

New Restaurant Dining Programs Foster Resident Independence and Dignity

Beginning in late fall, The Bernard L. Samson Nursing Center will initiate a restaurant-style dining program. The program, already in effect at both of Menorah Manor's assisted living communities (The Toby Weinman Assisted Living Residence and The Inn on the Pond), will provide residents with a dining experience that preserves dignity and provides choice. Menu options will be offered for a week, along with daily specials. Residents will be served by staff who provide personalized service.

In coordination with the restaurant-style dining program, Menorah Manor has introduced a program for residents on a puree diet. Pureed foods often make eating less enjoyable, which may create problems in maintaining a healthy diet and socializing while dining. The new puree dining program allows the foods to resemble non-pureed meals through specialized products and tools, and culinary creativity. Already the feedback from the residents has been very positive.

Bill Caldwell, Director of Dining Services, has been a leading force with the puree dining program. He states, "When going through the process of identifying our dining service goals and objectives, we saw an opportunity to enhance the dining service meal program while simultaneously preserving resident dignity. We involved our healthcare vendor partners and relied upon their professional expertise for selecting products and puree preparation methods. We then involved our professional resource chef and relied upon his culinary expertise for developing recipes and production models. We solicited the support and guidance of the chief clinical dietitian and speech therapists to ensure that we were able to support our objectives for enhancing the flavor profile, appearance and nutritional content."

After determining the amount of work involved, a full-time position was created solely dedicated to the puree dining program. The puree specialist position requires dedication, attention to detail, portion precision and knowledge in plate presentation. Our puree specialist has over seven years of experience in food service environments and understands the importance of food presentation for the program.

Both programs, the restaurant-style dining and puree programs, will ensure that residents of all Menorah Manor communities are able to have a positive dining experience.