



## **IDEAS TO CREATE A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE FOR CONGREGATE NUTRITION PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

On the March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 webinar *Make Your Mark: Enhance Hospitality*, we posed the question, "In what ways does your organization create a welcoming atmosphere for your congregate nutrition program participants?" We had many great responses from your peers, so we put all those ideas in one place for you.

- Greet clients as they walk into the center, celebrate client's birthdays. Volunteers cater to clients by serving them at their tables.
- Greet and sign in participants, decorate tables and dining area, trivia and game times, sing happy birthday and recognize wedding anniversaries.
- Cherokee Nation Nutrition Centers we decorate all seasons and holidays, plays bingo, make birthday cakes once a month for our elders.
- Smile and greet them by name ask them how they are, Birthday parties, Monthly Evening dinners, with entertainment, centerpieces, great menu, door prizes and entertainment. Doing surveys.
- We decorate our center for highlighted holidays and have a special meal for that holiday. We have a tree up all year and decorate it for each holiday.
- We are in a rural county (Highlands) and have renovated a congregate meal site and branded it as a "farmhouse kitchen".
- At our center we focus on theme days. We focus on holidays we greet people we celebrate birthdays we offer alternate meals.
- We have had staff work as wait staff wearing black and white which is



coordinated with black and white linens/tablecloths.

- We do our three major holiday meals a week before the holiday at our events center with cloth tablecloths, waitresses and more upscale menu. Participants love this.
- We have a volunteer who makes our centerpieces, and she spends a lot of time doing that. We switch them out every few weeks, and they are beautiful.
- I try to make new people feel welcome by putting them with someone that I know would be a good mentor for them. Many people feel uncomfortable coming by themselves.
- I go onto the internet and find word finds, crossword puzzles and other fun activities for people to read, and then I make them into placemats.
- Breakfast ideas.... especially in the morning when they feel alone.
- We do salad bar every day. We also have Lunching with Friends once a month.
- Always decorate for holidays. Acknowledge birthdays with a special dinner.
- Staff makes it a point to welcome each participant as they come in.
- Special meals for fun days example "Beach Party Lunch".
- Halloween Costume contest during lunch.
- On Tuesdays we have person come in and introduce a new dish to our participants with nutritional information. An added enhancement to our Tuesday meals.
- Partner with a farm gleaning program.
- We do a pickup of fresh/fruit veg after our weekly farmer markets.
- We create a welcoming atmosphere by offering salad bar every Wednesday with bible study for congregate dining.
- Matching table clothes and greeter and centerpieces w/ floral



arrangements and play relaxing music to create spa oasis.

- We decorate monthly the saloon.
- We have soup and salad option beside the regular lunches.