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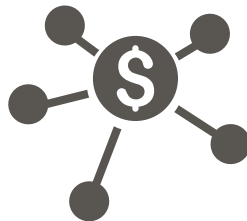


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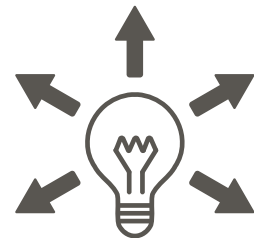
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Published by the Senior Dining Association
www.seniordining.org

Publisher and Founder
Harris Ader
hader@seniordining.org

Editor and Director of Member Engagement
Cheryl Slavinsky
cheryl@seniordining.org

Executive Director of Member Experience
Lori Mason
lori@seniordining.org

Director of Content Strategy & Design
Kelsey Hagon
kelsey@seniordining.org

Director of Creative Services
Omari Brown
omari@seniordining.org

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Harris Ader

With this inaugural issue of *Hospitality & Dining, Enhancing the Senior Living Experience*, I want to thank all of our members, sponsors and industry partners for your partnership this past year. Your dynamic leadership provides us with an opportunity to pursue our passion to educate and unite those dedicated to dining in the senior living industry.

Never has there been a more challenging time to be involved with senior living as an operator or industry partner serving those operators and their communities. The past two years have humbled us all.

The Senior Dining Association continues to have an abundance of gratitude for all the dining professionals and dining partners who have made such a positive impact for the people they have served through such trying times. We proudly applaud their creativity and innovations as they continue to lift spirits among residents and dining teams.

Through it all, the SDA has been able to support hundreds of communities and thousands of residents around the United States and Canada by bringing SDA members together through our workgroups, webinars, and chat sessions. Many dining professionals helped us share stories of triumph and solutions to our growing community of SDA members and friends.

The SDA will host three in-person events this year including Synergy Senior Dining & Hospitality Conference April 18 - 20 in Orlando, FL; SDA ONE DAY: LIVE, September 21 in Charlotte, NC, and our new SDA Workforce & Technology Symposium November 6 - 9 in Las Vegas, NV.

The Workforce & Technology Symposium will bring together senior living leaders from various organizations to uncover solutions for recruiting, training, and retaining top dining talent to remain competitive in the hospitality marketplace. By aligning technology with this initiative, communities can operate their dining program more efficiently and develop new innovations to support the industry.

With your support, we can make a difference in the senior living industry. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve you as we continue to navigate a path together to a bright future.

Happy New Year! We look forward to 2022!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Harris Ader', written in a cursive style.

Harris Ader

Founder, Senior Dining Association

Sharon Towers at SouthPark



Founded in 1969 by Presbyterian leaders, Sharon Towers at SouthPark is a not-for-profit Life Plan Community offering independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing care and short-term rehab on a wooded 32-acre campus in Charlotte, NC.

Home to 330 residents and currently employing over 300 staff members, the community is in the midst of a 10-year, \$106 million transformational, multi-phase campus master plan. Its newest offering, The Deerwood, will be a five-floor independent living apartment building with 42 residences. About 65 percent of the campus population currently is living independently in apartments or 30 some cottages. They make up the majority of the guests desiring fine dining.

When renovation of the main floor common area space is complete next year, it will feature a brand-new kitchen and a set of dedicated dining rooms divided into the newly renovated Wolfe Bar and Bistro with attached lounge and Allison's, the main dining room with full-service fine dining and a private dining room. There will also be a grab-and-go gourmet food market with seating and new billiards room.

Other renovations underway to finish in late 2022 include the Weisiger Health Center with a home environment/country kitchen with practice space, expanded dining and visitation spaces, additional storage, meeting room space, and other improvements.

New kitchen for efficiency

The new kitchen, formerly the dining room, is larger and built for full-service, cook-to-order dining.

“We’re modernizing the kitchen with a purposeful design and brand new reliable equipment that will maximize efficiency, flow and productivity,” said Milton McGowian, Jr., MBA, CDM, CFPP, FMP, MCP, recently promoted to Vice President of Resident Services at Sharon Towers.

“We’re moving into a lot of renovation phases that will give residents an awesome quality of life but also allow us to meet the needs of the future.

“We’ll be able to do additional catering, and we’re also renting out space for a third-party restaurant on campus. This will give our residents another option where they don’t have to leave the campus, and it will also introduce others from the greater community to Sharon Towers,” he added.

