

ST. AGNES MED. CTR.'s 'DESTINATION 10':

GEARING UP TO SUPERIOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Last June, the nutrition department at St. Agnes Medical Center in Fresno, CA launched a challenging new program called: Destination 10. Its goal: "To be the best in the business in patient and customer service."

St. Agnes is a 323-bed Holy Cross Health Care facility. The f/s department (85 full-time employees) operates a private dining room for physicians, an off-site delicatessen and an off-premise catering business on top of an active employee cafeteria and patient tray-line.

Last year, it prepared 721,089 meals in the middle of a major remodeling and expansion program.

New look at foodservice: "The changes in health care in the U.S. in the past 10 years have forced healthcare facilities to compete for every type of resource, especially patients," points out food Sue Walker, RD. "Patients, as customers, expect more from their healthcare providers today."

St. Agnes already enjoyed a high image in the community for its food operations, but Walker felt it was time to raise it a few notches. That's when she brought in Chef Don Miller, through his Rent-a-Chef consulting program—and the idea of Destination 10 was born, she says.

Rate yourself: "One of the first things we did was to ask Sue and her staff to rate themselves—on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being best in the business," Miller recalls. The St. Agnes staff gave itself a grade of "7," with "room for improvement." Miller says he agreed with the assessment.

Walker and her team decided their goal was to be a "10" in customer service—and that they wanted to hit the ground running.

"This project will actually take 2 to 3 years to complete," Miller says. "The most important first step is to get the entire staff involved and excited—and to take ownership of the project. All I do is provide some kind of fuel-injection and stir-up culinary ideas and service attitudes while I'm involved."

"The program involves thinking-through what we do and how we accomplish various tasks—how we

3 NEW-LOOK PLATES AT ST. AGNES

BEFORE		
 <p style="font-size: 8px; text-align: center;">Chicken, Rice, Veg, Fruit BEFORE</p>	 <p style="font-size: 8px; text-align: center;">Chicken, Rice, Veg, Fruit BEFORE</p>	 <p style="font-size: 8px; text-align: center;">Chicken, Rice, Veg, Fruit BEFORE</p>
AFTER		
 <p style="font-size: 8px; text-align: center;">Chicken, Rice, Veg, Fruit AFTER</p> <p style="font-size: 8px; text-align: center;">"The 3-oz. chicken slices were hidden under the lettuce before," Chef Miller points out. "Now, it's in full view and 'topped up' with garnish tricks using radish and black olives."</p>	 <p style="font-size: 8px; text-align: center;">Chicken, Rice, Veg, Fruit AFTER</p> <p style="font-size: 8px; text-align: center;">"Before, the plate simply wasn't balanced or eye-catching. It didn't have enough color. Using the same components, the modified chicken plate is now more appetizing and appealing."</p>	 <p style="font-size: 8px; text-align: center;">Chicken, Rice, Veg, Fruit AFTER</p> <p style="font-size: 8px; text-align: center;">"Before-version had too much food and no focus. New plate saves 25% in food-cost by using three quarters instead of four. It's dressed-up with cucumber, carrot, black olive and radish."</p>

might consolidate efforts—and put greater focus on the patient services we currently offer, everything from how our plates look to how the servers on the line are dressed."

Customer-focused ideas: Over the past 5 months, the cafeteria has introduced a series of customer-focused food lines and items as part of its push toward Destination 10.

- New breakfast specials, muffin and cookie bars feature fresh-baked products that are prepared on-site...plus a stepped-up line of monotony-breakers and weekly theme-days that feature Italian, Mexican and Armenian foods.

- Walker is also exploring the potentials for a mini-market and take-out as "plus" customer services.

- "Patient foodservice, chef Don's

focus during his week with us, benefited in a number of areas. We put in new tray-top arrangements (tray mats and coordinated napkins) to dress-up the look of the meal."

- "Chef Don also prepared a 'photo album' of ideas the staff can use to prepare different plates—to assure consistency of the finished product (photos above)."

And Walker introduced a new taste-test panel made up of members from all areas of the hospital. "It's proven to be a true learning experience for staffs from other areas when they find out that something they really dislike receives positive votes from other reviewers."

'Little changes' count: Other changes on the cafeteria line include:

- Shifting typical hot-service items,

like chicken, vegetables and rice, to self-service.

- Adding several rotating self-service bars for popular items like pasta and fruit.

- Marketing the "pizzazz" of cookies-right-from-the-oven and the aroma of "home-made muffins."

"They're not all major changes. But it's really interesting to see how little changes can actually make a big difference," Walker points out. "Little things like not forgetting to add salt to the water when you cook pasta...or else you have bland pasta."

For more information about RENT-A-CHEF, contact chef Don Miller at: 619-691-8927, 136 Ranier Ct., Chula Vista, CA 91911