Olive Garden Asks Kids How to Use the Internet to Better Their Communities

13th-annual Pasta Tales writing contest begins Oct. 6

ORLANDO, Fla., Sept 30, 2008 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- Kids and teens lead the digital revolution, sharing their ideas online every day. Now Olive Garden wants them to channel that knowledge and creativity to make a difference in their local communities. This year, Olive Garden's 13th-annual Pasta Tales essay writing contest asks students in first through 12th-grade: “How would you use the Internet to change your community for the better?” The grand prize winning essay is worth a three-day trip to New York and a $2,500 savings bond.

(Logo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20070926/CLW0471LOGO)

Beginning Monday, Oct. 6 through Friday, Dec. 5, Olive Garden will accept essays of 50 to 250 words from students in the U.S. and Canada. Entry forms and complete rules will be available beginning Oct. 6 at local Olive Garden restaurants or by logging on to www.olivegarden.com/company/community/pasta_tales.asp.

The grand prize is a trip to New York, dinner at the Olive Garden in Times Square and a $2,500 savings bond. A winner also will be chosen in each grade category and will receive a $500 savings bond and a family dinner at their local Olive Garden.

Entries must include the writer's name, complete address, phone number with area code, grade, date of birth including year and a statement that the work is their own. Entries must be submitted either online or postmarked by Dec. 5 and sent to Pasta Tales, PMB 2000, 6278 N. Federal Highway, Fort Lauderdale, FL, 33308-1916.

Submissions are judged based on creativity, adherence to theme, organization, grammar, punctuation and spelling by the Quill and Scroll Society of the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Iowa with finalists selected by Olive Garden.

For more information about Pasta Tales, call Katie Lennon at (954) 776-1999, ext. 240 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. EST.

Olive Garden is the leading restaurant in the Italian dining segment with 662 restaurants, more than 80,000 employees and $3.1 billion in annual sales. Olive Garden is a division of Darden Restaurants Inc. (NYSE: DRI), the world's largest full-service owned and operated restaurant company. For more information, visit Olive Garden's Web site at www.olivegarden.com.

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