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CRMC Staff Completes Culinary Arts Training

Six members of the Cortland Regional Medical Center (CRMC) Food Service Department are now certified as “Culinary Specialists”. Each of these individuals completed a 10-month culinary arts program that featured classroom training, hands-on experience, and demonstration.

The six new Culinary Specialists are Renee Babel, Jason Grant, Randy Hopkins, Eric Metcalf, Roxanne Price, and Susan Rogers. As part of their training, each of these cooks had to learn about, and then demonstrate proficiency, in 17 different categories, including: equipment handling and use, menu development, cooking fundamentals, recipe interpretation, presentation, and specialty skills (such as pastry and baking, sauces).

“It has been exciting to watch the progress our culinary staff has made,” said Wanda Rawson, CRMC Food Service Coordinator. “They all eagerly accepted the training and saw it as an opportunity to improve their skills. Each one has grown so much and I am very proud of their accomplishments.”

After they completed their training, the six were then assigned a “final exam”, which was to use their new skills to create two complete meals, coordinating all aspects of production. Each of the meals were then judged on the following criteria: appropriateness of choices, presentation and layout, ability to create a cohesive menu and unique recipes, and taste and taste relationships.

According to Rawson, the Culinary Arts training ties into the medical center’s overall efforts to improve patient satisfaction. “We felt that training our cooks in Culinary Arts was important. We really wanted to raise the bar on the quality of our food and the diversity of our

menu to be restaurant caliber, especially since we will be introducing a new hospitality program early next year.”

The new program, Spoken Menu, is a meal service concept that is becoming a major trend in the healthcare industry. The purpose is to serve meals “restaurant style” to patients right on the nursing units. Just prior to each meal service, a portable oven and serving units are brought up to each floor. A Spoken Menu host then visits each patient to review the menu selection for that meal and then take his or her order. The host then fills the order at the serving station and the patient has the meal within minutes.

“Spoken Menu service will cut down dramatically on waiting time for meals and assure that patients are served every meal fresh, and at the proper temperature.” said Rawson. “It is the perfect way to serve the exceptional meals that will be created by our new Culinary Specialists.”

The CRMC Culinary Arts Training Program was conducted by Anthony Volpe, a food and beverage consultant with over 23 years experience in the food service industry. Volpe has worked as an executive chef in restaurants in New York City, New Jersey, and Connecticut, as well as a corporate marketing and concept designer for major food service companies in the U.S. and abroad.

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