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HEALTHCARE

foodservice

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**FOODSERVICE
EQUIPMENT**
reports

Methodist LeBonheur Germantown Hospital 10

L2M's Steve O'Connor and crew helps the 209-bed hospital deliver on upscale retail, room service and spoken menu with a unique, multi-functional kitchen.

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RETAIL & KITCHEN DESIGN:

the Service Culture

Retail, room service and spoken menu are changing what people think about hospital foodservice at Methodist LeBonheur Germantown Hospital. Exceptional design helps the department deliver on all three.

By Jan Sellers Ashton

Surrounded by gleaming metal, polished wood and rough stone, and with the aroma of hearth-baked pizza and spicy stir-fry in the air, customers easily forget they're in the hospital café at Methodist LeBonheur Germantown Hospital, Germantown, Tenn. "We definitely call it a restaurant—not a cafeteria," says Lisa Abbay, RD, LPN, regional clinical nutrition manager and system director of food and nutrition. The beautiful public face of the facility's foodservice has an equally important support system behind the scenes in the form of two new kitchens. The main prep/volume production

kitchen prepares foods for both the retail op and patient feeding, while a second kitchen turns out two styles of patient meals, room service and spoken menu with a more limited selection.

The Wood Stone pizza oven is the heart of the retail café. Stations include a grill, pizza/pasta, display cooking, salad bar and grab-and-go merchandiser. A coffee and espresso bar offers snacks.

When the 209-bed hospital embarked on a \$1.2 million renovation in 2006, foodservices knew it was gearing up for the future. Germantown plans a 2010



opening for a 100-bed tower addition dedicated to pediatrics and obstetrics and needed to upgrade its 20-yr.-old foodservice facilities before that expansion was complete. Upgrading a tiny, out-of-date patient meal kitchen and cafeteria meant tripling the current space allotted to foodservices. Design began in 2006 and construction wrapped by March 2008. Ultimately, Germantown's patient feeding kitchen and retail operation immediately blow away any notion of "institutional foodservice." Both the kitchen and servery have much more in common with commercial restaurant kitchens.

Space Challenges

Despite being given a space below the current lobby (which, incidentally, is below grade!), consultant Steve O'Connor, FCSI, principal at L2M, Baltimore, envisioned an inviting, casual eatery that could rival any commercial establishment in town. In a space that might seem lacking in potential—no window views, artificial light and permanent, weight-bearing walls—those "drawbacks" diminished in light of the advantages the new location offered over the old. The existing kitchen and retail operation had been tucked away; it was difficult for visitors unfamiliar with the hospital to find it. The new facility is attractively visible through balconies located in the entrance lobby. Visitors can even catch savory aromas wafting from the restaurant. L2M added window wells to the space so that it's now suffused with natural light, as well.

Retail: More Space, Double The Sales

O'Connor's design supplanted the original, 20'x20' cafeteria's three stations, a hot line, deli and grab-and-go, expanding offerings to six stations scattered across 3,500 sq. ft.—a huge change from the previous café space. Around the perimeter of the new café servery is a coffee bar/snack station, grill/hot entrée stop, pizza/pasta area and a display cooking station. All three hot food stations, grill, pizza, display, also have self-serve beverage dispensers to speed up service and eliminate lines that might form at a single beverage station.

Customers can get their complete meal in a one-stop pass. Across from the coffee bar is the first of two self-service islands, the first offering myriad grab-and-go selections, the second, soup and salad.

"Our old kitchen and retail operation had less than one-quarter of the equipment we have now," says Abbay. "I don't know how we did it."

The beautiful Wood Stone oven in the pizza/pasta station provides a focal point for the entire space. A John Boos pizza cutting table and Delfield pizza prep station support the oven. They in turn are bookended by Traulsen heated cabinets and freezers. The fabricated front counter displays pizzas on Hatco heated shelves under the 3- and 4-bulb Merco track heat lamp assemblies. These track light assemblies, also located at the grill and display cooking station, help define the various stations as customers enter the servery.

At the grill/hot food station, patrons find everything from Weight Watchers entrées to burgers. The station comprises a simple cooking battery: 36" Tec gas griddle and charbroiler and a dual fryer battery from Frymaster. Again, Traulsen reach-in freezer and refrigerator are included to keep food close at hand and speed food flow, according to O'Connor. "We were given a nice shape and we made good use of the corners by putting cold storage and ice production right there to support serving without having to make trips to and from the kitchen." Chefs at the display cooking station prepare to-order meals on a heavy-duty, 4-burner Jade range. High-end menu options include grilled lamb.

