

# WHITTIER CHEF SERVES UP LESSONS TO LOCAL KIDS

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Seta chef Hugo Molina Ariel Hendrick, 9, how to make a heart-shaped pizza at the Boys & Girls Club of Whittier Jan. 27, 2010. (SGVN/Staff photo by Leo Jarzomb)

WHITTIER - Members of the Boys & Girls Club of Whittier learned recently that pizza doesn't always come in a box - whether frozen or delivered.

As part of the club's continuing efforts to show its members there's more to life beyond sports and video games, they participated in a cooking class.

Chef Hugo Molina, executive chef at Uptown Whittier's Set restaurant, conducted two cooking classes.

The first session catered to preteens age 9 through 12, and the second session involved the club's teenagers.

"It was fun and very cool that we got to meet Chef Molina," said Deanna Hall, 11. "I also loved that he didn't just show us how to make the pizzas, but we were able to learn by doing it ourselves."

Chef Molina's cooking class was part of the club's 2010 Professional Series.

This special series was created last year in an effort to share the talents of a variety of professionals with club members.

"These experts come from diverse and rich backgrounds within the performing and visual arts, literature, sports, culinary, and other professions that our club members wouldn't normally be exposed to through their school or home life," said Samantha Ridout, BGCW executive director.

"Set is pleased to partner with the Boys & Girls Club of Whittier and believes that every child deserves a chance for success," said Jeen Jimenez, co-owner of Set .

During their one hour "Culinary School of Pizza Design,"

club members learned how to prepare pizza dough from scratch.

They were encouraged to open their minds and explore new tastes such as gouda and brie cheeses, shitake mushrooms and sun-dried tomatoes.

The kids discussed the variety of sauces that can be used to make gourmet pizzas.

And finally, they created their own masterpieces in BGCW's state-of-the-art Lion's Club kitchen.

"It was great being able to learn from such an experienced chef," said 16-year-old Edward Avalos, who is also a student at California High School's Culinary Arts Academy. "I can't wait to tell my teacher what I learned in Chef Molina's class."

Molina's teaching technique emphasized pulling the kids out of their comfort zone by using ingredients they may not have tasted before.

"Imagination is the key to many things in life," he said.

"How do you know you don't like something if you don't try it?" Molina asked. "And how do you know something is impossible if you don't first imagine it and then believe in yourself."

Ridout explained that the BGCW is focused on engaging and encouraging youths between the ages of 7 and 18 years.

"Our curriculum is centered around our five core areas of programming," she said.

They are education and career development, character and leadership development, visual and performing arts, sports, fitness and recreation and health and life skills.

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