

Many responsibilities for hospital's Dietary specialist

(Following is a continuation of a series of articles on different people and what they do at the McCausland Hospital).

Watching what you eat is not an easy task, but can you imagine having to watch what tens of other people eat? Jennifer Gatz's job is just that- and more.

Gatz is the Dietary Supervisor at the McCausland Hospital, and she is responsible for, among other things, making up the menus for the staff and for the patients according to their diets.

Gatz told the News that the menus work on a three-week cycle. Each week has its own menu, changing every week for three weeks.

She said that everyone is fed the same foods, that is, the staff eats the same things that the patients do.

Meals are adapted according to specific diets that the doctor has prescribed, she said. For example, there is diabetic food to adapt to that patient's needs.

Gatz also looks at people's diet histories and counsels them accordingly.

She has a budget to work with and is responsible for ordering the food for the kitchen on a weekly basis. She said she orders the food from the local stores, Costa's in Terrace Bay and the Schreiber Food Market.

Also, she supervises the kitchen staff and tries, she said, to "keep them happy".

"Because it is a small hospital, there is a homey atmosphere," she noted. "We don't have the volume (the size) of a big hospital."

Gatz has four cooks under her supervision- one head cook, one full-time cook and two part-time cooks.

Another responsibility she has is catering to the different hospital functions (such as meetings). Out of all that, she surprisingly does no cooking.

New hospital

Gatz has been working at the McCausland Hospital for seven years now. She said she was the first in her position at the new hospital.

It was a brand new kitchen with practically nothing in it. "It was a challenge to set up in the new hospital," she said. "I had to order the plates, knives, forks and pots and pans."

She had to hire the staff and set up policies and procedures- all the while construction was still going on.

She did not have any cooks in the beginning- she acquired them gradually. "I did all the cooking at first."

Gatz said that she gets feedback from her staff and the patients concerning food preparation and the different rules and regulations.

"I don't use all their ideas," she said.

She takes notes of what patients like to eat. "The patients in chronic care have a long list- we cater to them a lot," she said. "Sometimes they order perogees and they are just in seventh heaven."

Home Economics Diploma

Gatz said that seven years is a fairly long time to be in one place but that she has learned a lot here in Terrace Bay.

"I won't be here forever." She would eventually like to move up the job ladder. She said time goes by so fast that it doesn't feel like seven years.

Gatz told the News she received her Home Economics Diploma from Sir Sanford College in Peterborough. She is originally from Wawa, Ont.

Her mother and father and one brother live in Wawa. Her other brother lives in the Baffin Islands and will soon be the manager of the Hudson Bay Company, she said.

An interest in everything about cooking (nutrition and the composition of food) as well as wanting to work with other people is what drove her to pursue this career choice.

After graduating from Sir Sanford, she went back to Wawa. She worked as a general laborer for six months and "made a lot of money".

After that job she took a vacation to England. She started looking for a job after returning from that vacation.

Gatz heard that the McCausland Hospital needed a Food Service Supervisor. An interview followed and "now it is seven years later," she said.

Everybody happy

Keeping everyone happy is the hardest part of the job- the staff is the hardest to keep happy, said Gatz.

She would like to change jobs with another person at the hospital for just one day- a nurse, a secretary or someone in administration. "Just for one day to see the problems others encounter," she said.

"People who eat in the cafeteria might say the food is bad one day, or that it's not what they want. It's tough. I take it with a pinch of salt."

Spare time

Gatz curls in her spare time once a week in the women's league. She said she is a fair player.

She is also involved in the Rangers which is associated with the Girl Guides.

It is a non-profit organization that aims to help people in the community. An example Gatz gave is going to Birchwood and helping with a tea or doing dishes- anything to help.

She also knits, crochets, sews, reads and takes trips in her spare time.

She is planning a trip to Venezuela in March. "That was a last minute decision," she said.



Dietary Supervisor

Above is Jennifer Gatz, the Dietary Supervisor at the McCausland Hospital in Terrace Bay. Gatz has the responsibility of preparing the food menus at the hospital. In her spare time, Gatz likes to curl, knit, crochet and read, among other things.

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