



by **BETH SCHOTT**

# Let's Move!

## Local chefs team with Michelle Obama to help fight childhood obesity

the challenge of childhood obesity.

Let's Move! is taking a comprehensive approach to engaging as many areas as possible that impact the health of children. Among them are empowering parents and caregivers, increasing physical activity, improving access to healthy, affordable foods and providing healthy foods in school.

That's where the hundreds of chefs from across nation come in. They were invited to a White House ceremony on June 4 where the First Lady encouraged them to go back into their local communities and schools to spread the message of healthy eating.

Citrullo plans on contacting local elementary schools and offering to make regular visits to come speak with the children about food, nutrition and what they should be eating.

"We can do career days or set something up right in the classroom," said Citrullo. "Whatever they would let us do, we will be happy to help with." He also hopes to spread the message by continuing to showcase the nutritious food turned out by his

chronic obesity-related health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and asthma.

These are some of the culprits cited in the Let's Move initiative: Fewer kids are walking to and from school every day, running around at recess, participating in gym class, and playing outside, opting instead to spend time in front of televisions and video screens. Busier parents mean fewer meals cooked at home, and more fast food. In addition, food and drink portions are two-to-five times bigger than they used to be.

Shelley Nachum is a Personal Chef who runs "Short on Thyme" in Delray Beach. She says a program like "Chefs Move to Schools" is long overdue, and is a great way for her to use her skills to help children slim down.

"It is very disheartening to see what is going on with all these kids and the obesity epidemic," said Nachum.

Nachum traveled to Washington D.C. June 4 when first lady Michelle Obama unveiled the program. She says the experience of being at the White House with hundreds of other chefs was "surreal" and found one of the highlights to be seeing the green, lush, and overflowing, White House garden.

"There is a little of everything growing. They had broccoli, Swiss chard, cauliflower, berries, carrots, beans and so much more," she said.

Initially, chefs in the Chef's Move to Schools program were told they would be matched up with local schools to work with, but Nachum said that hasn't been the case. Like Citrullo, she is contacting local elementary schools in her neighborhood to see if they will let her come in once or twice a month, and plant some new food ideas in the kids heads.

"Maybe we can talk to them about nutrition, where foods come from, different types of food, and hold cooking classes and demonstrations so they understand about food, and where it comes from," she said.

She said many children in today's society simply don't know where their food comes from, even the vegetables they push around on their plate.

"If they are involved in the process, maybe we can get them to eat it," she said.

Two local chefs are ready to dig in and take part in a national effort to get our nation's schoolchildren eating better. V. Paul Citrullo and Shelley Nachum are among hundreds of chef who are volunteering their time and culinary efforts as part of a national adopt-a-school program called "Chefs Move to Schools."

"It is something that we as chefs are passionate about," said Citrullo, who is an Chef Instructor and head of the Culinary Arts Program at McFatter Technical Center and Technical High School in Davie.

The initiative is an off-shoot of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!" campaign which was started with the ambitious national goal of solving

culinary students, which is served to many people on the school campus.

Citrullo is a member of the American Culinary Foundation, a group that he says for years has run a similar program called "Chef to Child" across the nation that focused on feeding kids in need and teaching them about good nutrition.

It's a lesson that is long overdue in the United States, and the major reason behind the Let's Move! campaign. According to statistics provided by the White House, childhood obesity rates in America over the last decade have tripled, and today, nearly one in three children in America are overweight or obese. One third of all children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives; many others will face

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**Pictured – Chef Shelley Nachum outside the White House in June. Photo courtesy of Shelly Nachum.**