

# Connection

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Here, catering associates (l to r); Wendell Counts, Eric Jones, Tymia Turner, and Todd Fichtenberg return to the kitchen to begin preparations for the dinner activities. The white shirt and long black apron is the official uniform of the catering associate.

## 'Catering to You' Increases Patient Satisfaction

The Nutritional Services Department at McLaren has taken their service to the next level. Earlier this year, a new system of patient meal service began called Catering to You.

Catering to You uses a personalized approach of providing hospital guests with one person to care for most all of their meals. Implementing the service at MRMC involved a significant shift in the meal assembly and delivery in the Food and Nutritional Services Department. The Department anticipates this change will result in greater patient satisfaction.

The concept of Catering to You was created by Morrison Management Specialists. Catering to You is one of several programs Morrison designed to focus on in-room patient interaction. The program has been

successfully implemented at several medical centers nationwide.

What makes the meal service unique is the decentralization of services, which allows a personalized approach to dining service. The catering associate is consistently assigned to the same unit, subsequently becoming a part of the nursing team, working closely with nurses and registered dietitians. The catering associate, a member of MRMC's Nutritional Services Department, interacts with the guests on a given floor between nine to twelve times during a 12-hour shift.

"The catering associates get to know their patients," stated Chris Curtin, director of Nutritional Services at MRMC. "The people make the program."

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*Chris Curtin,  
Director of  
Nutritional Services*

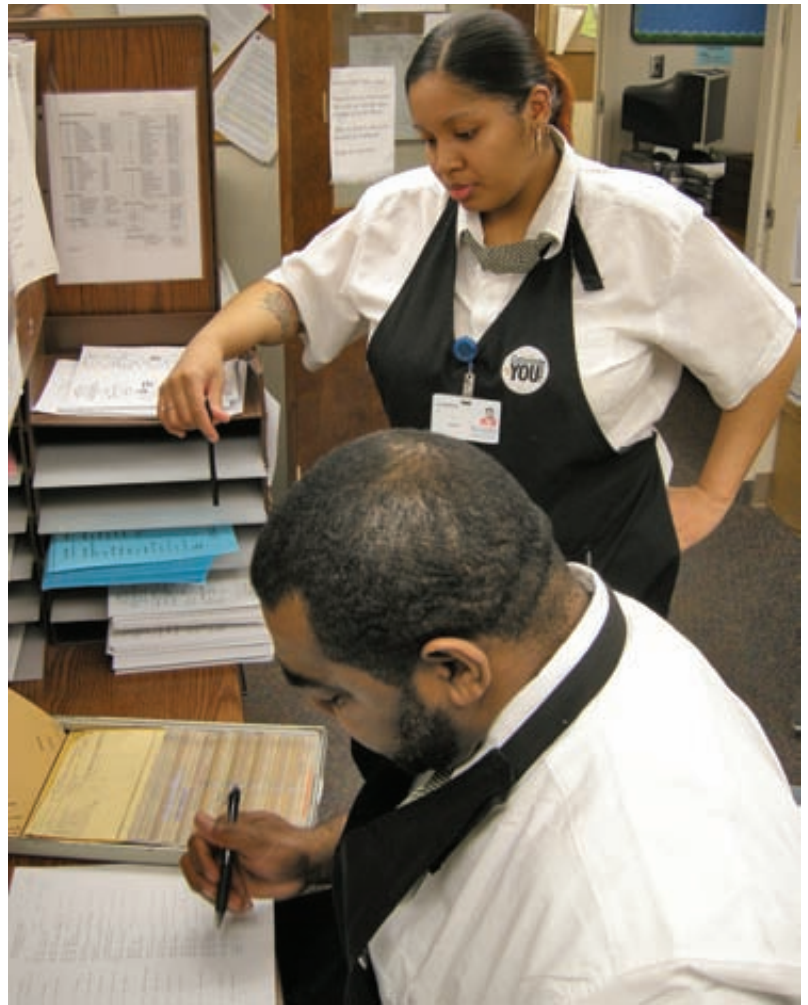
## Catering to You CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

There are currently 17 catering associates at MRMC. Their day begins at 6 a.m. by building approximately 30 to 35 breakfast trays for the patients on their assigned unit. When they deliver the meal, the catering associates offer to pour the patient a cup of hot coffee from a thermal carafe. This small change makes a big impression with patients. Previously a cup of coffee was poured in the kitchen and had often cooled by the time it was delivered.

Following the meal, the associates return to pick up the meal trays. At 10 a.m., the associates stop back to read the lunch choices aloud to each patient and take their lunch order. The process of building all of the meal trays, delivering the meal and collecting the trays is repeated with an additional stop to deliver any additional nourishment to patients with special dietary needs. At 3 p.m., the associates return to their floor to discuss choices for dinner and breakfast the next day. The catering associates assemble and deliver the third meal of the day. Once dinner trays are collected, the associates' shift is complete.

"Having one person responsible for every aspect of a patient's meal ensures greater accuracy," said Curtin. "Having several interactions a day also provides more opportunities for service recovery if a patient does have any concerns. We hope this structure creates a more comfortable environment for the patient and ultimately contributes to their overall satisfaction regarding their stay at McLaren."