Since January 2019, McGowian had served as Director of Culinary Services at Sharon Towers, where he led an award-winning culinary team of 56 that makes and serves over 800 high-quality, nutritious meals daily—and directed, administered, and coordinated all operational activities of the residents’ dining experience including catering, bistro, lounge, and fine dining operations.

Much of the dining staff has been with Sharon Towers more than 10 years—a testament to McGowian’s management style and the professional camaraderie among culinary partners Dining Services Manager Lyndsey Stevenson, who has worked at Sharon Towers for six years following a career in restaurants, and Executive Chef Brady Lutz who has been there 3-1/2 years.

Because of renovations, new residents can pick up meals buffet-style or choose to be served in a temporary dining room that previously served as an all-purpose room for movies and other activities. Some residents still are requesting meal delivery. Fine dining in Allison’s is currently offered on a reservation-only basis in temporary space. Fresh ice cream is served daily.

G



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An innovative cart is used to serve an area of healthcare residents several floors above. It holds 20 trays, cools and refrigerates one side and heats on the other side.

“This is the hardest part, the temporary dining rooms, and the renovation has been toughest on the back of the house and dietary staff,” said McGowian. Dining employees eat free, and there’s a self-service employee beverage area.

Residents are kept informed about the renovations, and they’ve been asked for their opinions along the way. On the main level, there are poster boards showing floor plans with colorful stickers marking new areas.

Encouraging Training and Development

How do you keep the team motivated with the challenge of a pandemic, construction, and all the new programs? “We want to ensure our staff have an avenue to do more,” McGowian said. “It’s not just about coming to work, clocking in, and going home. We want our employees to learn and have a bright future. We invest in our staff—with training and continuing education opportunities—to help them build a career in culinary services.” He encourages his staff to earn certifications such as CDM

(Certified Dietary Manager), as well as CRM (Certified Restaurant Manager), CRS (Certified Restaurant Supervisor) CRP (Certified Restaurant Professional) and others through ServSafe[®] and ServeSuccess.

“Promoting and supporting continuing education not only helps with employee engagement, but also serves as an effective selling strategy for recruitment of employees who want to grow and be their best,” McGowian added. Mock trainings with staff continue in preparation for the new restaurant and tableside service.



What’s happening in your community?

Do you have a great dining experience, event or activity that made an impact in your community with residents or team members? Let us share your

success with the SDA community. Email Cheryl Slavinsky, SDA Director of Member Engagement, at cheryl@seniordining.org.



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Invest in your team

Turnover. Retention. Recruitment. Those are the often-heard pain points among senior dining leaders. Many companies don't take education and training seriously, but recent studies show that employees who don't feel they are developing in a company are 12 times more likely to leave. We spoke with two VPs of Culinary & Dining Services—with campuses in 13 states combined—who are investing in their culinary associates with SDA memberships.

Staying on Top of Industry Trends



Patrick Plumadore

“Partnering with SDA has been so beneficial,” said Patrick Plumadore, Vice President of Culinary & Dining Services for Acts Retirement Life Communities. “Throughout 2020, we picked up great ideas from other operators on how they were handling safety issues, sanitation, dining room reopenings, delivery methods, reusable containers, and innovative technologies.

“Because of the great information from SDA, we expanded our membership to five culinary leaders from each of our campuses.” Acts has 26 communities throughout Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina.

“We want to give our culinary team members opportunities to interact with fellow operators nationwide and develop through forums, discussion groups, articles, and other resources,” Plumadore said. “It’s important that we stay on top of trends and know where our industry is going. SDA membership and engagement enables us to keep our finger on the pulse.”

Sharing Ideas and Solutions

Eric Johnson, Vice President of Culinary & Dining Services with Trilogy Health Services, said he invested in membership for his culinary teams from each of their 120 campuses in Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio to enable them to learn and expand the number of industry peers they can connect with.



Eric Johnson

“We have a terrific team, but I want to make sure we’re not living in a silo—where we’re trying to solve problems or create solutions on our own,” Johnson said. “As with anything, if you think you have a new idea, chances are you don’t! Someone else has most likely had that situation and created a solution you can learn from.”

He acknowledges, “Our food service directors are busy and tasked with getting meals out three times a day—managing sanitation, food quality, service excellence, etc. SDA membership provides them with connections to other operators who share their experiences, so our directors don’t always have to come up with solutions on their own.”

Resourceful Content for Proactive Problem Solving

“I want our food service directors to have resourceful content that will give them ideas and solutions before a problem comes up, so they are prepared if they face a similar issue,” Johnson said. “So if our directors are participating in an SDA chat and hear operators from other organizations talking about an experience they had and how they handled it, three months later, they will recall what they learned and can better problem solve and know where to get answers.”

