

# The Chopping Block<sup>XX</sup>

## Press Release

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## The Chopping Block is Turning 20

Chicago's Popular Cooking School Celebrates Milestone Anniversary

Chicago, IL – [The Chopping Block](#) is marking a milestone of teaching home cooks how to cook for the past twenty years this April. It's one of the few culinary schools in the country to accomplish this business feat. [Owner/Chef Shelley Young](#) opened The Chopping Block in a small cottage in Lincoln Park on April 4, 1997 as a small cooking school and antique cookware shop, at a time when recreational cooking schools were unheard of. The Chopping Block now has two locations in Chicago and plans are underway for two different events to celebrate the anniversary and the customers who have supported the local business over the years.

Young felt it was important to recognize not only the current employees who work hard to make the business a success but also those who were a part of the team in the past but may have moved on to other businesses, opened their own businesses or in some cases, even left the culinary industry. "We've invited back our 'Chopping Block All Stars', those chefs who played an integral part of the business over the past twenty years. They will return to their roots in our classrooms to once again teach a cooking class. This will be a chance for all of our students, present and past, to see these familiar faces again and learn something about the food that represents these chefs now," said Young.

The Chopping Block's anniversary celebrations will take place on:

- Saturday, April 1, 2017 10am-5pm Lincoln Square 4747 N. Lincoln Ave. Chicago, IL 60625
- Saturday, April 8, 2017 10am-5pm Merchandise Mart 222 Merchandise Mart Plaza Suite 107 Chicago, IL 60654

Both days are free, open to the public with no registration required and will feature demonstrations and hands-on cooking classes from guest and current chef instructors. Here are just a few of the guest chefs participating in the event:

- Abraham Conlon of [Fat Rice](#)
- Sari Zernich of [mfk.](#)
- Rick Ortiz of [Antique Taco](#)

- Joaquin Soler of [smalls](#)
- Sean Gartland of [Feast Cooking School](#) in Flint, Michigan

In addition to the guest chefs, Young will teach a class on both days of anniversary parties, as well as a special Chef's Dinner class on Tuesday, April 4 from 6pm-9pm at Lincoln Square. "Unfortunately, I don't get the chance to teach very often anymore. This special cooking demonstration will be a look back at some of my favorite dishes we've taught over the years and continue to teach to this day. It will be a celebration of classics from The Chopping Block," said Young.

Guests at both events will also enjoy a buffet of appetizers and desserts of Chopping Block favorites from over the years. Expect popular hors d'oeuvres such as Truffled Popcorn, Bacon Wrapped Dates and Mushroom and Thyme Cheesecake. There will be wine and cocktail samplings and instruction as well. "Our beverage program shows one new direction The Chopping Block is going in. We've responded and adapted our curriculum to our students' needs over these 20 years. Our new mixology program and our well-established wine program are an example of the knowledge people want these days. Food goes with wine and cocktails so it's a natural fit to offer these educational programs," said Young.

There will be an interactive station (think *Top Chef's* popular mise en place challenge) where guests can put their knife skills to the test as they learn about The Chopping Block's Certificate program, [Culinary Boot Camp](#). This was yet another program that was created out of demand. The five-day, intensive hands-on class covers all of the techniques learned in professional culinary school in an approachable, affordable and available environment. This program has only continued to grow since its launch in 2006. "This type of education is our future. People want to learn to cook but don't want the hefty expense or lengthy time commitment of traditional culinary school. We're working on an even more evolved type of learning as an alternative for these serious home cooks or those wanting to enter the food industry. We've identified areas of deficiency of education and training in our industry, and our goal is to address this shortfall with new learning," said Young.

Guests at the celebrations can take advantage of 20% off the entire store to mark the anniversary as well as special gift card promotions and other fun, interactive ways to look back at the business' 20 year history. 10% of all retail sales on both days will be donated to the Susan G. Komen organization to help fund breast cancer research. Young recently lost her mother to the disease in December 2016, "My mom was an inspiration to me in life and in the kitchen. In 2009, I talked her into doing the Breast Cancer Walk with me even though she couldn't walk and was on oxygen. I wanted to her to experience what an inspiration she was. We did the whole 60 miles together and she couldn't figure out what all the fuss was about," said Young.

The anniversary also marks the end of a years-long rebranding project which introduced a new look for The Chopping Block including a new logo, mobile-optimized website and remodeled facilities. Young opened The Chopping Block in 1997 in Lincoln Park, and a second location in Lincoln Square in 2003. The Lincoln Park location moved to the Merchandise Mart in 2005. More historical information about the business can be found in The Chopping Block's [online press kit](#).