

welcome to
#BLOGHERFOOD15



Elisa Camahort Page (left) interviewed Sarah Michelle Gellar (right) about her e-commerce venture Foodstirs at the closing keynote.

Women Supporting Women

#BlogHerFood15 brings women in the blogging community together and emphasizes the support attendees get from each other, whether they are keynote speaker Sarah Michelle Gellar or a first-time blogger.

BY STEPHANIE CRETS

BlogHer is an organization that brings together women content creators across social media, video and photography platforms and blogging. Presented by SheKnows Media, BlogHer events help women network, meet brands, hone skills and, ultimately, celebrate their work in the community. And #BlogHerFood15, which took place in Chicago on Nov. 6-7, emphasizes those in the food blogging community.

I go to a lot of conferences, but I've never experienced such an open environment, where everyone wants to know who you are, where you're from and what your blog or publication is. All you had to do was sit down at a table before a session and everyone immediately exchanged business cards to check out your content when they got home. Most of these women only know each other through their online presences, so getting together in person for two days of informative sessions, delicious foods from its many sponsors such as Canadian Lentils and outings to Eataly and nightclub The Underground.

"With written and even photographic communication, the interactivity isn't always synchronous," says Elisa Camahort Page, chief community officer of SheKnows Media. "It feels interactive and like a real conversation, but a lot of communication cannot be conveyed online. There is something irreplaceable about real-life connection and communication; hearing tone, touching,

hugging – there’s a lot of hugging that happens at these conferences. You’re turning to your online community for so much support and love that it’s a really wonderful annual reunion.”

Camahort Page also emphasizes the fact that attendees meet new people and discover bloggers or brands to work with that one would never find sitting behind a computer. “It’s not just about seeing the people you know and love; it’s about seeing new people,” she says. “Our goal is about building our audience and communicating with our community.”

Informative sessions ranged from social media bootcamps and kitchen demos for making the best guacamole to how to do taxes for your small business blog and the key to lifetime blogging happiness from food and lifestyle bloggers throughout the country. #BlogHerFood15’s goal is to help women – “and a few hearty gentlemen,” according to Camahort Page – be better at what they do, monetize their blog or small business – if they want to – and support them in any endeavor they can imagine. There was even a spot where attendees could get headshots taken and meet with sponsors and brands to help turn their blogging into a successful business.

‘A True Passion’

The highlight of the conference for many, including Camahort Page and me, was the keynote speaker, Sarah Michelle Gellar, who many know as Buffy from the cult hit show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. She recently launched an e-commerce venture called Foodstirs, which Gellar described as a lifestyle culinary brand geared towards creating memorable experiences through cooking for families, adults and anyone who wants to jump back in the kitchen, while focusing on using healthy, premium ingredients.

“I know the importance of being in the kitchen,” Gellar says. “That time and experience can’t be replicated anywhere else. And I like to know what’s in my food. Thankfully, that’s another idea of

Several sponsors, including Jamba Juice (right) and HeluvaGood! (below), came out to support #BlogHerFood15 with treats, prizes and networking opportunities.



Foodstirs; we’re making it easier for you. All the ingredients you need are there.”

During her keynote, Gellar discussed the importance of being in this supportive female community, how much Foodstirs means to her and her family and, of course, the possibility of a *Buffy* reboot. (She thinks it would be extremely fun, but isn’t sure it would be satisfying for fans in the way she would want it to be.)

“There’s a whole group of women that are taking care of their destiny by starting actual businesses,” Camahort Page says. “Sarah Michelle Gellar is so serious. A lot of celebrities put their

names on things, but aren’t really that involved. She’s super open to learning, asking a lot of advice and interested in the value exchange of working with all these people. It speaks well to her building a sustainable business.”

“I want people to know that this is a true passion,” Gellar says. “I believe in this product, the concept, what we’re doing, and that we have something important to say. This is much more than a vanity project, this is my blood, sweat and tears.”

This is what #BlogHerFood15 and other BlogHer conferences are all about: taking hold of your destiny and bringing your content and passion projects to a supportive community of fellow passionate individuals. Gellar noted that usually she can hide behind written lines in a television show or movie, but Foodstirs is all her and depends on people supporting her. She opened herself up to a community of supportive women bloggers all trying to do the same thing: launch and sustain their projects. If you’re in the blogging community, no matter whether you’re a celebrity or just starting your blog, BlogHer and SheKnows Media will welcome you, your ideas and the content you create. 🍷