Johnson concluded, “As a three-year-old growing organization, SDA seems committed to providing the resources and networking our culinary teams need to learn and connect, so we’re looking forward to our continued collaborations.”

“SDA membership provides them with connections to other operators who share their experiences, so our directors don’t always have to come up with solutions on their own.”

Event triples wine sales for Charlotte community



Sharon Towers in Charlotte, NC, is facing the same issue that your communities are. They're short staffed to the point that services are being cut. In July, Dining Services Manager Lyndsey Stevenson said, "I can't open the bar on a Monday night because I don't have enough people to bartend. We are short-staffed in that aspect."

Closing the bar means less sales, but Stevenson found a creative way to generate sales elsewhere. She teamed up with Executive Chef Brady Lutz to use his monthly chef tasting events as a general wine money generator.

For his chef tasting menu, Chef Brady takes culinary creativity to heights well beyond the everyday menu available at their fine dining restaurant. The residents' response has been exceedingly positive. It has become the hottest ticket in town for Sharon Towers residents.

Due to seating limitations caused by kitchen renovations, there are only 32

seats available for Chef Brady's big monthly event. Stevenson tells us that residents start calling for reservations at 12:01 a.m. on the first day they become available.

Have a look at the menu, and you'll see the level of creativity on such dishes as the Pekin Duck with fermented black garlic, chèvre and candied taggia olive. Something else you may notice from the menu are the wine pairings also listed, which were a new addition to July's menu.

Stevenson reached out to Empire Distributors, a wine distributor she'd worked with during her career in Charlotte restaurants, for help with wine pairings. "I teamed up with Empire Distributors, and they are sending somebody out every month to the tastings to feature the wine, talk about it and obviously help sell it."

She submitted the chef's menu, supplied the price point for the wine pairings and

Empire Distributors handled the rest. A representative was onsite during service to tell the diners about each pairing and answer questions.

To generate wine bottle sales they made wine order sheets. "When the wine vendors are here, they bring all of this with them, and I can just have the residents order all their bottles right then and there at the table," Stevenson explained. "The result was a significant increase in wine sales that night. "I would say we doubled our usual alcohol sales but tripled wine bottle sales."

Labor shortages are forcing communities and senior dining operations to find creative ways to compensate for fewer services and in this case, for lost revenue. Using creative thinking and strategic partnership with a vendor, Stevenson was able to capitalize on an already established event with Chef Brady to create additional revenue for Sharon Towers.





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Using color and light effectively in dining rooms

Studies have shown that strategic use of color and lighting in dining rooms and spaces—from interior design to plate colors—can help bring comfort, increase alertness, and stimulate appetites.

Part of the challenge in designing for the senior living environment is making residents feel at home and connected around them. Research has suggested that having access to nature and outdoors is therapeutic. Looking outdoors is one way to create a color scheme that resonates.

Working colors of the surrounding landscape into the design creates a sense of familiarity and safety, especially for those with dementia. Décor and color choices can help create a comforting

environment that contributes to healing and compensates for physical and cognitive losses.

Color for psychological impact

Dining room colors are often chosen for psychological impact, with consideration of the yellowing cornea in the aging eye which makes cool tones turn dull and grey. Purity of the hue has been found to enhance daily activity, eating habits, and moderate moods.

Peach stimulates the appetite; brown is grounding, and blue is a restful color with a calming effect.

Research shows the use of blue in the physical environment can actually lower blood pressure. Green is associated with growth and plant life and is the most

restful of colors. Green reduces central nervous system activity and helps people feel calm.

Brighter colors may be used to engage the senses when appropriate. For example, those with Alzheimer's or dementia sometimes forget to eat. Studies show that use of red and yellow in the dining room of a memory care center can help stimulate residents' appetites.

In fact, a Boston University study revealed that those with Alzheimer's and dementia ate 25% more when eating on red plates than on white plates. Red dinnerware stimulates the appetite and increases the visibility of food on the surface.

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THE SDA WORKFORCE & TECHNOLOGY SYMPOSIUM will bring together senior living leaders from various organizations to uncover solutions for recruiting, training, and retaining top dining talent to remain competitive in the hospitality marketplace. By aligning technology with this initiative, communities can operate their dining program more efficiently and develop new innovations to support the industry.