The custom fabricated island salad bar promotes a generous soup selection each day from three Tomlinson soup wells. Product pans in the bar are divided into half sizes on purpose; not only do they make for a bountiful display, but smaller pans also require more frequent replenishing. That keeps the bar fresh and mandates staff attention.

The new serving area, says O'Connor, allows customers to move from station to station to view products without having to stand in a line. Keeping the Barker grab-and-go

Methodist LeBonheur Germantown Hospital

Germantown, Tenn.

No. of Beds: 209 (100 more to open in 2010)

Opening Date: April 2008

No. of Seats: 164

Hours of Operation:
7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Retail Stations: Coffee/Esspresso/
Snacks, Grab-and-Go, Grill/Hot
Foods, Pizza/Pasta, Display Cooking,
Salad Bar

Food Facilities Design Consultant:
Steve O'Connor, FCSI, Principal,
L2M, Baltimore

Architect/Interior Design:
TRO/Jung Brannan

Engineer: Allen and Hoshall

Equipment Contractor:
Federal Equipment

Fabricator: United Fabricators

island near the entry and cashiers was key to keeping time-crunched hospital staffers—who comprise 85% of traffic—happy.

“The hospital was generous in making this happen,” says Abbay, and the investment has had immediate results: sales went up 52% almost immediately. “We didn’t think the retail would grow so quickly,” she says. Today, as many as 700 patrons go through every day, spending an average of \$6 per visit.

O’Connor says his goal was simple. “Make the serving area an upscale destination rather than an afterthought or choice of last resort. Make it work for the present and the future.” The same philosophy applied to the new, 4,800-sq.-ft. main patient-meal kitchen.

Great Support System

Behind the retail servery is the first of two kitchens L2M designed to support all food-service going forward. Considered the “main kitchen,” this first space is equipped to serve multiple needs: pre-prep for the

Dining On Call room service orders are whipped out from this classic short-order line.



retail operation (although as much actual prep as possible is done in front of customers at the retail stations), volume production of soups, sauces, bulk foods and baked goods that are used in retail and for patient meals, and dry and cold storage (with units from Thermo-Kool). Prep equipment includes Robot Coupe Blixers and vertical cutter mixer, Hobart slicers and nice touches such as an In-Sink-Erator disposal right by one sink-equipped prep table.

Volume hot food production is efficient with two electric tilting kettles (25 and 60 gal.) and a 40-gal. tilting skillet from Cleveland Range. With these, cooks can produce soups, sauces, rice and much more. Cleveland also supplied the convection steamer and full combi oven on the line for bulk steaming and baking needs.

Focus On Patients

The hospital, always responsive to patients, offers room service called Dining On Call. The service lets patients, including those in the oncology, obstetrics and pediatric wards, choose from an in-room menu. They can have what they want to eat when they want to eat between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., (within their dietary restrictions). Chicken stir-fry, grilled cheeseburgers, chicken alfredo and create-your-own deli sandwich are popular items. Delivery is promised within 45 minutes. Operators take called-in orders and transmit them to printers right on the short order line.

Designing within a confined “box” space, O’Connor says he set up production in this area to flow as it does in a restaurant, where short order is the order of the day. The battery includes a 6-burner Garland range with oven base, a Tec charbroiler and griddle and Frymaster fryer. A Traulsen blast chiller, located close by in the prep/volume kitchen, aids advance prep for room service meals, as well. Cooks can precook items, quick-chill them and quickly reheat or finish them on the short order line, shaving minutes off room service delivery times.

For baking and roasting, Abbay says they use the convection oven, located at one end of the short order line, for everything from baked goods for the retail area to macaroni and cheese for patient meals. Popular items include fresh baked scones, muffins, apple

turnovers, cookies and imported Danishes for the café to roasted pork loin, hand-carved strip loin and herbed Roma vegetables for patients.

Two Tray Makeup Lines

Right in the midst of construction, food and nutrition services and L2M faced a challenge. Rather than requiring that less mobile orthopedic, cardiac and short-stay surgery patients call in orders off the room service menu, the nursing staff requested a more personal approach. The department complied by creating an additional program to Dining On Call, called Catering To You. Harking back to a more traditional style of ordering, food and nutrition department associates visit patients and present a spoken menu. “That associate might see the patient a dozen times a day,” explains Abbey. Comfort foods and restaurant-style options mix on this menu, which including such items as pancake stackers with eggs and cheese and peaches and oatmeal for breakfast and roasted sirloin, potatoes Delmonico, yellow squash with red onions and apple pie for dinner.

