From coast to coast, students are headed back to school and there is anticipation and expectation as our youngest generations embark on the next step of their lives. At Morrison Senior Living, that excitement and empowerment is something we feel each and every day for our residents and their families. Our commitment to residents and community members includes nourishing their minds, souls and bodies to support a healthy lifestyle. Bateman Senior Meals, a division of Morrison Senior Living, is a great reflection of this ongoing dedication and passion to senior care. The Meals on Wheels Association of America estimates that one in six Americans over the age of 60 faces the threat of hunger; that’s 9.3 million elders. Since the recession began in 2007 and through 2012, the number of seniors experiencing food insecurity has increased by 49 percent. Those numbers are projected to rise as the aged population of our country increases. Through Bateman Senior Meals, we’re making incredible strides and positively impacting and enriching the lives of seniors. This month you will read about two Meals on Wheels programs, one in California and one in New York, that deliver healthy and quality meals, security and smiles to seniors who need assistance. You’ll also hear from Chef Davis Knight, who is making a difference in his community with Our Food Rules. It is through our dedicated staff and commitment to excellence that we are able to continually make a difference and proudly serve our communities each and every day.

Kevin Svagdis, President
Morrison Senior Living

Bateman Senior Meals is a division of Morrison Senior Living and an important part of the organization’s mission to serve seniors and their nutritional needs with dignity, care and compassion. For more than 30 years, Bateman has provided healthy, nutritious meals for senior meal programs, including many Meals on Wheels organizations. Bateman also serves adult daycare, Head Start and summer lunch programs, prepares food for event catering, and provides shelf-stable meals and disaster response nutrition across the country. We recently sat down with Bateman Senior Meals Regional Vice President Magi Brettler about the services and programs that make Bateman a leader in serving flavorful home-style meals.

TMW: Tell us about some of the different programs, delivery and the people and communities you serve.

MB: Bateman prepares and serves meals in a wide variety of programs, with varying levels of service. For some programs we manage a central kitchen and the client does all the delivery and in others we manage the central commissary and deliver to dining sites and seniors’ homes. We also manage and cook onsite at cafés where seniors congregate for lunch and socialization.

TMW: How many locations does Bateman have across the country?

MB: Bateman offers instead of serves programs on various levels, based on the budget and needs of each partner, and that drives the meal content and menu variety. In some programs we bake all of our own bread using a variety of whole grains and we bake our comfort dessert favorites for seniors. Ensuring that the meals are flavorful and nutrient-dense helps seniors stay healthier by eating a balanced, wholesome meal. According to our surveys, more than 80 percent of the seniors we serve report that our meals enable them to maintain their ability to remain in their homes.

Tom: Malnutrition is a real concern, especially for seniors who struggle financially. How is Bateman addressing some of these issues?

MB: We make every meal as tasty as possible within the guidelines of the Older American’s Act and other governing bodies. Creating nutrient-dense, flavorful and eye-appealing meals is a constant focus for Bateman. If the food is not tasty and attractive, it will not be eaten by seniors, and uneaten food cannot nourish the body or soul.

TMW: A good, high-quality diet is important for seniors; is there also an educational component to any of the Bateman programs?

MB: Bateman offers instead of serves programs on various levels, based on the budget and needs of each partner, and that drives the meal content and menu variety. In some programs we bake all of our own bread using a variety of whole grains and we bake our comfort dessert favorites for seniors. Ensuring that the meals are flavorful and nutrient-dense helps seniors stay healthier by eating a balanced, wholesome meal. According to our surveys, more than 80 percent of the seniors we serve report that our meals enable them to maintain their ability to remain in their homes.
Bateman selects meals are great retail branded looking meals delivering a nutritious diet neutral, yet very tasty meal for Private pay clients, hospital to home programs, and upscale café dining programs.

**WHAT MAKES BATEMAN SELECTS® SO HEALTHY?**

By controlling the carbohydrates to approximately 45 grams, sodium to an average of 470mg, and cholesterol to an average of 50 mgs per meal, Bateman Selects not only meets but exceeds the latest dietary guidelines for Americans—guidelines that encourage increasing whole grains and controlling carbohydrate intake to obtain and maintain optimal health and prevent health complications. To learn more, contact 1-800-491-1330.

