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Local promotions announced at Park Hyatt St Kitts

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International chef shares cooking tips with local staff

BASSETERRE, St Kitts — The high percentage of local labour at the Park Hyatt St Kitts can be attributed to a continuous strategy designed to train and encourage local employment. This strategy includes the recent promotions of more than 50 staff to more senior positions, continuing efforts to help develop a hospitality school, and a holistic approach to sustainable development in the Federation.

“It’s not by accident that we have a very strong focus on Kittitians and Nevisians,” said Mohammed Asaria of Range Developments, the developer of luxury hotel resorts in the Caribbean. “This been at the heart of our planning, which included a strong focus on training, at the outset, during construction and in the future. We were adamant we wanted to give guests the full Caribbean experience, and to be successful we needed local team members versed with international standards. It is no coincidence that more than 90 percent of our staff is Kittitians and Nevisians.”

Recent staff promotions include Nicola Michael to lead bartender, original position bartender; Christel Joseph to sales administrative assistant from human resource coordinator; Zoralitta Marsham to housekeeping supervisor from room attendant; Kishma Fahie to housekeeping supervisor, original position resort host; Yanero Henry to front office supervisor from resort host; Shanarda Daniel to reservations agent, originally Camp Hyatt attendant; Shelisia Glasford promoted to guest experience manager, original position housekeeping supervisor; Pedro Broadbelt to event services manager, from stewarding manager; and Terrance Dasent promoted to Jnr. sous chef, from culinary supervisor. “What truly energizes me is that fact that many of our associates are eager to learn and elevate themselves through dedicated, responsible and hard work,” said Flor van der Vaart, general manager of the Park Hyatt St Kitts. “It is always great to see the growth in people and have them pass their perceived potential and find out that they are capable of doing so much more.”

To achieve such high local content of Kittian and Nevisian employees, teams of trainers visited the local districts to scout for potential candidates. Working closely with the CFBC Hospitality School, a series of talks and lectures were developed. Open days were put on, with up to 60 percent of students at one such event being offered jobs at the resort.

A series of other measures, such as installing Wi-Fi in the Hospitality School so that students could watch training videos, sending a student to the US to acquire the required certification to teach other cooks, and working with street vendors to increase their understanding of the levels of hygiene required by visitors to the island. This was all in addition to the hotel's own shuttle from Nevis to ensure workers from Nevis can reach the hotel without any inconvenience.

This focus on hospitality training by Range Developments has been extended with its partnership with the Six Senses, which is about to start construction on the Six Senses St Kitts. A CFBC hospitality student, Wycliffe Clarke, won a scholarship to study at the Six Senses Zil Pasyon in the Seychelles. He will spend the next six months at the Six Senses Zil Pasyon so he can continue his practical education at one of the finest resorts in the world.

As well as Range's efforts prior to the opening of the Park Hyatt St Kitts, task force members from Hyatt hotels from across the world worked with more than 225 staff on many skills, including service protocols, compliance and safety training.

The St Kitts Nevis Red Cross team came to the resort to train staff in CPR/AED (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation/Automated External Defibrillator) and certify them as first responders.

There were trainers from software and chemical vendors to educate teams about their products, benefits and correct usage protocols or procedures.

Two bar specialists from Diageo Reserve took master classes in spirits, cocktails, bar skills, bar setups and equipment not only for bartenders, but also for servers and hostesses.

One of the unique aspects of the pre-opening training was to enhance the knowledge about the destination. Leonard Stapleton, a well known island historian, was invited to share with colleagues the history and culture of St Kitts and Nevis. This was extremely well received, with many saying that they weren't aware of many of the facets of the rich cultural heritage of their own country.

Most of this training was experiential and involved role play, fun activities and on the shop floor training. Having the liberty of extensive training from experts and Hyatt colleagues with years of hospitality experience in a hotel, ensured that colleagues saw world class service standards being displayed at actual service locations rather than in a classroom and without the fear of inconveniencing the guests.

"Training is key to any service industry and this was no exception," Asaria said. "Since opening in November last year the hotel has benefitted from all the programmes underway, as the best team members never stop learning."

Park Hyatt colleagues continue to be immersed in monthly training, which includes topics such as complaint handling, communicating effectively and creating connections.

"The evolution of service delivery knows no finish line," said a Park Hyatt spokesperson.



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