

Outstanding stewardship springs from a positive work atmosphere

By Carmen Carvajal

The Hospitality and Clinical Nutrition Team, Edmonton Acute Care, achieves outstanding results as stewards of the people, financial, and capital resources entrusted to them. Creating a positive work atmosphere, fostering staff pride in their work, and staff participation in decision-making are the reasons why the team composed of Sharon Sutherby, Amanda Magee, Roy Kennedy, Patricia Kossey, Alice Lee and Florian Lanctot is the recipient of the 2010 Covenant Health Mission Award for Stewardship.

The team oversees the supply of food, nutrition, housekeeping, portering, and laundry and linen services at the Misericordia and the Grey Nuns Community Hospitals. They manage the daily production of 1800 meals for patients and 1500 meals for elementary and junior high school students participating in the E4C School Lunch Program. The team also provides nutrition intervention and education to patients and manages two cafeterias and catering services.

"Good stewardship for me is looking at every little piece of the business and ensuring that we are good keepers of Covenant Health resources, so that money is used wisely and we can achieve our goals," said Sharon Sutherby, Manager, Nutrition and Food Services, Misericordia Community Hospital. "And probably the most important part of this is building a culture where staff trust us and feel comfortable providing their input in the decision-making.

Facilitating two-way communication is a critical element in building a positive culture among over 500 staff members with numerous job classifications. Rather than having a staff meeting with 100 people or more, each area meets in smaller groups so staff feel at ease speaking with each other and sharing common experiences.

"For instance, we brought the National Geographic video Celebrate What's Right with the World to our team meeting. The video talks about how we should focus on the positive side of things," said Roy Kennedy, Manager, Housekeeping, Portering and Laundry Services. "Afterwards, we talk about how much easier life is if we celebrate what we do right. It makes us feel good about our job and ourselves."

The Hospitality and Clinical Nutrition Team also encourages innovation by enabling staff to experiment with different ways of doing things while maintaining quality standards.

The team's approach to management is all about engaging staff so they can be creative in gaining efficiencies and minimizing waste. They believe that when staff take ownership of their work and the hospitals and take the time to celebrate achievements, the result is a strong, cohesive team that feels fulfilled by their contributions.