Many of our programs also include a nutrition education component; it’s a newsletter on one side and a menu on the other side. Topics range from the importance of hydration to the value of eating vegetables, fruits and grains. Our dietitian keeps the information fresh each month to keep seniors interested in reading it.

**TMW:** How do cultural and regional preferences impact the work of Bateman Senior Meals, Meals on Wheels and congregate dining programs?

**MB:** Menu customization to meet regional and cultural preferences is a clear focus for Bateman. We maintain a variety of recipes for the same foods and make adjustments for each region. Cornbread is a great example—some parts of the county like their cornbread sweet and cake-like, while others like it less sweet and a bit grainy.

We work to ensure that cultural preferences are addressed as well. In areas where there is a dominant culture, it’s easy; you focus on the culture, such as Hispanic meals. When the population you serve is a mix of cultures it creates more challenges. For clients that have a more standard American-based menu, we offer a special cultural menu day. This allows people to celebrate their heritage and enjoy the tastes of their homeland foods.

**TMW:** Shelf-stable meals are an important resource for many seniors; Bateman distributes these for weather, natural disasters, homebound seniors and other emergencies. How does the program work and what meals are involved?

**MB:** Shelf-stable meals are meal kits that may be placed in a pantry and pulled to consume on a day when the meal driver cannot deliver to the home due to weather or natural disaster. Many programs that face routine weather related emergencies work with us to pre-plan winter weather pantry boxes. These may contain as many as five meals in a kit. Winter boxes are usually delivered in early November before the first snow. In the South we face a lot of hurricanes and tropical storms, which means shelf stable meal boxes for that region go out in early June. The meal kits have a canned, shelf-stable entrée, canned fruit, shelf-stable dessert, crackers and shelf-stable milk.

Older Americans across the country have felt the impact of the recession. When budget cuts hit Sacramento County in recent years, there was no more additional funding for Meals on Wheels, and it looked like thousands of seniors might lose a vital service within the Northern California community. That’s when the Asian Community Center (ACC) of Sacramento Valley Inc. stepped in. ACC formed a new nonprofit organization called Meals on Wheels by ACC and partnered with Bateman Senior Meals to serve more than 2,000 seniors each weekday in Sacramento, and since January 2014, West Placer counties.

“Sometimes in the media, you get the impression that seniors are staying healthier longer, and in many cases that is true,” said Donna Yee, CEO, Meals on Wheels by ACC. “The fastest growing group among the aged population are those 85 years and older. But as we see more baby boomers approach age 60, it is also true that many people are not prepared for old age. In the last decade, the fastest-growing group of people who needed medical assistance were those age 50- to 60-years-old. So we shouldn’t forget that there are quite a few younger seniors who need help, too.”

Meals on Wheels by ACC serves some 1,400 home-delivered meals a day and another 600 or so congregate meals at 23 All Seasons Café locations. Not only is the meal service a nutritional program and a friendly visit, it serves as a safety net to ensure that seniors are healthy. More than 500 volunteers and a staff of about 20 are trained to look for signals of distress, danger, neglect or abuse. Due to their close and regular contact with seniors, Meals on Wheels by ACC makes more referrals to Adult Protective Services than any other group in the county. Yee said.

(Continued)
Meals on Wheels by ACC delivers hot meals daily, Monday through Friday; seniors who receive frozen meals get a delivery of five meals once each week. The program includes nutrition education, and for those seniors able to visit an All Seasons Café, it’s an opportunity for conversation and recreation.

Meals on Wheels by ACC asks for a $2 donation per meal, but it is not required; on average, they receive 43 cents per meal.

For those living in the Sacramento area, it’s a geographically and ethnically diverse region, with urban, suburban, and many rural agricultural areas and a fast growing population of seniors. It can be difficult, unsafe or impossible for some seniors to walk or drive to a store that has affordable food, Yee said. Even for those who do have access to shopping, proper nutrition can be a challenge.

