

Business

Elmwood Kitchen delivers Healthy, homemade meals are easy and affordable for senior citizens

by Tracey Weiss

Elmwood Kitchen eases a lot of burdens.

For senior citizens, it means two meals a day and no worry about shopping or cooking. For adult children of those seniors, it means someone is looking in on their loved one and providing food that's cooked with care.

For six years now, Elmwood Kitchen has provided more than 600 meals seven days a week to adult day care centers and to senior citizens in their homes. Ed Sibiga in Newington has been getting the meals for a year and a half now.

"I get them a few days a week and it's not expensive," he said.

He found the service though a referral from the Newington Senior Center.

"They're so wonderful. They're left on my back porch in a blue bin I put out there and it's easy for me. I use a walker and I can't always get up too fast to answer the door," he said.

"Four trucks come in every day to deliver food to people between 9 a.m. and noon," said Andrei Brel.

The business is run out of one of Mr. Brel's four adult day care centers, Juniper House on New Britain Avenue. His wife Zhanna operates and owns Elmwood Kitchen.

"The idea for the business was Zhanna's," he said. "She thought if people at the day care centers enjoy the meals, then why can't we offer them to people at their homes?"

Elmwood Kitchen delivers to West Hartford, Hartford, Newington, Wethersfield, Rocky Hill, Bloomfield, New Britain, Plainville, Berlin and Vernon, he added.

Meals are monitored by a registered dietician, "so the food itself is healthy," Mr. Brel said.

Elmwood Kitchen owner and manager Zhanna Brel (left) shows new employee Marta Robles how to set up chickpea salad for some of the 600 meals that will be delivered to clients all over the Hartford area.



"We get a lot of referrals from hospitals after heart surgery. Most of the meals are low in salt and cholesterol and we can make meals for diabetes, so they're low in sugar if they want it."

Clients can also choose to have kosher meals, as well as a choice of American, Spanish or Polish cuisine. Vegetarians, those with lactose intolerance or someone who needs soft foods only can be catered to as well.

"Most people like the American choices," he said, "but by going to different communities, we're able to cater to different cultures."

The emphasis is on fresh and homemade quality food. Several chefs prepare the food each day.

One day in September the "American" lunch and dinner meals included chicken salad, tomatoes, bread, borscht, meatloaf with mushroom gravy and fresh parsley, mashed potatoes, milk, juice, cookies and a peach.

"We change the meals seasonally," Ms. Brel said.

"I love the food. The soups are excellent. They do a wonderful pea soup and a borscht. The chicken soup is full of vegetables," Mr. Sibiga added.

"I get Russian rye, which I requested, and one day we had pigs in a blanket golabki. That was excellent. I haven't had one meal I didn't like."

There are at least 28 entrees each month in addition to dozens of different salads, potatoes, rice, pasta and vegetable sides.

"We start packing up meals for the next day at 2 p.m.," Ms. Brel said. "They are refrigerated, but never frozen."

For fresh vegetables and fruit, an employee goes to the regional market once a week and they do business with Padula Produce, based in Hartford.

Another employee is responsible for bundling the meals every day and that means knowing each client's preferences. That's done with a specific label on each bag.

"This person," said Mr. Brel, pointing to one labeled bag, "does not like peaches, but likes other canned fruit." Another person prefers buttermilk over milk.

Two meals a day cost \$10 and one meal is \$7.75.

"Our delivery is reliable," Mr. Brel said. "No snow

Elmwood Kitchen, page 38

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Elmwood Kitchen/37

storm or hurricane is going to stop the trucks.”

Clients can order the meals for as many days as they wish and 24 hours notice is all that is needed to insure the meals start getting delivered.

“This is good for children of elderly parents who are in another state or can’t always be around,” Mr. Brel said.

“Our delivery people see them every day and know if something is wrong. It’s peace of mind. We have someone who lives in Texas and pays for his parent’s meals. If we don’t call, he knows everything is all right,” he added.

“For \$10 they know for sure that lunch and dinner is taken care of. There’s no need to go shopping or cook. We believe it’s a great service. It’s part of the whole concept of home care. We want to help clients stay in their homes for as long as possible.” **WHL**

Senior citizen may qualify for the Connecticut Home Care Program for the Elderly through the state Department of Social Services for financial assistance for meals. Elmwood Kitchen is at 1086 New Britain Avenue. Call 860-922-4466 or go to elmwoodkitchen.com.

Getting married? Let us know

West Hartford LIFE and our website MyWestHartfordLIFE.com are interested in publishing engagement and wedding announcements. Send them to Tracey Weiss at 106 South Street, West Hartford, CT 06110 or e-mail tweiss@ctlife.net. There is no charge.

Clients who purchase a meal plan from Elmwood Kitchen can get lunch and dinner delivered before noon each day. A typical daily delivery might include chicken salad, soup, tomatoes, milk and bread for lunch and meatloaf with mushroom gravy and fresh parsley, mashed potatoes, cookies and another drink for dinner. The cost is \$10 per day.



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MDC ROAD RECONSTRUCTION CONTINUES AT THE RESERVOIR #6 WATER TREATMENT FACILITY IN BLOOMFIELD

Sections of the Reservoir Roadways will be Temporarily Closed to the Public

The Metropolitan District (MDC) is continuing road reconstruction projects at the Reservoir #6 Water Treatment Facility, located off Route 44/Albany Avenue in West Hartford/Bloomfield. The purpose of these projects is to reconstruct and improve access and service roads in the plant and reservoir areas.

The next phase includes road reconstruction along the south side of the Main Plant Building leading to the rear public parking lot. To perform this work in a safe and efficient manner, **this road will be closed to the public weekdays during the hours of 7:30AM to 4:00PM from October 17 to October 31st**, weather permitting and absent any unforeseen circumstances.

The road will be accessible after 4:00PM on weekdays and during normal hours on weekends; however, there will only be a gravel surface until the work is fully completed. Appropriate caution should be exercised during this time.

The parking lot immediately off of Route 44 is not affected by this work and will remain open.

While the MDC regrets any inconvenience the temporary closure may cause, this action is necessary to ensure the safety and security of all our recreational users during construction.

For information contact the MDC's Command Center at (860) 278-7850, ext 3600 or visit www.themdc.com