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Senior Living Community Pivots Communal Dining to Food Court Model

How One Community Tapped into Residents' Wisdom and Experience to bring Innovative Concept to Life During Pandemic

SEATTLE, WA – Bayview, a 62+ nonprofit Life Plan Community, announces a new food court model that focuses on the reopening of their main dining space and expanding meal options – all while thoughtfully and judiciously maintaining infection control, social distancing, and the overall prevention of COVID-19.

At the start of the pandemic, Bayview and many senior living communities alike quickly went from vibrant hustling and bustling dining rooms to delivering meals to residents' apartments. Dan Galvin, Bayview's Director of Culinary Services, embraced the long-haul reality that there was no clear end to the pandemic in sight.

"Our CEO, Nancy Weinbeck, challenged our community – both residents and staff – to brainstorm innovative and creative solutions for Bayview in the face of the COVID-19 crisis," Galvin stated, "I began to ask myself, how can we make use of our expansive dining space, elevate the variety of food offered, bring back some social element of engagement, all while making it safe as possible?"

A food court concept was the perfect solution. Galvin, armed with an extensive restaurant and hospitality background, teamed up with a multitude of staff and residents to bring this concept to fruition. Truly, the spirit of community and collaboration was on full display. Bayview Resident Bill Jordan, who has a long career as an architect, was key in developing floor plans that allowed for proper spatial strategies. Bayview Resident Michael Mayer, who is an Emmy-nominated set designer, was key in developing the look and feel of the food court. In addition to completing the food court with cost-saving solutions, resident and staff participation boosted morale and excitement throughout the community.

Called the "Terrace Garden Food Court", the space includes: three socially distanced ordering stations with glass partitions, a socially distanced waiting area, a new addition of a Marketplace offering Grab & Go items, crowd theater ropes, floor decals, large signage for easy navigation, separate aisles for employees and residents, socially distanced seating areas, and sanitation stations. Socially distanced ambassadors with bright vests will be working the floor to ensure proper infection control practices, community compliance and questions that may arise. Plants and essential foliage and an awning over the marketplace are part of some food court schematics that bring outdoor elements, inside.

"One of the bright qualities of senior living communities across Washington and really across the nation is the way we are learning from each other." Weinbeck, Bayview CEO states, "The pandemic is propelling innovation for us. We hope our story shines a much-needed positive light on the way senior communities are disrupting the status quo."

Bayview has paused the launch of the food court due to the increasing surge of new COVID-19 cases within King County. In the meantime, their hope is to inspire communities to look to older adults as an untapped source of wisdom, knowledge, and lifetime's worth of experiences. It's worth the look.

Before and after images of the dining to food court transformation is available upon request. A fun food court video tutorial is in the works with staff and resident actors.

About Bayview: Bayview, a bright gem of the Queen Anne neighborhood since 1961, is a 62+ Nonprofit Life Plan Community with the mission of "Transforming the experience of aging by creating opportunities for healthy, spiritual and purposeful living for our residents, children, staff, and the greater community." More about Bayview here: <https://www.bayviewseattle.org/>.