**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STUDENT AND AMATEUR BAKERS TASTE SWEET SUCCESS AT PASTRY CHICAGO’S**

**FOURTH ANNUAL RAISIN COOKIE COMPETITION**

**Fresno, Calif., April 22, 2011—** The California Raisin Marketing Board is pleased to announce the winners of Pastry Chicago’s fourth annual Raisin Cookie Competition hosted at the Whole Foods at Lincoln Park, Chicago. The April 16competition included a total of 25 bakers and more than 70 spectators, who came to check out the scrumptious raisin cookie recipes, take their photo with the California Dancing Raisin, and watch a Golden Raisin and Pineapple Cookie demonstration by Chef Della Gossett of The French Pastry School of Kennedy-King College at City Colleges of Chicago.

"The California Raisin Marketing Board is pleased to partner once again with Pastry Chicago and the French Pastry School of Chicago to celebrate California Raisins as a naturally sweet and healthy baking ingredient,” said Rick O’Fallon, Marketing Director for the California Raisin Marketing Board.  “Every year we are impressed with the innovative and delicious ways contestants bake with our star ingredient and this year was no exception.”

Each entry featured nature’s best baking ingredient – California Raisins – and was judged based on taste (60 percent); texture (26 percent); decoration (10 percent); and punctuality and professionalism (5 percent). Following are the top five contestants who won over the panel of esteemed judges:

**1st Place** - Carla Cubert, Raisin Rugelach; **2nd Place** - Dawn Hertz, Carrot Cake Cookies; **3rd Place** - Caroline Joshi, Coconut-Curry Cookies with Raisins; **4th Place** - Amelia Hyde, Raisin Peek-a-Boo Cookies; **5th Place** - Holly St. Myers, Take Me to the Movies Chocolate-Covered Raisin Cookies.

**Raisin Rugelach**

Recipe by Carla Cubert, First Place Winner in the 2011 Pastry Chicago Raisin Cookie Competition

**Dough Ingredients**:

* 8 ½ ounces King Arthur all-purpose flour
* 2 ounces sugar
* 8 ounces Plugra European Style unsalted butter, softened
* 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
* 1 teaspoon fresh lemon zest, grated fine
* ½ teaspoon Kosher salt
* 1 teaspoon Nielsen Massey vanilla extract

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**Filling Ingredients:**

* 4 ounces apricot jam
* 3 ounces brown sugar
* 1 ounce sugar
* 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
* 6 ounces pecans, chopped fine
* 5 ounces California Golden Raisins, chopped
* Optional: extra milk for brushing on top as needed
* Optional: coarse clear sugar to sprinkle on top as desired

**Directions**:

* Cream butter and cream cheese in bowl of electric mixer using paddle attachment.
* Add sugar, zest and salt to creamed butter and cream cheese.
* Add vanilla and mix well, but do not over mix.
* Add flour and mix until combined and separate dough into four equal portions shaped in disks. Wrap dough disks in plastic wrap individually.
* Refrigerate dough at least 1 hour, or overnight.
* Roll each dough disk into 9 inch rounds on well floured surface working with one portion at a time keeping others in refrigerator.
* Make sprinkling filling by combining brown sugar, 1 ounce of sugar and cinnamon.
* Spread very thin layer of apricot jam on dough round, approx. 1 ounce or less.
* Sprinkle ¼ of chopped pecans and ¼ of raisins over jam.
* Sprinkle ¼ of brown sugar cinnamon mixture over jam, raisins and pecans.
* Use pastry or pizza cutter to cut each 9 inch round into 8 equal pieces.
* Beginning with widest end, roll each rugelach slice tightly like a croissant.
* Continue with each piece and place on ½ sheet pan lined with parchment paper.
* Repeat until all four dough sections and fillings are used.
* Chill for at least 30 minutes to one hour before baking.
* If desired, use pastry brush to brush tops of rugelach with milk, and sprinkle clear coarse sugar crystals on top.
* Bake in pre-heated 350 degree oven for approximately 20 minutes or until golden brown.
* Remove from pan and serve warm or completely cooled.

**About the California Raisin Marketing Board**

A State Marketing Order in 1998 created the California Raisin Marketing Board and it is 100 percent grower funded. Its mission is to support and promote the increased use of California-grown raisins and sponsor crop production, nutrition and market research. For more information about the California Raisin Marketing Board and to browse delicious recipes, visit [www.LoveYourRaisins.com](http://www.LoveYourRaisins.com).

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