

News Release
West Side Ecumenical
Ministry
5209 Detroit Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44102
www.wsem.org

WSEM

For more information, contact:

Ilia Estremera
West Side Ecumenical Ministry
216/651-2037, ext. 309
iestremera@wsem.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WSEM HOSTS CHEF JEFF HENDERSON,
TOP AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHEF AND ACCLAIMED AUTHOR**

CLEVELAND (October 20, 2008) — Chef Jeff Henderson, one of the top African-American chefs in the country and author of the book *Cooked*, will be the keynote speaker at West Side Ecumenical Ministry's (WSEM) annual INSPIRE Community Luncheon. The event will be held 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. on November 18 at the Renaissance Cleveland Hotel Grand Ballroom.

The luncheon will host nearly 700 individuals, comprised of Northeast Ohio high school students, corporations and community members. Honorary chairs Dr. Eugene Sanders, CEO, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, and local celebrity chef Loretta Paganini, owner of The Loretta Paganini School of Cooking and The International Culinary Arts Institute, will help kick-off the event.

This year's keynote speaker will be author Chef Jeff Henderson, who as a youth turned his life around while serving time in federal prison for drug dealing to become one of the top African-American chefs in the country. Chef Jeff's story is one of redemption. When not working as an executive chef in Las Vegas, he travels throughout the country to high schools, universities and prisons to caution youth about not making the mistakes he made and gives them hope so they can keep their life on the right track. Chef Jeff's book and memoir *Cooked*, a *New York Times* bestseller, was released in 2007. He has appeared on popular syndicated radio and TV shows like "The Oprah Winfrey Show," "Good Morning America," "The Montel Williams Show," CNBC, and NPR's "All Things Considered" and been featured in print publications like *People* and *USA Today*.

- more -

WSEM Hosts Annual Luncheon Featuring Chef Jeff Henderson, page 2

“We felt it was important to showcase inspirational individuals like Chef Jeff who are able to turn their lives around and actively work to teach youth the importance of not making the mistakes they made,” said Judith Z. Peters, president and CEO of WSEM. “Chef Jeff’s story demonstrates the power of second chances and that it is never too late to overcome obstacles that we may encounter in life to do the right thing.”

Previous INSPIRE Luncheon speakers include Jim Ellis, swim coach and inspiration for the competitive swimming movie *Pride*, and Coach Herman Boone, inspiration for the Disney film *Remember the Titans*.

Tickets for the event are \$50. For more information, call WSEM at 216-651-2037, or check out the “Events” page at www.wsem.org. Order tickets online via the “Online Donations” link and select “Inspire Community Luncheon” from the drop-down menu at www.wsem.org.

About WSEM

Founded in 1966, West Side Ecumenical Ministry (WSEM) is a nonprofit, social service organization working to assist families and individuals meet their needs through programs of service. WSEM administers programs through its three Centers of Excellence and Counseling Solutions Program that provide food and outreach services, employment training, early childhood education and counseling solutions. For more information, visit www.wsem.org.

###