

# CHEF CESARE CASELLA

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## Chief of the Department of Nourishment Arts®



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Cesare Casella is the Chief of the Department of Nourishment Arts® (DNA) at The Center for Discovery®, a nurturing home, cruelty-free farm, and state-of-the-art medical and educational facility in the Catskills that serves individuals with complex conditions, like autism. Chef Casella, an internationally known culinary star, began his journey to The Center for Discovery® before he knew TCFD existed. Growing up in the hills of Tuscany, Chef Casella worked in his family's restaurant, raised chickens and pigs, made cheese and salumi, and grew dozens of herbs in his "arometo," or aroma garden. Fast forward to 2019 and Chef Casella is directing the nutritional and culinary program at The Center, living in the hills of the Catskills, overseeing herds of chickens, pigs, and cattle and is responsible for The Center's production of everything from bread and apples, to honey and the canestrino tomatoes, whose seeds arrived here from the chef's native Tuscany. He is a long way from home, but in a place that feels like he never left it.

After graduating from the Culinary Institute in Montecatini and helping transform the family restaurant, Vipore, into a Michelin-starred trattoria, Chef Casella moved to New York City and in 2001, opened Beppe, the first of three critically acclaimed restaurants. Beppe was followed by Maremma, named one of the Top 5 "Best New Restaurants" by New York Magazine in 2005, and Salumeria Rosi, as well as a long list of awards and accolades including: Food Arts magazine's "Silver Spoon Award" and New York Magazine's "Critic's Choice." In New York, Chef Casella began to share his passion for Italian food with others, writing cookbooks such as the 2013 James Beard Foundation nominee, *The Fundamentals of Classic Italian Cuisine* (2012) and *Feeding the Heart* (2016), an award winner about The Center's Seed to Belly® program, co-written with TCFD President and CEO, Patrick H. Dollard.

Naturally, it was a Tuscan connection that brought Chef Casella and The Center together. Just before opening Beppe, the chef acquired a small herd of Chianina, the famous breed of cattle that produce the Florentine Beefsteak. He needed a place to board the animals. The Center not only had space, they had Chianina of their own. This coincidence evolved into an almost two-decades long collaboration between the Chef and The Center. Together with Patrick H. Dollard, the chef invited everyone at The Center to the table – from farmhand and farmer, to nutritionist, chef, and feeding expert. The Seed to Belly® program was born. The dynamic Department of Nourishment Arts® was established. And a revolution of health for each and every one of 1,200 TCFD students and residents, and 1,700 staff members began – one bite at a time.