

Cura Hospitality Introduces Connections, Memory Support Dining

By Grace Zarnas-Hoyer

A whopping 70 million baby boomers are embarking on a path where growing older gracefully will be their new goal. As with any goal, challenges will present themselves along the way. And, Alzheimer's will not only be a wave that baby boomers may have to ride out. It's a disease that has currently struck over five million Americans. In fact, every five years, the incidents of Alzheimer's doubles because of this group's huge demographic. Without a cure, 35 million baby boomers at some level will be affected.

Members of Cura Hospitality, a food service management firm that specializes in senior living and healthcare, have followed this fast and furious trend that is here to stay. With creative attention, research and testing, Cura developed Connections, Memory Support Dining, the first program of its kind designed specifically for use in the hospitality setting.

According to Josh Crandall, Cura director of partnership development and memory support project leader, more than 50% of the communities Cura serve have or are planning specialized care for adults with memory impairment. Currently, Cura is serving over 700 dementia care residents and this will increase by 30% over the next five years. Additionally according to the Alzheimer's Association almost half of all people 85 and older have Alzheimer's disease Crandall and co-memory support project leader, Deb Santoro, who is an RD, LDN, SPHR and Cura's director of staff development, wanted to enhance their current skilled and personal-care assisted living offerings, which include an award-winning culture change guide; Puree Creations SM, that meets the challenge of adequately nourishing residents with dysphasia; and framing food in brightly colored tableware to increase caloric intake. "Food and hospitality is an integral piece to the memory support unit. It's one of the major activities that senior living residents look forward to. And, for the Alzheimer's resident, it sadly may be the only form of social interaction," said Crandall.

CREATING THE CONNECTION

To fully understand the dynamics of a person afflicted with Alzheimer's, Crandall, Ms. Santoro and members of Cura's leadership team, toured and trained at the Alzheimer's Resource Center in Plantsville, Conn. in 2012. "In addition to being a community that cares for Alzheimer's residents, a big part of their mission is in training and consulting nationwide," said Ms. Santoro. Cura's goal was to benchmark off the Alzheimer's Resource Center to meet the ever-changing hospitality needs of residents as they progress through the stages of dementia.

The group met with Kelly Papa, director of education, research and dementia care consulting, where Cura leaders were able to put themselves in the residents' shoes. "Going through the day as a resident, allows our visitors to experience the level of care that our staff provides and to make the emotional connection with our residents," said Ms. Papa. "The Cura group stood out as people who were the most dedicated and sincere in finding innovative ways to serve these residents with personalized care, dignity and compassion."

CONNECTIONS, MEMORY SUPPORT DINING

Working with The Alzheimer's Resource Center inspired Cura's memory support task force and its dining leaders to take what they had learned to a new level. The word "Connection" had struck an emotional chord with the Cura team. So much so, that after dedicated research and development, Cura's *Connections, Memory Support Dining*, was launched in August 2012. Complete with action plans, sample planning check lists and easy step-by-step training, long-term care professionals hit the ground running, wasting no time to implement these progressive tools in their communities.

Conversation Starters is one of the tools that have been extremely popular as a way to generate a conversation. Conversations Starters are 5x8 cards that feature full-color photos in a retro design from the residents' era including holiday gatherings, sports and recreation, occupations, and even military memories. Below each photo are a series of questions about the photo that a staff member can ask a resident to help them make "connections" to something similar in their past in an effort to encourage a conversation. As Alzheimer's disease affects recent memories first, the ability to recollect things that happened in the past is much more resistant. "Conversation Starters is not a foreign concept, but introducing images that residents can reconnect with their earlier life is new and promotes a positive emotion," said Ms. Santoro. Currently, Conversation Starters are being used at Sycamore Manor Health Center, a community in Montoursville, PA, that serves 26 dementia residents. "We have used the cards on many occasions and have found they are great for starting a conversation. Our residents enjoy the pictures and reminiscing about them," said Debbie Boush, certified activity assistant at Sycamore Manor.

Aroma therapy is another tool that Cura's Connections incorporates to encourage eating, a common behavioral problem associated with the disease. The goal is to

See **CURA** On **Page 18**



VIRTUALOFFICEWARE, INC.

Where Talent Meets Success

Human Resources Consulting Services Division

Helping your business climb to new heights

- * Executive Search & Contract Staffing
- * HR Project Management
- * HR Support Services
- * HR Audits
- * HR Training Services



Learn more...**888.950.0688 x 161**
or visit
Virtualofficeware.net/HR-Consulting-Services

THE PARIS ADVANTAGE!



**We Are a Linen Partner
Committed to Your Success.
That's the Paris Advantage.**

At Paris, we have a proven track record of providing on-premise laundries dramatic savings through our linen rental programs.

For more information, and for a **FREE evaluation** of your present linen management system, please contact **Joe Shough** at **800-832-2306** or **jshough@parisco.com**.





