRATES 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL 'LUNCH WITH THE PRINCIPAL' EVENT**

*Program recognizes Los Angeles-area students making a commitment to academics and citizenship*

**CITY OF INDUSTRY, Calif., May 14, 2013** – Benihana Inc., the nation's leading operator of Japanese theme and sushi restaurants, is celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Lunch with the Principal*, a program that honors children in the Los Angeles area who have made a commitment to improving their academics and citizenship. While most programs reward having the highest grades or participating in the most activities, children are chosen for *Lunch with the Principal* because they are committed to achieving their personal best. In total, the program has honored more than 600 students.

The inaugural event was held in 1999, partnering with Rowland Unified School District's 15 elementary schools. Each school was invited to select one student who had made significant improvement in academics and/or citizenship to be recognized at a luncheon with their principal. The following year, the program was extended to include Walnut Valley and Chino Valley Unified School Districts. On average, 43 students are recognized each year.

Between May 14 and May 22, Benihana will host an event for each school district. Students, principals and administration will be invited to their local restaurant to enjoy a meal complete with Benihana's signature chef entertainment, and students will be honored for their unique achievements with a certificate, chef's hat and keepsake photo.

Benihana General Manager Raymond Chan, who launched the program, is proud of its unique positioning.

"Much emphasis is put on being the best, either in sports or academics," Chan said. "But there is much to be said for overcoming obstacles to better oneself and for recognizing those who may not be at the top of their class, but give 100 percent of themselves nonetheless."

Benihana's *Lunch with the Principal* event has been recognized by the districts as an outstanding community partnership. The program has now expanded to other Benihana locations throughout the United States.

**About Benihana**

Headquartered in Miami, Benihana Inc. is the nation's leading operator of Japanese theme and sushi restaurants with 94 restaurants nationwide, including 62 Benihana restaurants, seven Haru sushi restaurants and 25 RA Sushi restaurants. In addition, 15 franchised Benihana restaurants are operating in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean. To learn more about Benihana Inc. and its three restaurant concepts, please view the corporate video at [www.benihana.com/about/video](http://www.benihana.com/about/video).

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