



Eskenazi Health Awarded Foodservice Operation of the Year

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St. Charles, IL - FoodService Director, media partner of the Association of Nutrition & Foodservice Professionals, recently held the annual MenuDirections conference in Atlanta. At this event, various award recipients were acknowledged, including the 2018 Foodservice Operation of the Year recipient, Eskenazi Health. ANFP member Thomas Thaman, CDM, CFPP, director of food and nutrition services for Eskenazi Health, received the award on behalf of the hospital. "Eskenazi Health is a public hospital committed to serving the local community. Giving back to the community was the basis of our local procurement efforts," says Thaman.

Over the last five years, locally sourced food, beverages, and supplies purchased by Eskenazi Health has increased from 3% of all purchases to 52% of all purchases with a year-end goal of 60%. This increase began as Associate Director Seth Grant developed partnerships with various Indiana vendors. "In 2019, 52% of all purchases are manufactured and/or grown in Indiana, including 100% of our protein," says Thaman.

While the hospital has many successful initiatives and partnerships with programs in Indiana, it was recognized for its success with Meals on Wheels of Central Indiana. "The two organizations have had a 40-year relationship producing and delivering nutritious meals to the homebound in the metropolitan Indianapolis area," says Thaman. "Many of the clients depend on Meals on Wheels volunteers to deliver one main nutritious meal every day."

This partnership has grown over the years as both organizations have seen the impact of nutritional care that their clients receive. "Eskenazi Health understands the same commitment as Meals on Wheels; nutritional health and wellness of the community is Eskenazi Health's mission," says Thaman.

One of the partnership's many successes includes a frozen meal program for Meals on Wheels clients. This allows a community feeding, as multiple meals are now delivered at a time in larger quantities. This also provides clients with a choice of meals and a nourishing meal seven days a week, rather than the traditional five-day Meals on Wheels program. After implementing this change in the program, clients are eating better and are healthier, which has reduced hospital re-admission rates.

As for future partnerships, Thaman says the hospital is eager to work with organizations in Indiana. “When we started this journey, we had absolutely no idea how far it would take us and we were presently surprised at the scope and variety of products available in this state,” he says. “We love the fact that we can continually promote Indiana commerce and model to other organizations the importance of supporting the local economy.”

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