

GREENVILLE, SC, September 30, 2013 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- Old Country Buffet and HomeTown Buffet are honoring five rising stars of hospitality during Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15). The employees, selected out of many candidates nationwide for the Hispanic Heritage Series, have all grown their careers into management positions at the steak-buffet chains. Each of them has showed leadership abilities among their staff and excellent customer service to their guests.

"The restaurant industry is comprised of a diverse workforce, but they have not always afforded to move up to management positions," said Greg Graber, Chief Operating Officer of Buffets, Inc. "We want to provide not just a job, but also an enriching career for all our employees. Our restaurants provide the training and support needed to move up into a management position and beyond. In honor of Hispanic Heritage month, we are celebrating these five employees and their Hispanic roots because they have excelled in their career paths here."

Luis Bautista, Bellingham, WA- Old Country Buffet
Luis Bautista is the general manager of the Bellingham Old Country Buffet. A native of Mexico, Bautista has been with Old Country Buffet for over 15 years. His natural knack for conversation and his superb leadership skills have led Bautista to growing success in the company. "I couldn't have joined a better company," he said. "I enjoy it so much that it doesn't feel like work to me." Bautista enjoys playing outside with his daughter in his free time, and plans to become involved with the local Chamber of Commerce.

Alex Lopez, Watertown, MA- Old Country Buffet
Born in El Salvador, Alex Lopez has been promoted from dishwasher all the way up to Kitchen Manager at Old Country Buffet in Watertown. "My biggest life achievement is becoming a manager here at Old Country Buffet," he said. "I have limited education, but with lots of hard work, I achieved what I have now." Lopez takes pride in his many responsibilities as kitchen manager and loves being able to make guests happy through "great customer service and even better food". When he is not working, Lopez can be found volunteering at his son's school.

Maria Martinez, Union Gap, WA- Old Country Buffet
Maria Martinez moved to the United States in 2002 after growing up and earning her college degree in Mexico. She is now a Kitchen Manager at the Union Gap Old Country Buffet. Martinez finds that being a part of the Old Country Buffet restaurant team is a rewarding experience. "Old Country Buffet provides great career opportunities to those who work hard," said Martinez. "I know this firsthand." She loves the restaurant industry and is thrilled that she has a management career that she truly enjoys.

Eduardo Terrero, Manchester, CT- HomeTown Buffet
Eduardo Terrero grew up in a Puerto Rican and Dominican household in Brooklyn. He started at HomeTown Buffet 20 years ago and

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is now a General Manager of the Manchester restaurant. He said, "I'm very proud to still be a part of the team in a management position." Terrero loves his job because he enjoys providing families with a place to share a meal- a pastime that was so important to him as a child and, today, as a father. A true team player, Terrero believes that shared responsibility and the ability to work well with people are the keys to success. "These are skills that can help you out later in life," he said.

Robert Rolong, Dale City, VA- Old Country Buffet
Robert Rolong immigrated to the United States from Columbia when he was 13 years old. Rolong started his career at Old Country Buffet as a dishwasher and worked his way through college at the restaurant. Today, he is a Service Manager and is pursuing his Masters degree. The most rewarding part of his day is working with guests to ensure they have a wonderful experience. "At the end of the day," he said, "knowing that I helped make someone's day better gives me great pleasure." When he is not studying or working at the restaurant, Rolong spends his free time as a referee for adult and youth recreational soccer leagues.

About Buffets, Inc.
Buffets, Inc., one of the nation's largest steak-buffet restaurant companies, currently operates 343 restaurants in 35 states, comprised of 333 steak-buffet restaurants and 10 Tahoe Joe's Famous Steakhouse restaurants. The restaurants are principally operated under the Old Country Buffet , HomeTown Buffet and Ryan's brands. Buffets employs approximately 18,000 team members and serves approximately 100 million customers annually. For more information, visit <http://www.Buffet.com>.