Behind the scenes, significant changes were made to the process of meal tray preparation and delivery to accommodate the Catering to You Service.



*Latoya James assists Darrell Rushing as he accustoms himself to the new role of catering associate.*

Work stations were renovated to accommodate the trays being assembled by one person. Before, there was one tray preparation line staffed by many employees to assemble meals. Now there are three work stations that operate simultaneously. This allows patients to receive their meals sooner and helps nurses time the patients' medication distribution. Capital expenditures included new "air curtain" refrigeration units for each station, new meal delivery carts, and "heat on demand" insert plates to keep food at 160 degrees for up to one hour.

With Catering to You nearly four months old at McLaren, early feedback has been positive.

"As measured by Press Ganey, patients' overall rating of meals

has increased in all measured questions," stated Curtin. "The survey question that has shown the most significant increase in patient satisfaction is 'How would you rate the courtesy of person serving food?' Patient satisfaction scores for that question have improved from the bottom 10<sup>th</sup> percentile to the top of the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile."



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*Chris Curtin,  
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# Friendship and Fun Keeps Pulmonary Rehab Patients on the Right Track

Jack Arnold, Barb Bethel and Gary Edwards meet regularly for fun, friendship and to provide encouragement over a shared health condition. They are three of approximately 35 million Americans with COPD or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. The disease encompasses emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and asthma. Jack's, Barb's and Gary's paths joined one another when their pulmonologists sent them to McLaren's Pulmonary Rehab Program.

Gary has participated in the program the longest. He has been attending rehab sessions for more than a decade, and he shows up to exercise, learn, and socialize five times a week. He was only 50 when he was diagnosed with COPD.

"There is no doubt in my mind that this program has kept me functioning, out of the hospital and off of the lung transplant list," states Gary. "If you are serious about fighting your disease the



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*Gary Edwards, Patient*

*Gary Edwards has mentored many pulmonary rehab patients in his ten years in the program. He says it only takes two or three visits to fit right in. He is pictured here with respiratory therapist Kimberly DeJonghe.*

payback is tremendous. I have participated in two other programs when I have gone to warmer climates over the winter months and they were only about exercise. The McLaren program offers good education and socialization, and it makes all of the difference."

Jack, age 66 of Mt. Morris, joined the program four years ago. At that time, he couldn't even walk from the parking lot into the building without taking a break. However, his dedication to rehab rewarded him with a 26 percent improvement in just six

Barb, age 69 of Flint, is the newest of the three to the program. She started coming in September 2007. After receiving education from the staff, Barb was introduced to exercise. Her first time on the treadmill lasted two minutes before she had to stop, and that was with her oxygen.

"This program has been a Godsend; I can't begin to say how it has helped me," states Barb. "The respiratory therapists are fantastic. They really look after you and they lighten the mood."

Barb notes this is the first January since 2002 that she did not have to spend time in the hospital. She is also up to 30 minute stretches on the treadmill. She went from barely being able to walk to her back door to getting her life back.



*Jack Arnold has many reasons to stay healthy. Married for 45 years he is the father of four and grandfather of 10 with number 11 on the way. He says the socialization that takes place at pulmonary rehab helps keep him coming back.*

weeks. Like Gary, Jack credits the program for keeping him alive.

"If I hadn't been sent here I am

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 4*



*(Above) Barb Bethel credits pulmonary rehab for keeping her out of the hospital for the first January in several years, to keep it that way she goes to rehab three times per week and takes one mile walks at the mall twice a week.*

## Friendship and Fun Keeps Pulmonary Rehab Patients on the Right Track CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

convinced I would be dead by now,” says Jack. “Other than the exercise, the therapists educate you about the do’s and don’ts. Everyone at rehab is different so nothing is a competition, and the socialization makes it easier because you have someone in a like situation go through everything with you. The people keep me coming back.”

### McLaren Pulmonary Rehab Program

McLaren Regional Medical Center has the largest Pulmonary Program in the state of Michigan. It is also one of the oldest; now in its 28<sup>th</sup> year. McLaren was the first program in Michigan to be accredited by the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation. The program also networks with several area transplant centers including, the University of Michigan, the University of Pittsburgh, the Cleveland Clinic and Henry Ford Hospital. A staff of five registered respiratory therapists cares for patients who participate in McLaren’s Pulmonary Rehab Program. At rehab patients learn about exercise, diet, medicines, and breathing techniques to remain as healthy as possible. To contact McLaren’s Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program, call (810) 342-5370.

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## Community Connection



McLaren’s Pulmonary Rehab Program held its annual free community educational program in March. The event is held in an effort to raise awareness about chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and asthma. COPD is the third leading cause of death in the United States and more than 35 million Americans are living with some type of chronic lung disease. This year’s program speaker was Paul Christensen, M.D., associate professor of pulmonary and critical care medicine from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Dr. Christensen gave an overview of treatment options for patients with lung disease.

**Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)**

## Blood Drive

The American Red Cross invites all MRMC employees and visitors who qualify to donate blood at the upcoming blood drive scheduled in Ballenger Auditorium on Wednesday May 28. Help us achieve our goal!



Mark Your Calendars!

**Blood Drive  
May 28**

## Connection

*A monthly publication for employees and friends of McLaren Regional Medical Center.*

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