

CASE STATEMENT: REDUCING FOOD WASTE

Rose Villa Senior Living

Rose Villa is a retirement community focused on excellence in service and independence for its residents.

The community is also a green leader, having achieved Gold certification in Clackamas County's Leaders in Sustainability green business program. Their work is rooted in sustainability, including their approach to their food service, facilities, maintenance, groundskeeping and resident engagement operations. Their kitchen is a bold example of what can happen when a commitment to environmental stewardship results in a comprehensive food waste prevention strategy.



The Opportunity

When Chef Marty Bracken began working at Rose Villa in December 2018, she and Norine Mulry, Food & Beverage Director, were tasked with revamping the onsite restaurants' menus to reduce food waste and identify possible cost savings. The kitchen had already been following a number of best practices to prevent waste, including a first-in, first-out system for ingredient storage that managers oversaw nightly; prep procedures that made the most of ingredients; and repurposing unused or unserved items, like curing salmon from brunch to use in later meals and making grab-and-go options with unserved menu items.

**Food Waste
Stops With Me**

Their commitment to sustainability kept them interested in looking for new ideas. In January of 2019, Norine attended a regional Food Waste Stops With Me workshop and created an action plan for prevention. The plan aimed to identify sources of their kitchen's food waste and set goals to prevent food from being thrown away in the future.



The Process

The first step was taken in March 2019, when kitchen staff conducted two week-long food waste audits. The kitchen separated and recorded the contents of 595 pounds of waste in the first week of the audit and 480 pounds in the second week. Most of the scrap included inedible prep waste such as fruit and vegetable trim and eggshells, but also more dinner rolls than expected.

The kitchen staff began to identify strategies to lower the number of pounds they were wasting. Norine and Marty addressed wasted dinner rolls first and took the simple but effective step of involving customers in the process by asking them if they'd like rolls rather than automatically serving them. A menu redesign emphasized ingredients that naturally have a higher yield of usable material and less trim waste. Other updates to the menu increased cross-utilization of ingredients, especially between restaurant menus and catered events. They also increased plant-based options, both to meet resident demand and to decrease their meals' overall environmental footprint.

The Results

A year and a half after Norine attended the Food Waste Stops With Me workshop, Rose Villa's kitchen continues to deepen its commitment to preventing food waste and maintains contact with its regional partners, including Clackamas County Sustainability & Solid Waste. The combined efforts of Norine, Marty, and the rest of the kitchen staff have informed a rotating, seasonal menu and ongoing food waste prevention strategies that have resulted in a 2 to 3% savings in food costs — meaning money is saved, food waste is prevented and Rose Villa is able to offer delicious, sustainable food to their community while having a positive impact that extends beyond their kitchen.



Learn more about how you can reduce food waste.
FoodWasteStopsWithMe.org