Creating contrast

Cells in the retina responsible for normal color vision decline in sensitivity, causing the contrast between different colors to be less noticeable. This change affects depth perception and makes judging distances more difficult. That's where high contrast can play a role to help delineate objects and levels.

However, it needs to be used carefully to provide cues, not to cause more confusion. To someone with compromised vision, a dark carpet with a light border can be perceived as a hole that needs to be avoided. It's important to ensure that countertops and floors, for example, or walls and stairs are done in contrasting colors so the separation is easily recognizable.

Increased light = increased caloric intake

In addition to color selections, utilizing light sources as a non-pharmacological treatment for dementia is a developing field of research. Better verbal skills, alertness levels, and food consumption all increased with bright light.

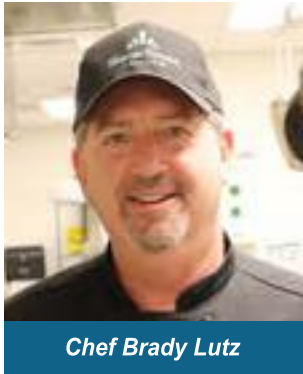
Ideally, dining rooms maintain homelike surroundings and are free of institutional noises and distracting glare. By maintaining a high-light level at the dining table, food and utensils are illuminated for the dementia eye.

Research supported by the National Alzheimer's Association showed increased light in the dining room coupled with contrast at the place setting increased caloric intake by approximately 1000 calories for a 3-day calorie count in residents with dementia.

If your community is planning on renovating and looking for solutions for dining spaces that will last 10 to 15 years, keep in mind the strategic use of color and lighting as part of the process. The right blend of colors and lighting will make your residents feel more at ease—and at home.



Boundary-busting cuisine by Chef Brady Lutz



When asked about his food philosophy and advice for other senior dining chefs, Executive Chef Brady Lutz at Sharon Towers has a good tip for anyone in the kitchen—whether you're cooking for two or 20 or 200.

“Never be afraid to think outside the box,” says Chef Brady. “If your food looks and tastes amazing to you, your guests will think so, too.”

Chefs in senior living communities have big shoes to fill—especially with independent living residents, because many have traveled the world and often expect meals similar to those they've experienced in the best restaurants in which they've dined.

Chef Brady does not disappoint, and it's no surprise that Fusion Cuisine is his favorite type of cuisine. Fusion cooking combines two or more contrasting cuisines, cultures, traditions or techniques to make a new dish. Chefs often use this fusing

of various flavors and foods to expand their culinary repertoire, create unique dishes particularly with unusual or underused ingredients, and subtly introduce new foods. Chef Brady does just that with the Chef's Tasting Menu each month.

The Culinary Department of Sharon Towers at SouthPark takes pride in serving foods that are not just delicious and nutritious, but outside the box. Every month, residents look forward to the Chef's Tasting Menu, which they know is a chance for Chef Brady to spread his wings of creativity way outside the box while also widening residents' flavor palettes.

That drive for creativity and the special interaction he has with the guests is why he looks forward to the monthly event as much as the residents do. He loves inventing new dishes that will surprise and delight, then emerging from the kitchen to describe and introduce the new and different food options of the five-course dinner—foods such as barbecue eel or a prawn dish with ginger marmalade and hibiscus crystals he served in the past.

Chef Brady likes to use ingredients and flavors that challenge the norm, many times backed up with a story of its origin.



Pekin Duck with fermented black garlic, chèvre and candied taggia olives

INGREDIENTS

- 6 Pekin Duck legs
- ½ gallon duck fat
- 1 tablespoon star anise
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- 1 teaspoon cloves
- 1 tablespoon black peppercorns
- 1 head of garlic (split)
- Salt (to taste)

FOR PLATE ASSEMBLY:

- 6 flat breads: sundried tomato and black olive
- 18 candied Taggiasca olives
- 3 oz. chevre (goat cheese)
- 6 cloves of fermented black garlic
- Orange zest
- Microgreens

DIRECTIONS

1. Season duck legs and place them in a pot. Add spices and garlic. Cover duck legs in duck fat. Bake for 6 hours at 250 degrees with lid on pot.
2. Let duck cool, then pick the meat off the bone.
3. For plate assembly, arrange flatbread on plate, top with chevre, duck, fermented black garlic.
4. Garnish plate with candied Taggiasca olives, orange zest and microgreens



Like the time he chose to use Forbidden Black Rice in one of his dishes. Of course, the residents were intrigued when he explained that it's known as Forbidden Black Rice because in Ancient China, black rice was reserved exclusively for the Emperor and Chinese aristocracy.

