

TRENDS

Back to School?

Senior living facilities are emulating colleges in both menu choices and payment plans.

DULUTH, Ga.—Senior living facilities such as CCRCs are taking on more of a college feel, at least as far as how residents pay for their meals.

According to a recent study conducted by Horizon Software International, more and more senior living facilities are opting for models based on flex dollars, points or declining balance programs.

The online survey, conducted in October 2009, was a follow-up to a 2006 study conducted by the Senior Living Division of Zeigler Capital Market Group. More than 200 operators responded to the survey, which asked them to identify the types of meal plans they currently offer residents, the forms of payment they accept and whether they planned any changes in meal plans in the near future.

“Dining options for independent living residents are changing rapidly,” the study found. “Flexible dining plans are replacing meal-per-day plans. Communities are ex-

panding their venue options in varied and creative ways to appeal to a broader market. Communities are striving to be competitive not only with other communities, but in the greater retail and hospitality market as well.”

The survey results were compared with those in the 2006 survey. Based on this, Horizon concluded that the largest shift has been away from the single meal per day option.

“In 2006, 40% of communities [said] the standard meal plan consisted of one meal per day,” the study said. “In 2009, this number reduced to 25%, with 74% indicating the community intends to move . . . to the more flexible plan within the next two years.

“Conversely, in 2006, only 11% of the communities had a flexible dollars or points-based plan,” it continued. “In 2009 this number increased substantially to 42%.”



Among the other findings:

- 12 communities indicated they were in the process of converting their meal plans to a dollar-based plan;
- 20% said they offer more than one meal plan, with some of those respondents indicating they planned to phase out meal-based plans;
- 52% offer two dining venues, a formal dining room and a casual location;
- 20% said they have three or more dining venues: formal, café/bistro and another casual location; and,
- 18% of respondents said they were completely cashless.

Reincarnation

Popular Cornell restaurant to live on in new iteration.

ITHACA, N.Y.—The creative joint venture between Cornell Dining and Ithaca’s famed Moosewood Restaurant, known as Moosewood at Anabel Taylor Hall, concluded its successful three-year run at the close of the 2009-2010 school year. But the goal of operating a vegetarian whole foods eatery on the Cornell campus will live on in Cornell Dining’s new One World Café, opening August 25 in the same location.

One World Café will feature many of the natural, local, sustainable vegetarian and vegan foods that customers came to enjoy at Moosewood

at Anabel Taylor, as well as new salads and sandwiches. It will be open Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

“Building on what we learned with Moosewood at Anabel Taylor, One World Café enables us to continue offering the Cornell community healthy, fresh and delicious food in a comfortable, convenient location on the main campus,” said Gail Finan, director of Cornell Dining. “We sincerely appreciate all that we have learned about vegetarian cooking from our collaboration with the Moosewood team. Their help in developing our vegetarian recipes will be reflected in the

revitalized menu not only at One World Café but at other Cornell Dining locations featuring vegetarian offerings.”

Added Laura Branca, from Moosewood Restaurant, “Moosewood at Anabel Taylor Hall proved to be a big success, showing that customers will happily choose healthy, fresh, natural food options. It was a great opportunity for us to try some new ideas in a university setting, and we’ve learned a lot from our association with Cornell Dining. Now that this phase of our research is complete, we are happy that Cornell will go on serving customers great vegetarian food.”

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