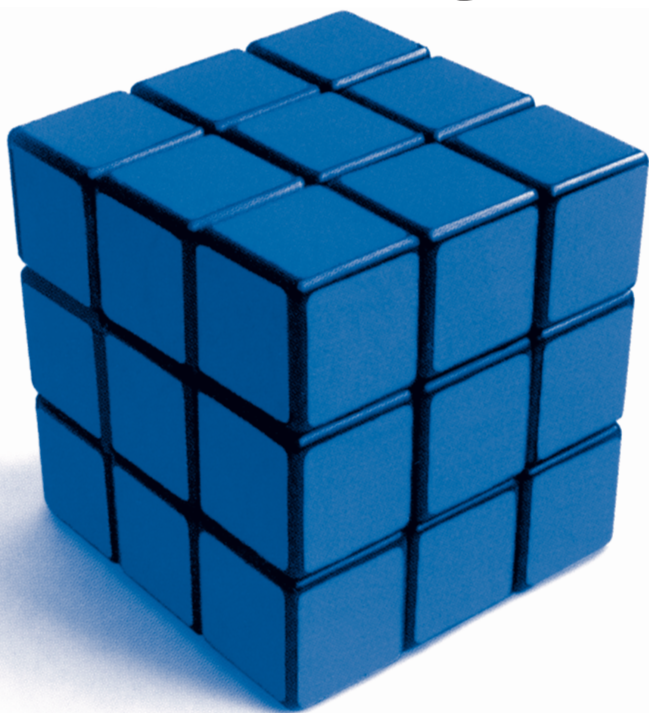


Partners in Linen Management

www.parisco.com

PARIS HEALTHCARE LINEN HAS PROUDLY SERVED THE MID-ATLANTIC REGION SINCE 1951.

If you think linen service should be easy... you're right



With our SmartLinen service, CleanCare makes linen easy again

If you think all linen services are the same, think again. You don't need to live with frustration or tolerate screwups month after month. SmartLinen combines the finest products with cutting-edge inventory management to make your linen service as easy as it should be. With just one phone call, your linen hassles disappear forever.

800.222.7600 | www.clnicare.com



CURA From Page 18

create natural food smells, like cooking-off the bacon or baking items an hour or so prior to the serving the meal to help stimulate the residents' appetites. "Care givers might encourage residents to identify the aroma or comment on how wonderful the smell is of cookies baking," said Ms. Santoro. Crock pots are also being used to simmer herbs, chicken stock and vegetables so that the smells permeate throughout the community. According to a programming coordinator at The Bridges at Bent Creek in Mechanicsburg, PA, "the winter menu cycles featured more stews and pot pie recipes, so when the crock pots were filled with these savory ingredients, the residents noticed the aromas more by asking questions like 'what's for supper and when do we eat?'" When pies, cakes and cobblers were on the menu, the residents commented on the smells of baking and how it reminded them about cooking and baking at home for their children and husbands.

To encourage residents to consume adequate calories, a Walking Food program was also created to provide nutritious snacks that can be consumed "on-the-go". This program is ideal for residents with dementia who often experience difficulty sitting for an extended period of time to dine, and thus may not consume adequate nutrition during meal periods. Focusing more on preparation techniques, Andrew Kendall, Cura director of dining services, is giving a new purpose to the common pretzel rod. An idea he was able to share from the Alzheimer's Resource Center, Kendall turns the pretzel rod into a skewer that holds pieces of grilled chicken.

Common Shepherds Pie also receives a refresh – the onion, ground beef and carrots are stuffed into a pasta pocket, while the gravy is used as a dipping sauce. Since pocket sandwiches are popular, Kendall even purchased a 50's style sandwich maker so they can incorporate creative sandwiches. The Connections walking food component features recipes such as vegetarian spring rolls, crab and cream cheese wontons, chicken tacos and French toast fingers with fruit dips.

Kitchen Connections is another tool being offered as a way to encourage residents to participate and emphasize positive culinary experiences from their past. Just recently, residents assisted dining staff in the preparation of lemon lush. "While we prepared the ingredients, we chatted about the recipe's history. Through this simple activity, our residents offered six different recipes and instructions on how to bake lemon lush, including a resident who we discovered had authored a cookbook 30 years ago," said Kendall.

To complement the meal, *Musical Memories* recommendations were created as a resource for staff, families and volunteers to assist in the understanding of the positive impact of music during meal times and throughout the day.

For more information, visit www.curahospitality.com. 📌

Make a Difficult Discussion Easier

Hospice Discussion Guide Gets Patients and Families Talking

Patients and families often need help understanding the facts about hospice. In fact, many people are confused about what hospice is and how to make the most of all it has to offer.

Filled with conversation topics, this **free downloadable guide** helps healthcare professionals address hospice issues with patients and their loved ones. It's a structured way to help patients and families make informed decisions about end-of-life care—and make a difficult conversation easier on everyone.

There are three easy ways to share this guide with your patients and their loved ones:

1. Download ***Considering Hospice Care: A Discussion Guide for Families***, print it, then distribute it to appropriate patients or families when you visit with them.
2. Forward your patients the link so they can download the Guide at home.
3. Download the Guide and forward it to your patients as an attachment.

Innovative
Hospice Care®
VITAS®



Download the
Discussion Guide at
hospicecanhelp.com
or scan the QR code
with iPhone or Android.

For more information please call 1.800.723.3233

