

Make Your Mark Webinar Series: Hospitality

March 10, 2020

Enhance Hospitality Tip Sheet

Nutrition services authorized under Title III-C of the Older Americans Act are designed to promote the general health and well-being of older adults. The services are intended to reduce hunger and food insecurity, promote socialization, and delay the onset of adverse health conditions. Congregate meal sites offer nutritious meals to promote health and interactions with others to increase socialization.

Hospitality is key to creating a welcoming environment that makes participants want to attend. Hospitality is the relationship between a guest and a host or better said, an older adult and the congregate site. The site receives the guest with goodwill, including the reception and entertainment of the attendees. Small changes can make a big difference in creating a memorable experience.

Enhance Hospitality

- **First Impressions.** Assign a host or greeter to welcome and help seat guests. Host/greeter should have a great smile and natural sociability. Greet guests with a friendly hello and smile. Eye contact is imperative. Always depart with a pleasant “enjoy your meal” and a smile. Host/greeter should be a good multi-tasker to handle all the interactions with guests.
- **Create the Welcome Station.** Move a small podium or desk near your front entrance. Use a ledger, sign-in book, or bar-coded cards (with date, lines for people’s names, arrival times, etc.) to help staff get familiar with guests, help introduce the guests to others and help them feel welcome. To promote socialization, create nametags to encourage conversation.
- **Establish an Atmosphere of Hospitality.** Be creative and add little touches like lighting and centerpieces on tables. For example, string white lights to create ambiance. Centerpieces can be purchased at a local craft store or let guests make as part of an activity.
- **Celebrate Holiday and Special Events.** Everyone loves to celebrate! Create a special event around traditional holidays, birthdays or fun holidays (ex. National Spaghetti Day). Consider a brunch option. Brunch is a cost-effective meal to prepare and people love it. These events don’t have to be on the actual day they fall. Promote, celebrate and dine! For more idea go to the Food Wellness and Nutrition Holiday Hospitality Inspiration Calendar: <https://nutritionandaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Food-Wellness-and-Nutrition-Holiday-Hospitality-Inspiration-Calendar-Final.pdf>.

The Language of Hospitality

“It has been, and continues to be, our responsibility to fill the earth with the light and warmth of hospitality.” – J.W. Marriott



Continue to educate your staff and bring the hospitality mindset into the senior center setting.

Create an event schedule to stimulate interest and coordinate thematic meals

Try varying your service styles-coordinate ideas with food providers

Create an activity that will help decorate the center; i.e. making battery lit lanterns and floral arrangements for center pieces on tables

Engage, engage, engage- listen to the guests