“It’s difficult to cook up a pot of stew or chili for just one person,” Yee said. “It’s a lot easier to just buy a can. But does that can of chili have enough nutritional value? Not always. And it almost certainly will have more sodium. It’s challenging for seniors, especially those living alone, to get high quality nutrition for the number of dollars they have and the resources they have available. That’s why programs like Meals on Wheels are so important.”

Donna Yee, CEO, ACC Senior Services

WHO GETS HELP?

Seniors in the Sacramento area who are homebound due to illness or recovery, disability or reasons that prevent them from leaving home receive home-delivered meals. Depending on their situation, homebound seniors receive a daily hot midday meal delivered Monday through Friday, or a weekly box of five frozen meals. For those clients who are able to leave home, there are 23 All Seasons Café locations where seniors can gather, socialize and enjoy a hot mid day meal.

MEALS ON WHEELS BY ACC SENIOR SERVICES

2,387 home-delivered meal participants
3,273 congregate meal participants
2,000 meal served daily
500,000 meals served annually in partnership with Bateman

WHY BATEMAN SENIOR MEALS?

“In 2010, when ACC took over the senior nutrition program, we were fortunate that Bateman wanted to partner with us in food production and to ensure that the meals were reliable and nutritious. In many ways it was the perfect pairing. ACC had the capability for delivery and social services, and Bateman had the production technology and expertise we needed and was not limited in its approach or methods used to produce meals. They can create frozen meals, bulk meals, individualized hot meals and shelf-stable meals, and we wanted to do a mix of frozen and hot meals. Bateman easily took on the technology the county had recently developed as a cost-saving measure and worked with us to ensure efficiency. In the first year, Bateman did a lot of research and work with its vendors to improve the quality of the proteins served. For example, they were able to increase the number of meatballs in a spaghetti dish while also improving the quality; it was quite astonishing. Our clients said they wanted more variety in the meats we offer, and again Bateman worked with our dietitian and nutritionists to make that a reality. They improved the variety and quality in the menu, all within our budget. It’s been a great partnership.”

Donna Yee, CEO, ACC Senior Services

PART OF THE FAMILY

“One of the biggest benefits of being part of Meals on Wheels is that everybody gets to know the client. That may be on the phone or in person, but there is no way somebody can be involved in Meals on Wheels and not have direct feedback from the client or their family in regards to the impact we have in their lives. In our program, many volunteers have known the seniors we serve for several years. They see them cope with disability or a chronic condition and even loss; our volunteers are often very much a part of their family. It’s a high-touch service and it’s easy to see why our volunteers and staff are so self-motivated. Our clients let us know that we’re doing meaningful work every day.”

Donna Yee, CEO, Meals on Wheels by ACC
Nutritious food drives Meals on Wheels WNY, but the organization is so much more. The programs are a daily visit, a friendly face and a lifeline for seniors in a region where 70 percent of clients live alone, and more than half are 150 percent below the poverty line. For many, the volunteer who delivers daily meals may be the only person an elderly or disabled resident will see for days, months or perhaps all year.

“We stress the human aspect of our program because it touches so many lives,” said President and CEO of Meals on Wheels WNY, Tara A. Ellis. This is AP style format and would like to make all similar references in this format. “For many of our clients, their children who are of working age are able to work because they have our program—they have that assurance that their parents will get this meal and this visit every day.”

In addition to meals—one hot and one cold—delivered around noon each day to participating residents, Meals on Wheels WNY provides nutritional supplements and weekend meals to qualifying seniors under the guidance of registered dietitians and a team of social workers. The program offers meals across five different dietary profiles. The organization also provides some 2,000 congregate meals each day, as well as emergency food kits for weather related closures and disaster preparedness. Every meal provides one-third of the recommended daily nutrition for those over age 60. In total, Meals on Wheels WNY—in partnership with Bateman Senior Meals—now provides about 1.2 million meals to the community each year. In addition, Meals on Wheels for WNY runs an “AnMeals” program to help ensure that clients’ cats and dogs are fed, enabling them the comfort of a pet companion.

“Our founders saw the growing need of an aging population in this community,” Ellis said. “As the aging population grew and many young people left the area, this was a way to provide a safety net that allows people to age with dignity and grace in their own homes. Not only do our clients have food insecurity, many experience isolation and mobility issues with no opportunity to access food even if they did have the funds to do so.”

