

Botsford serves up hot food, recognition to celebrate National Hospital Week

BY ALICE ASHMORE
STAFF WRITER

It was not your ordinary hospital food. Hamburgers sizzled on the grill and the aroma of barbecued chicken breasts wafted in the breeze around Botsford General Hospital last Tuesday.

The annual cook-out was in celebration of National Hospital Week.

"It's a time when we can pat each other on the back," said

Nancy Dumas, public relations coordinator at Botsford. The hospital has 2,700 employees and more than 600 volunteers, she said.

"It's nice to be recognized, and the food is delicious," said Margaret Stottler, an RN at Botsford for 10 years.

In a unique twist, it was the hospital administrators and supervisors that manned the barbecue pits and serving lines.

Stottler appreciated the role

reversal. "It shows me that the people in management are willing to serve us, too."

Jose Kottoor, director of physical medicine, spent part of the afternoon minding a bevy of chicken breasts on a grill. "Every year we do this as an appreciation for our staff. It's fun getting to be outside and to do this for our employees."

Peg Reihner, vice president of planning, flipped burgers on a neighboring grill. "It's a tradi-

tion. This is my 14th year being at the grill."

She said the barbecue is an important event for the hospital and its people. "This is sort of our annual rite of spring."

The fun-filled atmosphere prevailed inside, too, where serving tongs were used to poke fun as well as the food in the serving line.

Several hundred staffers at a time crowded into the hospital's community room to enjoy the food and the camaraderie.

The barbecue was served for all three shifts at the hospital. "This will continue for the afternoon shift, and then again between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. (for the night shift)," said Gerson Cooper, CEO and president of Botsford.

"It's a very popular event," Cooper continued. "All of the supervisors are either servers or cleaners. It is just another way of saying thanks."

Botsford Administrator for Fund Development Margo Gorchow said, "It's a way of changing the rhythm of the day. It is really about a celebration of the people who work here."

The National Hospital Week celebration also coincided with National Nurses Week this year.

"Nurses are of course, our lifeblood," Dumas said. She noted that Botsford, like hospitals throughout the county, is



Well done: Among those working the grills was Margo Gorchow (right), Botsford's administrator for fund development.

facing a critical shortage of nurses.

"From my perspective, nurses complete the hospital by the work that they do. They are patient advocates," Stottler said. "I love my profession."

Dr. Paul LaCasse, medical director at Botsford, noted the average age of today's nurse is 45 years old. "In 10 years the average age will be 60. Only 8 to 9 percent are under the age of 30."

Dr. LaCasse said, "The job we ask of our healthcare workers is a difficult one."

Cooper said, "When patients go to a hospital, it is very difficult for them to truly evaluate the efficacy of the care they receive. What they are experts in

is evaluating the kindness, consideration and attention that is paid to them."

He said that establishing a positive relationship between patients and nurses was crucial.

"Nursing is a very difficult and challenging job. There are more of us and fewer nurses," Cooper said.

Nancy Rakovits, RN, a recovery room nurse, has worked at Botsford for 21 years. She was among the staff enjoying the barbecue on Tuesday. "The hospital is showing its appreciation for our hard work."

Although she noted the food still tasted like hospital cuisine, she said, "They're trying, and that's what counts."

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take it down or come to the planning commission. They have ignored the ordinance officer and continued to expand."

There are standards for businesses and residential areas to do things in an orderly manner, to go through the proper channels, Gushman said. "The city's position has nothing to do with philosophy or politics, he added."

"When you walk under the arch, you will walk under a very aromatic trollea," said Susan Meinke, Christine's mother, who is excited about the plantings.

She expressed frustration after contact with city about issues such as parking space and the height of plants. She offered to paint the planters to match the outside wall or mortar it.

"I could never get an answer,"

she said. "Right now, it is called blight with a court date of May 22. It went from inappropriate use of a parking lot and now it is being deemed blight. It's just a garden. What is the big issue with the garden? It hasn't interfered with the parking because there is more than enough space."

There's safety issues, also, with the arch and the planters, Gushman said. "What if the arch isn't properly secured? What if somebody trips? What if you pull into the parking lot at night and expect it all to be a parking lot?"

Susan Meinke is continuing to obtain signatures from those supporting the gardens. The petitions haven't been submitted to the city yet.

The Meinke's gardens are


grown without pesticides and according to the lunar cycle.

"We need to reclaim our right to grow our own produce," Susan Meinke said. "You are in control, no one else."

The Meinke's have had much success with their plants, growing 20-foot corn stalks with two-foot cornucobs at their Cora Street home, Christine said.

Customers, like Charlene Helen Berry, of Plymouth Township, complimented the family who helped her overcome ailments with their organically grown products. Berry is a dulcimer player, who has entertained at the store. She also hosts a radio show. She supports the gardens.


"There's an effect of the greenery on the people," she said.



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