



Local solutions.
Planet healthy.

Case Study - St. Luke's Wood River Medical Center

Context

St. Luke's Wood River Medical Center (SLWRMC) is a federally recognized non-profit community hospital with all revenues going back to the regional mission – To improve the health of people in our region. It employs over 300 professional and service personnel in a 25 bed facility that serves more than 1,600 inpatient and 1,500 outpatients a year. Its focus is on providing the best for its internal and external community in every regard.

Challenge

In 2008 the Lead Clinical Dietician proposed that SLWRMC could make significant strides in its vision *to provide America's finest medical experience* for everyone by re-evaluating the impact that its nutrition department has on so much and so many. Highly processed food procured from a single large distributor was having a significant effect on the quality and impact of the nutritional well being of the staff, patients, community and environment. The fiscal performance of the nutrition department was also operating in a significant deficit. The question was asked: "How can we improve our nutrition services so as to better serve nutritional, environmental, social and fiscal expectations? "

Action

Sustainable Food Systems, LLC was hired to evaluate the existing program, recommend changes for more sustainable food choices and subsequently help implement and manage the process. In doing so the following was undertaken:

- A comprehensive assessment and action plan was collaboratively developed, proposed and agreed upon to all stakeholders at SLWRMC.
 - The Action Plan was categorized into four categories: Food/Products; Facilities; Community/Staff; and Communication.
- The SLWRMC Sustainable Foods Lead Team, comprised of key stakeholders, was formed and created a mission and vision for the hospital's food service:
 - Mission: *"To provide highly satisfying food that sustains the health of ourselves, our community and the earth."*
 - Vision: *"To provide a food service program that will set the example for others to follow."*
- The team wrote a comprehensive Sustainable Foods Policy that is incorporated into the hospital's administrative Policy and Procedure System. This policy establishes the criteria by which to operate the food service program.
- The hospital engaged all staff to get involved through workshops, news bulletins and a program naming contest.



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- New seasonal recipes and menus were incorporated. Procurement strategy sessions were held with local food producers and farmers resulting in a commitment to supporting local producers.

Results

The immediate results have been the consumers' perception of the quality of food; hospital administration and food service management's clearer understanding of cost impacts and how to manage neutral or lower operational costs; as well as the positive feedback and support of the surrounding community.

- Through the implementation of the new Policy, SLWRMC has:
 - Eliminated Non desirable food ingredients (Trans Fats, HFCS, Hormone laden dairy, etc.)
 - Become the first hospital in Idaho to sign the Healthy Food in Healthcare Pledge.
 - Begun the reduction of prepackaged food items to the goal of 50%
 - Eliminated the automatic use of disposable service ware by 75%
 - Incorporated a cost effective means of serving local artisan food products from Hailey Coffee Co., Bigwood Organic Bread, Cloverleaf Creamery milk and Idaho's Bounty produce. This has resulted in strides to reach the goal of 30% regional sourcing.
 - Many other specifications such as the use of only Sustainable Seafood, composting, water and energy monitoring, public relations, etc.
- A Monthly Operating Report system has been developed, implemented and executed. This tracks a detailed measurement of all food service related expenses for evaluation and adjustment.
- New seasonal menus have roll-out with Patient and Café menus linked. The focus on simplicity and scratch cooking menus and recipes have been raised to restaurant quality
- A Culinary Arts training program for the dietary staff has been developed and executed by the College of Southern Idaho.
- Six local Sun Valley restaurateurs and chefs have committed to supporting the new nutrition program by offering a guest chef series.
- The hospital's food service program was chosen to be one of the guest chefs at the annual Sun Valley Food & Wine Festival in June 2009.

Reflection / Where do we go from here?

The results of The SLWRMC Sustainable Program, Green Cuisine, are a clear indication that by working as a collaborative group of stakeholders who focus on going back to basics with menu, recipes and management systems, a better program does NOT have to cost more and can have a tremendous positive PR effect. The hospital has begun has to realize its vision of setting the best example for others to follow.

The next phase of implementation will include more focus on less waste, increased local purchasing, staffing developments and community outreach.