Kitchen renovations have limited seating to only 32 seats for Chef Brady's big monthly event, which became even more popular when teamed with a local wine distributor for food and wine pairings—ironically initiated by a staff shortage that threatened to close the bar on Monday evenings.

Chef Brady says the biggest food trend at Sharon Towers is the transition from buffet dining—for which the kitchen was

previously built at the nearly 50-year-old community—to upscale full-service, restaurant-style dining. The current construction and renovation project is doubling the size of the kitchen and dining space, and the expansion will allow for additional catering.

He admits the combination of ongoing construction and the pandemic has been the greatest challenge of his senior dining career and his 3-1/2 years at Sharon Towers, but he's proud of the Culinary Department's innovations prompted by restrictions due to both. He loves the opportunities to create new and interesting foods at Sharon Towers.



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Tipping in independent living



Tipping is one way to boost compensation for servers in your independent living communities without hurting your bottom line.

Of course, pay isn't everything. There are a variety of reasons why servers might choose a senior community over a traditional restaurant: their hours are predictable, their shifts end well before midnight, and they have most weekends off. Nevertheless, as long as servers at restaurants make more money, senior communities are going to have a hard time attracting and keeping the best staff.

Few communities have actually implemented tipping programs, but it's becoming a topic of discussion.

"It's really driven by the problems of getting staff," said Schelley Hollyday, founder of the Hollyday Group. "You're competing with restaurants for servers, and now that the restaurants are reopening, servers and bartenders are probably going to go back to that higher compensation model."

Hollyday noted that the conversations tend to be within communities that have multiple venues, with tipping being considered primarily at their highest-end dining venues. For instance, if they have a steakhouse, or if they're doing destination dining, she believes that's where we will initially see tipping start on a case-by-case basis.

She stressed that any tipping system must be automatic, to head off the possibility that servers will show favoritism toward their heaviest tippers.

Before getting started

Communities will have to address several questions before they move forward with a tipped model.

Will gratuities be a percentage of the check, or will there be a set cover charge for each diner? Hollyday advocates a percentage model, assuming a community's point-of-sale system can calculate percentages.

Communities also must decide whether to lower the base pay of their servers to accommodate the extra income from tips. Current pay for senior dining servers is generally around \$10–\$12 an hour, while base pay for restaurant servers averages less than \$5 an hour.

Communities to this point are not choosing to lower their servers' base pay. Tipping typically raises a server's total pay to \$25–\$30 an hour, which is competitive with restaurants.

Communities must decide whether tipped employees will continue to participate in their holiday funds. Most communities have that annual holiday fund that all the residents contribute to. Typically, every employee gets an allocation from that holiday fund, which can be pretty generous. So what happens to the folks that have been getting gratuity compensation throughout the whole year? Hollyday admits she doesn't have an answer; it's just a question to think about.



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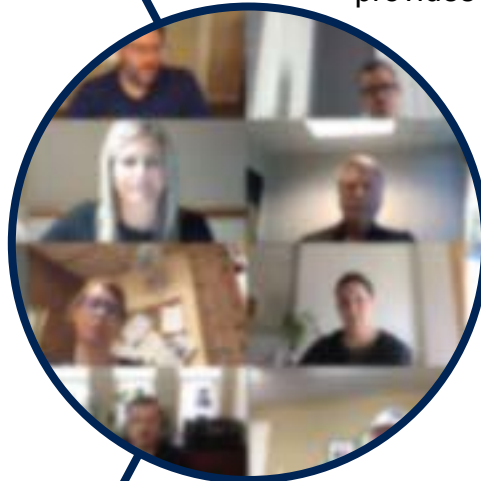


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SDA NEWS (WEEKLY NEWSLETTER)

One of our founding principles is sharing best practices and creative solutions from our members in our weekly newsletter.



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NOVEMBER 6-9, 2022
Las Vegas, NV

WHAT OUR MEMBERS HAVE TO SAY

“We all had something in common. We all had the same challenges, the same issues. And to be able to talk to other people that were in my circumstances was really great.”



—**JONATHAN PINSKER**, Regional Director of Culinary and Nutritional Services, Acts Retirement-Life Communities, Inc.

“The SDA will bring value to my community by creating new relationships with other food service professionals to learn new and unique ideas to bring back to our community. It will also keep us informed of industry changes and future developments within this industry.”

—**SDA MEMBER**



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**PRO
MARKETPLACE**



**TURNKEY
CONSTRUCTION**



**DESIGN
SERVICES**