

Producing Home Delivered Meals *continued from front page*

Kitchens undergo regular inspections and are certified for preparation and storage processes. USDA and COA come on site annually; Middletown Board of Health inspects twice annually unannounced.

Prepping meals

Chef Josh said each HDM client receives a monthly menu a month ahead and is asked to make weekly selections of entrees, milk, snacks, and fresh fruit. These selections are reviewed for errors or questions and then tallied weekly to determine how much product to order and prepare.

“Our goal is to empower clients to take responsibility for their diet by making choices, to make the process person-centered,” said Chef Josh.

Dining Services Associates prep each meal in volume (for example, all meatloaf meals are cooked at one time) based on standardized recipes. Once food is cooked, it goes through a cooldown process called Hazard Analysis Critical Control Process to ensure that food integrity holds and there is no risk of bacterial growth. Food is cooked ahead of time before placing portions into black plastic food trays that then go through a heat sealer and labeling process.

Each entrée label provides heating instructions, the entrée



Dining Services Manager Fred Moore affixes labels to meals.



Sous chef Adam Nelms (left) and cook Tony Wagers portion cooked meal items into trays for sealing and freezing.

name, and Central Connections contact info. Meals are flash frozen and stored in the freezer.

Central Connections is required to provide clients a complete list of ingredients for each meal. This is sent out once and then upon request so every ingredient is known, critical to people with food allergies.

“Eventually,” said Chef Josh, “we will buy a nutrition software program to provide nutritional values for each meal.”

Packing 3,200 meals a week

Packing of meals into boxes occurs 3 days a week (usually Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays) for an average of 24 hours a week, with at least 4 people packing and sometimes more, especially on Fridays.

“Almost 3,200 meals a week are cooked, packaged, and boxed for delivery. This number excludes our 5 weekly congregate meals and any catering jobs that Central Connections has,” explained Chef Josh.

Each client’s box receives a packing ticket—a copy of the client’s menu selection—and then items are picked from shelves and inserted into a cardboard box, along with the frozen entrees. For quality check, the person packing initials the menu multiple times to verify that everything needed is in a client’s box—

from frozen meals to drinks to bread and snacks. Boxes are sealed and labeled with a client’s name. Then boxes are stored in the freezer until the day of delivery. On average, Central Connections uses 800 cardboard boxes a week for HDM.

On delivery day, kitchen staff sets up boxes by routes for 6 or more drivers, depending on the day. Drivers are paid and use their own vehicles to deliver HDM and are reimbursed for mileage. At this stage, drivers also pick up perishables, such as milk and fruit.

The meal program also includes the 100 hot meals that are heated at Central Connections and delivered Monday through Friday to clients who often cannot operate kitchen stoves or microwaves and may be confined to bed. Meals are delivered off site to local private residences and places such as Trinity Manor, Dublin House, and Mayfield Village.

Administration of the HDM program is time-consuming, with maintenance of client records and proof of adherence to all guidelines, plus ordering—taking 20 people to finish one week of meals from start to finish.

Qualifying for HDM

Individuals may contact COA at 513.721.1025 to see if they are eligible for HDM. They also may approach Central Connections’ chefs or drivers for COA info or call Jodie Lawson, our HDM Coordinator, 513.217.4919.

Chef Josh said many clients have commented favorably on the new menus. “I don’t know any facility in this area that self-produces home delivered meals at this level,” he said.

Donations for the HDM program will be gratefully accepted. Checks should be payable to Central Connections.



the connection

newsletter of CENTRAL CONNECTIONS for **AUGUST 2017**

3907 Central Ave, Middletown, OH 45044 / 513.423.1734 / centralconnections.org

Dining Services Produces Home Delivered Meals on Site

Feeding older adults in Butler and Warren Counties has been a prime mission of Central Connections for many years. On May 1, our home delivered meals (HDM) program ramped up its services to older adults when Central Connections became a self-producing provider of meals, said Executive Chef Josh Blackmore who directs the HDM program.

“On May 1, we began cooking and packaging meals to be delivered to clients unable to cook for themselves or who do not have resources to obtain balanced and nutritious meals,” Chef Josh explained. “Until this date, we had contracted with a vendor to supply meals that we delivered. Now we are doing it all on site: cooking, packaging, and delivering meals.”



