Influential Women Features Jeanne Michon: Executive Director And Last Remaining Founder Of New Beginnings Inc.

WOONSOCKET, RI, UNITED STATES, September 4, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Chef, Nonprofit Leader, and Lifelong Community Advocate Continues a 40-Year Mission of Compassion, Resilience, and Service



Woonsocket, Rhode Island — Jeanne Michon is a chef, nonprofit leader, and lifelong community advocate whose more than four decades of service have been defined by one simple purpose: caring for people in need. Through her work in culinary arts, nonprofit leadership, hospice care, and community outreach, Jeanne has dedicated her life to ensuring that individuals and families have access to food, compassion, dignity, and a helping hand when they need it most.

Jeanne's professional journey began on May 16, 1986, when she was just 20 years old. She began working as a nurse's aide, helping care for mentally disabled adults. Raised in a large family with limited financial resources, she learned from an early age the importance of hard work, resilience, family, and compassion. During her off-hours, she volunteered at a local soup kitchen and meal site serving people experiencing homelessness. What began as volunteer work would ultimately become a lifelong mission.

It was at the meal site that Jeanne met her husband, who was helping build homeless shelters. Their shared commitment to serving others became an important part of the life they built together. While Jeanne had always dreamed of attending culinary school, financial obstacles initially made that goal difficult to achieve. With determination and the support of her husband, however, she eventually enrolled at Johnson & Wales University, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1994 with a degree in Culinary Arts and was inducted into the Silver Key Honor

Society.

Jeanne's culinary career developed alongside a deep commitment to caring for others. She spent 15 years working with Hospice Care Rhode Island, supporting terminally ill patients and their families during profoundly difficult periods of their lives. Her professional culinary experience also included serving as head Chef at an Italian restaurant, working as a private Chef, and becoming a Chef and instructor. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she further expanded her professional qualifications by earning her Teaching Assistant Certification.

Family has remained equally important throughout Jeanne's journey. At age 41, she welcomed her first and only child and stepped away from her professional responsibilities for five years to become a full-time mother. Eventually, she returned to the community meal site where she had volunteered for decades. She became its Chef and remained in that role for six years, continuing to provide meals and support to people who depended on the organization.

When the original meal site eventually closed, Jeanne and two other women recognized that the community's need had not disappeared. Determined to continue the work, they reopened the nonprofit in 2017 under the name New Beginnings Inc. Today, Jeanne serves as the organization's Executive Director and Chef and is the last remaining founder. She oversees daily operations, prepares meals, coordinates outreach, and continues working directly with the people the organization serves.

Under Jeanne's leadership, New Beginnings has entered an important new chapter. The organization recently purchased its first building and began renovations, creating an opportunity to expand its services and strengthen its long-term presence in the community. For Jeanne, the new building represents more than physical space, it is another step toward ensuring that people in need have somewhere to turn.

Over approximately 40 years of community service, Jeanne estimates that she has helped serve nearly one million meals. Reaching that milestone during her 40th anniversary of service provided an opportunity to reflect on the enormous number of people and families touched by her work. Yet despite the scale of her contributions, Jeanne continues to approach her mission one person and one meal at a time.

Her dedication has earned numerous honors throughout her career, including recognition as Southern New England's Remarkable Woman 2025, the Rotary Vocational Award 2018, Grand Marshal of Autumnfest 2022, and the Boys & Girls Club Distinguished Service Award 2024. These recognitions reflect the lasting impression Jeanne has made through her professional service and commitment to the broader community.

Jeanne attributes her success to resiliency, a willingness to learn, and remaining open-minded. She believes that when something does not work the first time, there is always another way forward. Sometimes, she says, people simply need to be more creative. Positivity has also played

an important role in helping her navigate challenges and continue moving forward.

Perhaps most significantly, Jeanne credits the community and the extensive network she has built over the past 40 years. She surrounds herself with professionals who have helped and guided her throughout her career. Jeanne recognizes that she may not always know exactly what needs to be done, but with the right guidance, she will find a way to accomplish it. That network has helped shape her into the strong and resilient woman she is today.

The influence of mentorship has also been central to Jeanne's development. Some of the best career advice she received came not through formal instruction, but through watching her mentor, the last director of the soup kitchen where she volunteered and later worked as a chef for six years. Although her mentor did not have a culinary background, she possessed a strong business background and successfully led a nonprofit agency for 31 and a half years.

Jeanne admired the way her mentor led the organization and gained confidence simply by observing her. While her mentor handled the business side, Jeanne was able to remain focused on her culinary work—something she loved deeply. The experience taught Jeanne the value of allowing others to lead in their areas of strength while remaining committed to her own.

For young women entering the nonprofit and culinary industries, Jeanne has one primary message: "Don't give up." She believes there is always a way to create a way forward and encourages young professionals to surround themselves with people who lift them up rather than hold them down.

Jeanne acknowledges that nonprofit organizations currently face significant challenges, particularly around funding and competition for limited resources. With federal funding reductions and smaller organizations sometimes competing with larger nonprofits for the same resources, she believes organizations must become increasingly creative in grant writing, fundraising, and program development.

At the same time, Jeanne sees collaboration as a powerful opportunity. While the nonprofit world can sometimes feel competitive, she emphasizes that many of the larger organizations with which she works are not competitors. Instead, they serve the same people in different ways and rely on one another's strengths. For Jeanne, collaboration is ultimately about ensuring that individuals receive the help they need.

At the center of everything Jeanne does are three core values: positivity, resiliency, and family. Her philosophy of service is straightforward even when carrying it out is complex: show up, serve others, and never underestimate the impact of a warm meal offered with kindness.

As she continues leading New Beginnings Inc. and serving her community, Jeanne remains guided by the belief that every challenge presents an opportunity to find another way. Her four decades of service demonstrate what can happen when compassion is transformed into action.

Through every meal prepared, every person supported, and every young professional encouraged, Jeanne Michon continues to build a legacy centered on service, dignity, and the belief that no one should have to face hardship alone.

Learn More about Jeanne Michon:

Through her Influential Women profile, https://influentialwomen.com/connect/jeanne-michon or through her website, https://www.newbeginningskitchen.com/

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