The two meal delivery systems, Dining On Call and Catering To You, are assembled on completely separate tray assembly lines, each accessible to the transport door. Dining On Call gets plates off the short order cook line. Staffers dish sides and more from a Wells, 4-pan hot food well. Room service tray assembly includes Aladdin heated plate dispensers and base heat activation tables. Orders are plated, trays are assembled and they’re loaded into room service carts from Dinex.

The Catering To You area is set up like a Pod. One server dishes meals from a 5-pan Aladdin hot food well (supported by a base heat activator) and passes them to two tray finishers on either side of a tray assembly table. Each assembler has his or her own refrigerated air screen that holds cold items. Meals are loaded into three Aladdin tray delivery carts. Both Dining On Call and Catering To You share a beverage area and Hoshizaki ice maker.

On a typical day, the patient kitchen might plate up 466 patient meals, upwards of 12,000 meals a month.



Equipment That Lasts

L2M handles a lot of work at airports, where O’Connor says equipment life is only about five years due to constant concept changes. But a healthcare setting such as Germantown’s requires sturdy, durable, energy-smart equipment that will give an operation at least 20 good years of production. “When selecting equipment, we look for manufacturers and model numbers that are Energy Star rated; in lieu of that rating, we use equipment that is eligible for the California energy rebate.”

It all begins with the budget. “Operators think differently than they did 10 years ago when it was all about containing or cutting costs,” says O’Connor. Now equipment choice is more focused on lifecycle costing. “Operators are much more willing to pay upfront for environmental benefits and understand they’ll enjoy a payoff later. If your operation is going to be using the same piece of equipment for 20 years, the higher-priced, more durable, energy-efficient equipment will pay for itself very quickly.”

O’Connor says L2M created a line-item budget, making it easy to determine equipment choices, especially in the production kitchen. He’s particularly pleased with two pieces that were retained in the spec, despite requiring a little more upfront capital investment. The long-term payoff is guaranteed.

A pulper, this one from Somat, is not a traditional spec item, but it makes huge financial sense for an operation the size of Germantown.



The Halton Capture Jet hood, shown here over the Cleveland combi, will greatly reduce utility costs over the years.



The grab-and-go station is situated right by the entrance and near cashiers for quick in-and-out service for time-crunched patrons.

One is the Halton Capture Jet hood. This unit creates a gentle air screen along the perimeter of the hood, improving capture and greatly reducing the exhaust power needed to capture and contain grease-laden vapor and steam. In other words, the hood doesn't have to work as hard to suck the effluent up and out. The up-front cost of this unit is more than other hoods on the market, but the reduced exhaust requirements means the facility needs less capital equipment to heat and cool the space. It also realizes long-term savings on utilities costs, according to O'Connor. The hood, he adds, qualifies for one LEED point under the category of Energy and Atmosphere.

The other favorite equipment selection, a Somat pulper/extractor, is not a common spec, says O'Connor, but is increasingly popular in large projects such as Germantown because it makes great economic sense. Unlike disposers, pulpers don't require water flow to operate; that saves on water costs. Pulpers extract moisture from the garbage, reducing volume substantially. That in turn reduces trash hauling costs. "We reduced five bags of garbage to just one with the pulper," says O'Connor.

Clean Up: Just As Critical

The pulper is in Germantown's new dishwashing room, situated at the head of the Hobart flight-type dishmachine. Staffers scrap dishes into the pulper and load them into the machine. O'Connor's one regret is that walled-in space limits the size of the dishwashing area.

Even so, the layout nicely retains the proper flow of soiled in-clean out. And the new dishmachine and Eagle three-compartment silver soak sink are marked improvements to what existed before. "We had a pass-through system that sent wares through a wall to a cramped warewashing room," says Abbey. "It was a disaster." The new dishroom area also includes an adjacent cart wash.

Overall, O'Connor and Abbey are pleased with the final outcome. Abbey says, on busy days, every single chair in the 164-seat café is full. In April, exactly a year after the facility's opening, patient satisfaction hit the benchmark of 85%.

That success will continue even as the hospital expands. Despite designing in a box surrounded on all four sides by immovable walls, O'Connor was able to plan for future expansion. He deliberately built in "soft space," such as storage, that can be repurposed if the kitchen or servery needs to grow. "They can use this space and this equipment for a long time." **I**

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