



Transforming street children into world-class chefs

Date : 14 mai 2015

Média : <http://www.philstar.com/>



Chef Alain Ducasse with the Tuloy sa Don Bosco Culinary Arts students

In 1999, chef Alain Ducasse set up the Alain Ducasse Institute at Enderun Colleges. This was the first Ducasse Institute outside France and it's now the Institute's hub in Southeast Asia. Aside from being a chef with 21 Michelin stars, Ducasse has a big heart. He set up the school to help expand his knowledge to the next generation, and to upgrade the standards and open up opportunities in his establishments and his global networks. To add to that vision, he went a step further and opened this opportunity up to street children from Tuloy Sa Don Bosco Culinary Arts School in a program called "Youth with a Future." Its mission is "transforming street children of the past into world-class chefs of the future."

This was patterned after chef Alain's "Women with a Future" program that he started in Paris to allow a select group of underprivileged women to train for a year and have a chance to apprentice in one of his establishments.

Locally, he chose Tuloy Foundation because of its advocacy of giving street children a chance for a bright future through their comprehensive program of caring, healing and teaching. Fr. Rocky Evangelista, founder of Tuloy Foundation, said there are three qualifications to be a Tuloy Foundation student: you must be hopelessly poor, you must want to have a better life, and you must be willing to obey the rules.

Chef Ducasse came to the Philippines in March 2014 to visit Tuloy Foundation and launch Youth with a Future. It was such a touching event. I asked him why he chose the Philippines as the first Ducasse Education site and he said, "People are smiling all the time." At the same time, during his visit, there was a charity dinner and auction wherein he donated meals from his restaurants all over the world, as well as books and memorabilia to be auctioned. The students go through an eight-month program at Tuloy sa Don Bosco Culinary Arts School and then another three months at Alain Ducasse Institute in Enderun. The first batch of 10 students graduated from the Alain Ducasse Institute through the Youth with a Future initiative in June 2014 and we celebrated with a delicious meal prepared by the graduates themselves. Each of the graduates was awarded a Certificate of Culinary Arts from Alain Ducasse Education in France.

The learning does not end there, though: after graduating, the 10 graduates were given internships at Raffles and Fairmont Makati, Vask, Chateau 1771 and Prego Ristorante. After the internship, six of them were eventually hired locally while four are currently working at the Four Seasons Resort Dubai at Jumeirah Beach.

A year later, the next batch of 10 scholars started their three-month program at the Alain Ducasse Institute after the successful two-night fundraising event, Laksa Night, held last April. Chefs See Cheong Yan and Marc Chalopin cooked a simple yet sumptuous four-course dinner of Shanghai pork and garlic stem ravioli in tomato syrup, curry laksa, chicken rice and *babba au rum*. Some batch mates and I came to support the event and we got a table. You, too, can be a part of this great initiative. There will be many more opportunities to dine and enjoy while at the same time helping a good cause. Or just donate and sponsor a scholar.