



EVENING STANDARD FRIDAY 1 MAY 2009



Support: from left, Fred Sirieix, general manager of Galvin at Windows restaurant at the Park Lane Hilton, youth ambassador Alex Rose and chef Chris Galvin

Galvin cooks up a fresh start for troubled youths

AMAR SINGH

TEENAGERS from some of London's most crime-ridden housing estates are to be offered the chance to train and work in leading five-star hotels.

Galvin's Chance, a project spearheaded by Michelin-starred chef Chris Galvin, will see youths from neighbourhoods blighted by gun and knife crime trained to work at the highest level of the tourism and hospitality industry.

Le Gavroche, the Hilton on Park Lane, The Dorchester and the Jumeirah Carlton Tower have already made a commitment to provide work experience and job opportunities to up to 20 young apprentices and it is hoped more will follow.

The initiative is the brainchild of Fred Sirieix, the general manager of the Galvin at Windows restaurant at the Hilton.

The magnitude of London's gun and knife problem was brought home to Mr Sirieix when he was jogging through Peckham, where he lives with his girl-

friend and five-year-old daughter. He said: "I love running in my spare time and on my route I kept seeing the police signs after there had been a murder.

"It was shocking. There are children in gangs and getting into trouble. It is horrible and we can't stop it, but we can help show there is an alternative."

He said Galvin's Chance will involve trainees working at different hotels or restaurants while receiving training at Westminster Kingsway College as waiters, sommeliers and bar tenders.

The scheme will begin once £30,000 in funding has been raised. French-born Mr Sirieix added: "I am fortunate to work in Mayfair in this wonderful industry,

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which can be very rewarding. There are jobs available and anyone can do it. I am no superstar but I have a willingness and that is essential.

"Learning the skills of a sommelier or a bartender requires real dedication and can lead to very fulfilling careers."

The scheme will be run in association with STOP (Solve This Ongoing Problem), a campaign set up by graphic design student Alexander Rose after his friend Eugene Attram, a student from Croydon, was stabbed to death aged 16 in 2006.

Mr Rose, 20, from Mitcham, said: "I've been running the STOP campaign for two years and when Fred got in touch I saw that there was a real opportunity. We have the ability here to really do some good. The way to combat criminal culture is through opportunities and it doesn't get much better than these amazing hotels."

Also involved in the programme is the charity Springboard which has a track record of helping ex-offenders and the

long-term unemployed find work in the hospitality leisure and travel sectors.

In a bid to raise the £30,000 needed Galvin's Chance is holding a 4.5km race around the Serpentine in Hyde Park and under Park Lane culminating in a grueling ascent of the 28 floors of the London Hilton on 15 June.

Mr Galvin, who learned his trade under Antony Worrall Thompson 30 years ago before joining the Ritz Hotel, won a Michelin star at Orreery and also won accolades at the Wolsley before joining the Hilton on Park Lane.

He said: "The race will be fun but the intent is serious. Galvin's Chance is there to help real people at risk change their lives. We hope it will grow over the years and make a real difference."

Taking part include ex-footballer Graeme Le Saux, athletes Jo Fenn and Roger Black and chefs Eric Chavot and Michel Roux Jr.

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