Following guidelines

Central Connections sought approval from Council on Aging (COA) to cook HDM on site. “We chose to do this to become more financially responsible as a non-profit organization and to provide what we consider an improved meal selection to older adults in this region,” said Chef Josh.

The process began with surveying existing HDM clients about their meal likes and dislikes. Based on that feedback, Chef Josh developed 20 unique meals for each of 4 cycles so that menus could change every 3 months, with a goal to not repeat menus. The next menu cycle changes in August.

Welcome, New Members!

Dennis Bowles, Melissa Bowles, Walter Deaton, Warren Hines, Nancy Jeffery, Marylln Johnson, Esther Person, Marilyn Sorrell, Paul Tudor, Michael Wonderly, Sandra Wonderly

“We want to offer multiple options to our clients for variety and to make dining more interesting,” said Chef Josh. “By doing this, we help prevent ‘meal burnout’ from eating the same meals over and over.”

Once the 4 cycles of menus were created, Chef Josh worked with a licensed and registered dietitian who reviewed menus to ensure that COA guidelines were met. Then he focused on creating therapeutic diets (cardiac, diabetic, renal, etc.), making changes to meet guidelines and to design appealing meals. These were submitted to COA’s Dietitian and Nutrition Business Relations Partner for review and to ensure that every meal item met USDA requirements for a balanced meal for an older adult’s daily intake.

All menus were approved by COA with the menu creation process taking 7 months and the final approval process one more month.

When cycle 2 goes into effect, Chef Josh will look at the meals selected most often from cycle 1 menus and, with survey feedback from clients, revise cycle 1. To date, the most popular entrees are hearty beef and noodles, meatloaf, roasted turkey, and country fried steak.

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The HDM prep crew includes (left to right) Geraldine Hughes (packing and delivery), Beverly Philpot (delivery), and Cindy Pence and Debbie Sears (packing).



HOURS OF OPERATION: Monday, Tuesday 9:00AM–4:30PM Wednesday 9:00AM–7:00PM Thursday 9:00AM–5:00PM Friday 9:00AM–3:30PM Saturday closed Sunday closed

Central Connections

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The Connection is the official newsletter of Central Connections. Please direct comments and suggestions to Lisa Biedenbach, Director of Operations, 513.217.4915 or lbiedenbach@centralconnections.org

Central Connections, a 501c3 nonprofit senior center in Middletown, Ohio, and a United Way Agency Partner, promotes whole-person wellness and serves the needs of adults over age 50 with nutritious meals, movement classes, transportation services, health screenings, recreation, volunteer opportunities, and social and educational events and programs.

8 Billiards Results / June and July

June 29: Blind Draw

1st: Terry Highley, Jerry Addison
2nd: Les Hensley, Bob Pieratt

July 6: 9-Ball

1st: Terry Highley
2nd: Jerry Addison

July 13: Blind Draw

1st: Bob Pieratt, Dave Depew
2nd: Les Hensley, Terry Oliver

July 20: 9 Ball

1st: Dick Johnson
2nd: Terry Highley

Cornhole Winners

July 21 winners were: 1st—Mary Wells, 2nd—Sandy Kahn, 3rd—Paul Hogg. **Cornhole continues on Fridays at 1:00 PM** in the Jamboree Room. Players of all skill levels are welcome!

Movement Opportunities *see insert for programs calendar*

The **7-week fall session of Cardio Splash** will occur on **Mondays, Sept. 5–Oct. 21, from 10:15–11:00 AM**, at the Middletown YMCA.



Cardio Splash provides low-impact shallow- and deep-water exercises and the same benefits as traditional exercising. All fitness levels are welcome. A minimum 10 participants is needed. Cost is \$30 per person. **Register and pay at our Welcome Center by Wed., Aug. 23.**

Learn Tap and Jazz dance in **Artistry in Motion Dance Classes** on **Mondays and Thursdays in August from 10:30–11:30 AM**. The class includes beginner instruction geared to novices and tailored for older adults. No cost to members; nonmembers pay \$3 per class. This program is funded by a grant from the Ohio Arts Council.



