



Foodie delights for brave Sam with Starlight!

On Tuesday 18 February, a brave young foodie from Ware in Hertfordshire enjoyed a once-in-a-lifetime experience at two of London's finest food establishments, Allen's of Mayfair and The Connaught – a special day out that was organised for him by Starlight Children's Foundation, the UK's leading wish granting charity for children and young people with serious and terminal illnesses.

12 year old Samuel Collins, or Sam as he is known to his family and friends, was diagnosed with Ewings sarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer, in his right pelvis in October 2012. To fight the disease, he has undergone a gruelling course of chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment and a hemipelvectomy to replace part of his pelvis with bone from his leg in June 2013.

Although he has been very brave during his treatment, Sam has found it really tough. The treatment has made him feel very poorly and, as a hemipelvectomy is a very rare and invasive procedure, it is taking Sam a long time to recover from the surgery.

Sam loves cooking and he particularly likes meat and good British food, such as stew and dumplings, sausages and meat pies. He is really interested in the preparation of meat and he enjoys reading about the subject in his favourite cookbook, *The River Cottage Meat Book* by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall.

Sam was referred to Starlight and the charity organised a special day of gastronomic delights in London for him. First stop was London's finest butcher, Allen's of Mayfair, where Sam and his dad Kris enjoyed an exclusive butchery lesson from the owner of Allen's, Justin Preston, and his team. Located on Mount Street, Allen's is the oldest butcher in London and it counts footballers, politicians and television stars amongst its patrons. Dressed the part in an apron and with a butcher's metal mesh glove, Sam learnt to prepare a number of lamb and beef cuts and got to ask the experts lots of questions about butchery!

At lunchtime, Sam was invited across the street to world famous hotel, The Connaught. Taking with him a very special piece of meat that he had prepared at Allen's, a delicious T-bone steak, Sam and his dad Kris enjoyed a wonderful experience in the kitchens of H  l  ne Darroze at The Connaught, the stunning restaurant of its two Michelin-starred namesake, H  l  ne Darroze.

Alex Gilling, Head Chef at H  l  ne Darroze at The Connaught, showed Sam how to cook the steak, before serving it to him and his dad with a scrumptious accompaniment of black truffle mashed potato and broccoli. Sam enjoyed eating his steak, whilst getting to watch the chefs prepare the lunch service orders. After the delicious main course, they enjoyed a medley of mouth-watering desserts!

Afterwards, Sam's dad Kris said, *"Sam is fascinated by the world of food and it was an amazing chance for him to see behind the scenes at two of London's most prestigious culinary institutions. Thank you to Starlight for this fantastic opportunity and to Allen's of Mayfair and The Connaught for such a memorable experience – he has not stopped talking about it since!"*

Justin Preston, Owner of Allen's of Mayfair, said, *"I have been a supporter of Starlight's for a while now and it was a great pleasure to be able to help the charity create this special experience for*

Sam. He is a very courageous young man and it was inspirational to see, first hand, how Starlight makes a difference to brave children and young people like Sam."

Alex Gilling, Head Chef at H el ene Darroze at The Connaught, "We were delighted to be able to invite Sam into the kitchen at H el ene Darroze. We had fun cooking the delicious steak he had prepared at Allen's and I was pleased to be able to share some of our favourite desserts with him. As he is really interested in gastronomy, we hope that the visit gave Sam lots of food for thought!"

Information

To refer a child for a wish or to make a donation, please go online at www.starlight.org.uk. For every  1 you donate, 92p goes towards helping Starlight's very ill children.

For more information, please contact Henny Vere Nicoll at henny@starlight.org.uk / 020 7262 2881 # 231.

Starlight grants once-in-a-lifetime wishes for seriously and terminally ill children, restoring the magic and fun of childhood and giving the whole family happy memories to share, whatever the future holds. Starlight also creates entertainment in every hospital and hospice throughout the UK.

Sick children go to Starlight parties, laugh their way through pantomimes, go out on Starlight Escapes, play games and watch films on the Starlight Fun Centre, and enjoy the toys and puzzles of the Starlight Distraction Box. Happy children respond better to treatment and Starlight helps children to forget about their illness and simply have a bit of fun.