

National Nonprofit Stop Foodborne Illness Names 2019-2020 Theno Food Safety Fellow

Chicago-based Organization Focuses on Food Safety Education, Programs

CHICAGO, July 24, 2019 – The national nonprofit public health organization [Stop Foodborne Illness \(SFI\)](#) today announced that Jaime L. Ragos has been named the 2019 – 2020 Dave Theno Food Safety Fellow. Ragos was selected by a committee comprised of professionals and educators from SFI and from the Michigan State University Online Food Safety Program.

“Since establishing the Theno Fellowship in 2018, we’ve been astounded at the quality of candidates who have applied,” said Mitzi Baum, CEO of SFI. “Jaime’s credentials make her a stand-out in any crowd. Her impressive resume illustrates her commitment not only to studying food science but also to sharing that knowledge to create safer, healthier communities. We’re thrilled to have her on board.”

The Theno Food Safety Fellowship is an opportunity for a young food scientist to work with SFI professionals and learn from members of the extended SFI community about the real-world health consequences of failures in food safety. The Fellowship, which includes housing, pay and benefits, requires that the Fellow work full-time for SFI and complete a 12-credit Online Food Safety Certificate with Michigan State University. Dave Theno, a food safety consultant who died in 2017 and for whom the Fellowship is named, was instrumental in establishing food preparation and cooking protocols that permanently changed procedures in the restaurant and fast-food industries.

“Stop Foodborne Illness is a key player in educating people about how to end preventable illness and deaths from food pathogens,” Ragos said. “I can’t wait to start working with the SFI team and the educators at Michigan State to learn more about key strategies to build awareness among consumers, the government, and food industry professionals regarding food safety.”

Ragos, a 2019 graduate of the University of Tennessee (B.S., Food Science and Technology), participated in research programs in the University’s Department of Nutrition; the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications; the Department of Food Science and Technology; and the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology. She also worked on research teams at the Smith International Center in Guatemala and at North Carolina State University in the Department of Food, Bioprocessing, and Nutrition Sciences.

SFI’s inaugural Theno Fellow, Emily Forauer, a University of Connecticut undergraduate with a Bachelor of Science in Pathobiology and a Bachelor of Science in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. She plans to pursue a Master of Science degree in Nutrition and Food Sciences at the University of Vermont at the completion of her Fellowship.

About Stop Foodborne Illness

Established in 1993, **Stop** Foodborne Illness (originally named Safe Tables Our Priority) is a national nonprofit public health organization dedicated to the prevention of illness and death from foodborne pathogens. Our programs are centered on promoting sound food safety policy and best practices, building public awareness, and assisting those impacted by foodborne illness. We advocate tirelessly to regulate food handling and processing from farm to table. We partner with Congress, the USDA, the FDA, the CDC, and other relevant agencies and organizations to mitigate food safety risks through policy and legislation.

The Impact of Foodborne Illnesses

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that each year foodborne illnesses impact millions of Americans, causing more than 100,000 to be hospitalized. Approximately 3,000 people will die from the effects of foodborne illness and others live with the long-term and often debilitating impacts for life.

The need for consumer and food industry education about foodborne illnesses was highlighted in 1992, when an E. coli outbreak from undercooked hamburger meat killed four people and left thousands sick. SFI has been instrumental in promoting the passage of food safety laws including the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Most importantly, we are proud of our nationwide community of 31,000 activists, educators and supporters.