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Helping make dreams come true

Local meal assembly business partners with ARC Broward

By SCOTT FISHMAN
 Staff Writer

Melanie Drew cherishes her internship at Dream Dinners of Sunrise.

The 25-year-old is a student of the Culinary Institute at ARC Broward, which provides services to more than 1,200 children and adults with developmental disabilities and other life challenges. Drew found the week-long experience invaluable.

"My favorite part was working with Nicole Marefka," she said. "Maybe I can work there some-

day."

The meal assembly business began its partnership with ARC Broward in Sunrise after co-owners Sally Grant and Marefka attended an open house for the organization's Center for Financial Stability. Their efforts hit close to home for Grant, who has a nephew with autism. Dream Dinners has welcomed eight interns thus far.

"Everyone who has come in has been very enthusiastic," Marefka said. "They want to work. This is the first real-world work experience for many of them. The ones that have come through have their

food safety knowledge and certification. They have the skills. ... They spend the week doing everything from prepping the food that comes in from the trucks, assembling the meals and working with our guests when we have sessions."

The internship program starts with the application process through the Center for Financial Stability. Melissa Gousse, center coach, said students start coming in around week seven of the program. They begin honing their interview skills and preparing a resume and are guided through ev-

ery step leading up to an internship.

Jasmine Watkins, 24, was a Dream Dinners program participant in March.

"It helped me gain additional work experience," she said. "I really liked the staff. They were kind and helpful. I also learned more about prep work and cleaning."

Culinary students also help in-house by preparing meals for adult day programs and group homes, as well as assisting with city events. Interns are given the opportunity to branch out at local restaurants

and catering companies.

"We really appreciate businesses in the community that want to help," Gousse said.

The institute hopes to produce more success stories like Kristina Seesahai, a graduate who was hired to work at Dream Dinners. The 23-year-old had an "externship" at Chili's.

"I was very happy about getting the job," she said. "I found my love of cooking through the culinary program. It helped me a lot."

For more information, visit Arcbroward.com or call 954-746-9400.

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dangle from the ceilings of suites, where visitors lounge on memory-foam beds and watch cable on flat-screen TVs. Blueberry facials, Brazilian waxes and aromatherapy baths are among the treatments available in the gleaming spa.

This new, 130-room Palm Beach County resort was designed to feel like the Breakers or the Four Seasons, with one key difference: It's for cats and dogs. Called the Posh Pet Hotel, it



PHOTOS ABOVE BY JIM RASSOL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

FORT LAUDERDALE

— Nearly every day Ryan LeVin pedals by the crash site where six years ago he ran down two British tourists in his Porsche. When he does, he has "personal conversations" with the two men he killed.

"I keep my victims very close in my heart," LeVin, 40, told the Sun Sentinel Thursday in his first public interview.

He bicycles by the spot where he killed



LeVin