



## **News Release**

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### **Teen Inventor R.J. Batts Debuts the “Tip Tough®” Line at 2017 International Home & Housewares Show**

***Meet the Youngest Exhibitor in Show’s History at Booth N7570***

**SALISBURY, MD – March 6, 2017** – When middle schooler R. J. Batts started brainstorming about how his dad, a restaurant chef, could protect his fingers at work, he wasn’t thinking of fame and fortune.

“I just wanted my dad to stop cutting his fingers so often,” said Batts, now age 14. “He sometimes needed stitches, which meant it hurt to work, and he often could not play with my sister, Grace, and me.”

With the support of his parents, Lori and Bob, R.J set out to invent a product that would shield his Dad’s fingers as he cut, chopped and diced food. While working on sketches and 3D prototypes, Batts hit upon a simple yet effective way to shield each finger thoroughly up to above the second knuckle – the areas most exposed when using kitchen knives.

“I knew if I could cover those areas, my Dad’s hands would have much more protection,” said Batts. “Once I saw it could work, I thought other chefs might want it.”

He continued to improve the product, first by adding prongs to hold food securely in place. Then, to make the product sanitary for professional kitchen environments, he decided to forge the “Professional” version from sturdy stainless steel, adding a series of holes to provide access for thorough cleaning.

The Tip Tough® was born.

Soon after he had a working concept, Batts was accepted into the local chapter of the Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!), hosted by the Salisbury (Md.) Area Chamber of Commerce. He worked with YEA! for six months, developing business skills, establishing his company – Picklehead LLC – and receiving advice from local business leaders.



Accolades and funding followed. In 2016, Tip Tough won start-up funding from Salisbury University's Shore Hatchery Competition and received grant support from TEDCO. Tip Tough was also named "Fan Favorite" in Start Up Maryland® Pitch Across Maryland competition.

Arturo Suazo, Executive Chef of Sobo's Wine Beerstro in Salisbury, appreciates the value of Tip Tough every day. "Tip Tough is easy to use, amazingly safe and no problem to wash," said Suazo. "And it saves money because it protects fingers, limiting lost time from injuries and workers comp."

The Professional Grade Tip Tough was so well received that Batts and his family decided to develop a "Home" version. The colorful product offers the same features made of molded plastic at a slightly lower price point.

Professional bartender J.T. Landon, also of Sobo's, notes that Tip Toughs are useful in any kitchen or bar. "I keep several of them in my kit and just wash them in the sink or toss them in the dishwasher. Easy, fast and very useful."

### **So ... Picklehead?**

Tip Tough is a Batts family endeavor, so when R.J. thought about naming his company, he used a childhood family nickname.

"My Dad called me 'Picklehead' when I was younger. I like that as a company name it includes food – which my products work with – but it also reminds me to not take myself too seriously and to appreciate that I could only have gotten this far with my family behind me."

Located in Salisbury, Maryland, Picklehead LLC is committed to quality products that add value to people's lives, and to supporting other local and regional companies.

Tip Tough is proudly made in the USA. Available in both Home and Professional grades, Tip Tough is ready for retail and commercial distribution nationwide.

For more, visit [www.tiptough.com](http://www.tiptough.com) and find the company on Facebook under Picklehead LLC.

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