The Cincinnati Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired hosts a **low-vision support group** at Central Connections on the **first Wednesday of each month from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM**. For more info, contact group facilitators Gary Ensing, 513.487.4522, gary.ensing@cincyblind.org; or Jennifer Brock, 513.487.4507, jennifer.brock@cincyblind.org.

Whole-Person Wellness Opportunities

For any programs or classes, members and guests must register in person at the Welcome Center or call 513.423.1734.

Sarah Hellmann, director of Art for All People, leads art-making sessions called **“Painting with Purpose” on Wednesdays in August, from 10:15 AM–12:15 PM** in the card room. There is no fee for the classes, which are made possible through a grant from the Ohio Arts Council.



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Our **summer cookouts** with Chef Josh and Chef Karen at the grill have been a big hit so we've scheduled **4 cookouts in August**. Dine inside or on the patio. These menus are the days' congregate meals. A donation of \$4 per diner would be appreciated. Ask for a congregate meal envelope at our Welcome Center. *See insert in this newsletter for dates and menus.*



Who doesn't love dessert? What cook doesn't want to end a delicious meal with a sweet treat? Join fellow foodies for our cooking classes that will focus on desserts. **Cooking classes will be held on Thursdays at 4:30 PM**. Dates and menus include:



Thurs., Aug. 17—Crème Brulee

Thurs., Aug. 24—Pumpkin Cheesecake

Thurs., Aug. 31—Caramel Apple Delight

Cost is \$5 per person per class, including sampling and recipe. A minimum of 10 people is needed for a class. *Register at our Welcome Center, 513.423.1734.*

If you live with someone with diabetes or are yourself newly diagnosed with diabetes or want a refresher on the basics of diabetes management, then attend a **3-part series on diabetes** to be led by Dianne Schneider, RDN, LD, CDE, nutrition expert and outpatient diabetes educator. Mark your calendars for these hour-long sessions that begin at 10:00 AM in the Cohen Conference Room:



Thurs., Aug. 24—“High Blood Sugar? What Does This Mean?” Explore the differences between pre-diabetes and diabetes and how simple lifestyle changes can improve your health.

Thurs., Sept. 7—“The Language of Diabetes.” Find out the meaning of terms such as HgbA1C, neuropathy, beta cell destruction, glycemic index, and more.

Thurs., Oct. 19—“Carbohydrates: Friend or Foe?” Discover the truth about carbohydrates as part of a diabetic diet.

Register at our Welcome Center, 513.423.1734. You may pick and choose which sessions to attend.

Entertainment



Wed., Aug. 9, noon
Golden Notes choral group

Thurs., Aug. 10, 6:00–9:00 PM
Soul Express

60s and 70s soul music
doors open at 5:30 PM
SPLIT THE POT AND DOOR PRIZES

Celebrate members' August birthdays and anniversaries on Tues., Aug. 29, in the dining room at lunchtime! Join us for a treat sponsored by Haven Behavioral Hospital of Dayton.



Blues & BBQ Connections, Saturday, Sept. 9

Who: 3 Cincy Blues Society bands, playing 45-minute sets each

What: southern-style food + blues

When: Doors open at 5:00 PM; music 6:00–9:00 PM

Where: Central Connections Banquet Center

Admission \$10 for adults in advance and \$15 at the door. Children age 12 and under \$5. Purchase tickets online at BluesBBQConnections.org.

Do you seek tips for maintaining and promoting your brain health? Do you know the early signs of memory loss and what occurs in your brain during normal aging? Find answers to your questions during a **3-part brain health series** led by Carolyn Ferris, RN, education coordinator of the Alzheimer's Association Greater Cincinnati Chapter. The series includes 3 one-hour sessions from **10:30–11:30 AM** in the Cohen Conference Room:

Thurs., Aug. 31—“Know the 10 Signs.” Learn early signs of Alzheimer's and how they differ from normal aging.
Thurs., Sept. 28—“Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body.” Explore the benefits of exercise, mental stimulation, socialization, and nutrition in brain health.

Thurs., Nov. 9—“The Basics: Memory Loss, Dementia, and Alzheimer's Disease.” Discover the risk factors, stages, and treatment of each brain condition.

Register at our Welcome Center, 513.423.1734. You may pick and choose which sessions to attend.