

Surplus hotel food feeds the needy



DAVID PARKER
AROUND TOWN

While **Didier Luneau**, general manager of the Westin Calgary Hotel was running Le Centre Sheraton Montreal, he was approached by **Alain Archambault**, who had an idea to create an organization that would distribute surplus food from hotels and restaurants to local shelters.

The initiative was launched three years ago as La Tablee des Chefs and Luneau committed his hotel property as the first in Montreal to implement the program. It was hugely successful and is providing some 200,000 portions of nutritious food a year to the community.

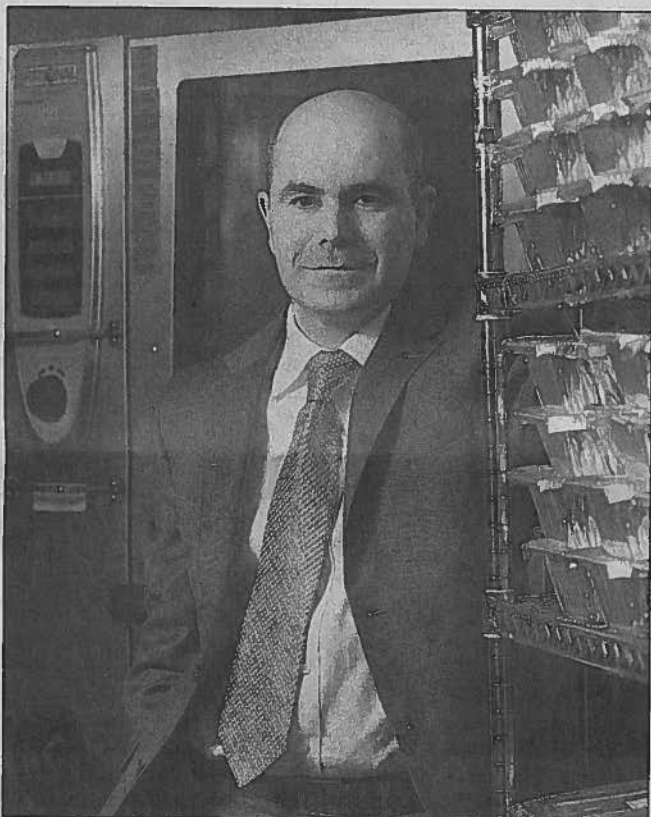
Luneau approached his kitchen staff at the Westin with the idea of launching The Chef Table in Calgary and he says there were cheers in the kitchen as he explained how 300 to 400 portions of their creations could be transported to the Calgary Drop-In Centre each week.

Extra food is always prepared for the many banquets held at any hotel and at the end of the day cooked food has to be thrown out. Food that has left the kitchen is not salvageable, including any that has been set out in buffet style. But no chef wants to see a creation headed for the landfill and, after a three-week pilot, good food is being efficiently and safely delivered to the centre that serves more than 3,000 meals each day to its clients.

Any surplus food at the Westin is frozen throughout the week in hygienic containers that can hold eight to 10 servings each. On Friday mornings, hotel supplier Bow River Foods picks them up in a refrigerated truck — donating time and the vehicle — and delivers them to the Calgary Drop-In Centre for its culinary staff to freeze and re-heat as necessary.

Meat, fish and vegetables and lots of baked goods that would have been dumped are now providing tasty nutrition to people that surely need it, and the centre is able to use money it would use on food for its other operations.

Luneau is well aware of the success and the benefits realized by the Montreal organization's positive impact on the lives of the less fortunate. La Tablee des Chefs mobilizes chefs, cooks and confectioners in the redistribution of food surpluses



Ted Rhodes, Calgary Herald

Westin hotel general manager Didier Luneau with frozen trays of food to be sent to the Calgary Drop-In Centre.

as well as in the preparation of ready-to-eat meals to profit food banks.

He says that after a couple more months to iron out any wrinkles with The Chefs Table that is enabling his hotel staff to help in the fight against hunger, he will approach his colleagues in the Calgary Hotel Association to form a sustainable food brokerage service throughout the city. Luneau has a vision to add many other hotels and restaurants to join the initiative and with sponsorship, perhaps purchase a refrigerated vehicle that could be used as a regular pickup service to other shelters.

After spending 19 years working with major construction contractors, **Milan Niksic** left Clark Builders to teach construction management and estimating at SITT Polytechnic.

Now, after three years at the institution, he has re-joined the private sector as vice-president, preconstruction at Devitt & Forand Contractors.

It was only last November that I mentioned **Wendy Brownie** had opened her new Inspirati fine linen store in the Devenish building. What has become a destination shop for quality tablecloths, place settings, table runners and sheets has already outgrown the space and has relocated along 4th Street SW. in the building that houses Masters Gallery.

Rotary International president **Kalyan Banerjee** visited Calgary last week to recognize southern Alberta Rotarians for their outstanding commitment

in raising over \$2 million for the work of the International Rotary Foundation.

Ken Hughes, founder and president of Alpine Insurance & Financial, and **Cam Clay**, founder and president of Westland Insurance (Alberta), have merged their brokerages.

Both are equal partners in the new venture; Hughes as chairman and CEO and Clay as president and COO.

The new combined insurance brokerage will deliver nearly \$50 million worth of insurance products to approximately 25,000 clients across Alberta. It will operate under the Alpine Insurance & Financial name with five locations and 65 employees across the province in Calgary, Canmore, Edmonton, Lethbridge and Red Deer.

DAVID PARKER APPEARS TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND FRIDAY. READ HIS COLUMNS ONLINE AT CALGARY-HERALD.COM/BUSINESS. HE CAN BE REACHED AT 403-830-4622 OR E-MAIL INFO@DAVIDPARKER.CA

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