Ellis said the program would not be possible without the 1,500 Meals on Wheels WNY volunteers; some 400 are on the street each day. As the aging population of the U.S. increases and many seniors struggle with limited or reduced income and increasing costs for daily living, programs such as Meals on Wheels are crucial. Approximately 55 percent of those over the age of 65 who are admitted to a hospital end up there due to poor nutrition, Ellis said, and every dollar invested in Meals on Wheels WNY saves $5 in healthcare costs and $50 of Medicaid costs. Further, every $25 investment per senior per year drops assisted living facility confinements by an entire percentage point!

“Each of us within the organization works to find our story and what connects us emotionally to what we do at Meals on Wheels. For me, I experienced hunger as a child. My father is a steelworker and that wasn’t a boon for financial success in the 70’s in Buffalo, New York. My parents struggled throughout my childhood. I remember very vividly standing in cheese and peanut butter lines, hearing my mother sobbing and wondering how we were going to keep it all together. They managed to come out of those circumstances and end up on the other side, but that strain of food insecurity and not knowing where such a basic human need is going to come from, it’s not something you ever forget.”

Tara A. Ellis, President and CEO
Central Baptist Village was rated in the top 20 percent of nursing homes in Illinois, and one of the Best Nursing Homes in the country in 2014 by US News & World Report magazine. Central Baptist earned an overall five-star rating from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

**FAST FACT**

Chef Knight is known at Central Baptist Village for his interactive and inspiring programs and demonstrations that promote education, nutrition, wholesome food and a generous portion of fun. The “Resident Chef for the Day” program brings residents, staff and their recipes into the kitchen to share their favorite meals. “Baking Buddies” pairs residents and staff with Knight and introduces them to his passion for sweet treats. Knight makes beautiful, artisanal chocolates in the old world style, with pure ingredients and antioxidant-rich dark cocoa.

The Renaissance of Real Food

By Davis Knight
Executive Chef, Central Baptist Village

With Our Food Rules, every day we’re creating something truly special for our residents. It’s a return to what’s really important and it’s as opposite as you can get from “production” food; it’s the essence of good, wholesome cooking. Our Food Rules not only inspire and motivate chefs, they create flavors and experiences that our residents crave, understand and relate to.

My approach to cooking is personal. I look at every meal from the perspective of “what would I do in my own home?” because for our residents, this is their home. The majority of the community at Central Baptist Village are women; they know cooking and have spent a lifetime making meals. While I may not recreate meals exactly the same way they did, I can use quality ingredients to create a memorable meal.

A big part of success in Our Food Rules involves education and engagement. Examples include our “Resident Chef for the Day” and “Baking Buddies” programs, which brings residents and staff right into the kitchen to learn, share ideas and experience our passion for creating quality and delicious food. This hands-on interaction not only creates a connection to food, but also allows us to further build relationships with residents.

From a food perspective, our housemade salad dressing is a great example of our efforts to bring fresh and healthy offerings to communities. When we began making our own dressings at Central Baptist Village, some residents were hesitant and said the house-made dressings didn’t taste like the bottled versions they had come to know. By replacing store bought dressings that typically include preservatives and sugar, we have provided a healthier alternative while creating new taste experiences for our residents.

Every day, our entire team works to communicate the thinking behind Our Food Rules. We talk with residents and hold demonstrations, and now our residents can recognize and name the herbs and ingredients in every dressing. Word has gotten out to family members who visit and they take that philosophy home and into their community. When we made fresh mozzarella cheese for a demonstration, the reaction was shock and awe, especially among the kids. They couldn’t believe you could make cheese from so few ingredients.

For me, food has been a part of my life since the age of three when my mom introduced me to the kitchen. She wanted me to know how to cook and be self reliant. I worked in the corporate and creative world for several years, and when I went to culinary school in my thirties, it was my mom who inspired my passion. She was beginning to show signs of multiple sclerosis, and I wanted to make a difference in a way that was personal, but also universal—I wanted to make a positive change with a return to real, wholesome and fresh food. My role with Morrison allows me to do that not just for my mom, but for every “mom” and resident we serve.