

Chefs, hoteliers and kids - the dream team!

Issued by [City Lodge Hotel](#)

30 Nov 2021

What happens when you combine the ethos behind the World Association of Chefs' Societies' (Worldchefs) annual International Chefs Day with compassionate hoteliers and lively children? Fun, food and education!



With a view to creating a magical day for vulnerable children in their communities, general managers and staff at City Lodge Hotel Group (CLHG) properties put together a comprehensive outreach programme under the guidance of group food and beverage manager Trevor Boyd. Participating hotels and kitchen teams hosted events that combined feeding, educating and entertaining the little ones to nourish body and mind.

The theme for International Chefs Day 2021 on 20 October was once again “Healthy food for the future”, with a focus on sustainability, the environment and healthy eating habits. The origins of this global event are proudly South African, explains Worldchefs: “In 2004, the late Dr Bill Gallagher implemented International Chefs Day to celebrate our profession and to share and pass on our knowledge and culinary skills to our children. It is our legacy to help children get excited about healthy food and our industry.”

Several sister properties joined forces and others partnered with worthy causes active in their areas. Town Lodge Umhlanga partnered with Reach for a Dream and hosted family fun in their kitchen. Reach for a Dream makes dreams come true for children with life-threatening illnesses and the hotel has had a strong relationship with the organisation since it opened in 2019.



Courtyard Hotel Waterfall City, City Lodge Hotel Waterfall City and Town Lodge Midrand hosted children and their carers from New Jerusalem Children's Home at the new Courtyard Hotel Waterfall City. Executive chef Keegan Maistry and his team showed the children how to make pizza, which they all settled down to eat once cooked, followed by crispy apples and fruit juice. The staff from these hotels donated toys and toiletries in gift bags for the children, creating much excitement.

Town Lodge Bellville, City Lodge V&A Waterfront, City Lodge Pinelands and City Lodge GrandWest visited Durbanville Children's Home with kiddies' picnic boxes and balloons. The staff and their families also donated clothes and toys to these deserving children.

Town Lodge George turned its attention to Bethesda, an organisation that offers intermediate care, home community-based services and has a child and youth centre. They prepared and served hearty, home-style vegetable and butternut soup, fresh rolls and doughnuts.



Teams from Courtyard Hotel Rosebank, Courtyard Hotel Sandton, City Lodge Hotel Fourways, City Lodge Hotel Katherine Street, Town Lodge Roodepoort, Road Lodge Rivonia and Road Lodge Randburg supported the Lighthouse Baby Shelter, spending an enriching afternoon out at the home. This shelter takes in children of all ages, from infants to teenagers, and there are currently 13 children in their care. The CLHG team met several staff and children, and made much-appreciated donations of foodstuffs, summing up the experience, "It is small acts like these that make us realise how fortunate we are in life and that we should be grateful for what we have on a daily basis. Also, we are grateful for the special angels out there that make it their life's mission to help the less fortunate."

These are just a few of the examples of what the group's hotels did around the country to mark International Chefs Day. Trevor Boyd, group food and beverage manager, brought his expertise and passion for giving back to rallying and guiding the hotels in this worthy endeavour. He says of the outcome, "I am so proud of how our teams interpreted and delivered on the theme for the children's events at their hotels. We are also very grateful for the participation by and donations from our valuable suppliers. They really came to the party and enhanced our offering wherever they could. This is what both SA Chefs and Worldchefs is all about, bringing chefs and communities together in an educational and entertaining way, building those relationships, and always looking to give back to those in need. This is CLHG's first time participating in International Chefs Day and it ties in perfectly with the group's many other charitable and CSI programmes."

Lindiwe Sangweni-Siddo, chief operating officer, says: "It was heartwarming to see how Trevor and the staff at our hotels rose to the occasion of providing service excellence and heartfelt hospitality to these little guests. For many of the children, this was their first time in a hotel, seeing a professional kitchen in action and dining in a smart restaurant. We believe it opened up a world of possibilities for these eager young minds, delighting their playful nature and also planting seeds for their future of becoming fruitful and healthy members of society. We look forward to growing this initiative in coming years."

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