



Mark Ainsworth Bio

The Outstanding Alumnus Award

Mark Ainsworth is an award winning chef and author who has been central to Holmes food service and events at Holmes for many years in his roles as chef, planner, and manager of the kitchen staff. For these and other contributions, the Holmes Board is delighted to recognize him with the Outstanding Alumnus Award in recognition of his exceptional commitment to Holmes and its mission, serving as an inspiration to others.

Mark is a Holmes Camp alumni who attended family camp for 25 years from the 1960s into the 1980s when his parents directed family camp. When he was 15, he started working in the Holmes kitchen, progressing from washing dishes to washing pots and pans to assisting cook Ann Richardson and, when Ann retired, to becoming head camp cook.

But Mark's interest in cooking actually began earlier, at home. When his mother went back to school to get her masters degree she had each of the four children cook one night a week. She wrote a recipe booklet for them to follow, reviewed with them what they were going to make, and had the ingredients on hand. With that training, Mark felt he was good at cooking — as are all of his siblings — and eventually enrolled at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY.

Mark has cooked in restaurants and kitchens around the world and shares his passion for food through his teaching and writing. Having graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in 1986, he first worked as a professional chef then became a professor at C.I.A. in 1993. In his early career as a chef, he worked at New York City's renowned restaurant Le Bernardin, on a cruise line, and in restaurants in Germany and the British Virgin Islands. He has written two books, "Fish and Seafood" and "The Young Chef: Recipes and Techniques for Kids Who Love to Cook."

At Holmes, Mark has planned and overseen gala dinners, contributed group cooking lessons to silent auctions, and served as an event committee member planning gala venues and menus. He has melded his roles as teacher and volunteer by enlisting his C.I.A. students to work in the Agape kitchen and serve as wait staff for events. In all activities, his expertise has been indispensable.

In addition to planning and presenting meals at Holmes, Mark has volunteered at work days, helped manage and reimagine the Holmes farm during Covid, and, as a member of the facilities committee, who lives near Holmes, often responds to urgent issues or lends a hand on maintenance projects.

Mark is also a beekeeper and has two daughters, Darby and Kaleigh, who are also active at camp.