

No jello here...

Gourmet chefs reinvent hospital food

by Suzy Devers

Freshly-baked woodstone pizzas from a wood-fired oven, a carving station featuring a 70-pound bone-in flank steak, homemade soups from scratch with fresh noodles and a barista bar offering espresso, cappuccino and other flavored drinks.

Sound like hospital food? Not if the executive chefs at Parker and Littleton Adventist Hospitals have anything to say about it. Instead of bland institutionalized food, these two culinary masters are creating delicious health-conscious fare that's giving hospital food a great name.

An award winning chef at your local hospital?

Chef Dan Skay, a graduate of the prestigious Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York and winner of multiple culinary awards, including, *The Great Chefs of America* award and *Best Colorado Entrée* award, opened Parker Adventist Hospital's Café Peakview, where he designed the menu.

The impressive selection includes such upscale items as fresh hand-stretched mozzarella with smoked tomato coulis and cilantro oil, smoked beef brisket with Yucatan orange chipotle glaze, Irish grilled lamb ribs adorned with edible orchids flown in fresh from Thailand and fresh hearth-baked salmon with fresh Asian vegetables and Indonesian soy.

Skay even picks fresh herbs from Parker Adventist's natural herb garden located right outside the kitchen door. "At Café Peakview we do all small batch cooking to order," Skay says. "You won't find green beans in a steam table here."

Fresh food, great service

Meanwhile, over at Littleton Adventist Hospital, Chef George Carlberg is also doing his part to reinvent hospital food. With three decades of experience cooking creative high-quality cuisine, Carlberg focuses on fresh, nutritious ingredients. "We've almost entirely moved away from processed and canned vegetables," Carlberg says. "The focus is on mouth appeal, taste and nutrition."

In addition to fresh vegetables, Carlberg also uses all-natural angus beef, USDA choice tenderloin, organic chicken and a variety of fresh fruits. Carlberg even shops locally for as many specialty items as he can find. For example, he purchases fresh egg noodles for his soups, special gourmet breads for his sandwiches and natural hand-made tortillas for his fresh burritos—all from local shops.

Carlberg adds, "The business we're in is called 'food service,' so we focus on both". One way he provides excellent service is to offer breakfast, lunch and dinner from 7 a.m. to 7

p.m. “If a patient comes out of surgery at five in the afternoon and craves breakfast, there’s no reason he shouldn’t be able to eat eggs,” Carlberg says.

Carlberg continually works at refining the menu and improving the service. “I have a theory that we may be the only bright spot in a patient’s day,” Carlberg says. “So every day I try to make it better.”

Just what the doctor ordered

Both Chefs also collaborate with dietitians and nutritionists and adhere to the doctor’s orders. For example, if a patient is on a fat-restricted diet, the kitchen will recommend a tasty substitute for fish and chips, such as steamed fish and baked “fries.”

Both executive chefs oversee multiple operations catering to the needs of patients and hospital staff. Parker Adventist Hospital also offers internships for Johnson & Wales University students enrolled in the College of Culinary Arts. “I try to encourage creativity and teach them the use of unique ingredients, like cubeb berries or fresh roasted and ground spices, like garam masala,” says Skay. “I like to give them as much information as possible for a well rounded learning experience.”

Enjoy...

Hungry yet? The cafés are also open to the public. So next time you’re in the mood for a fresh, nutritious meal, think hospital food. You’ll be amazed. The world-class chefs at Littleton Adventist and Parker Adventist Hospitals know how to delight your palette, nourish your body and lift your spirits through their remarkable culinary artistry.