

Learn More About Our Coronavirus Food and Cafeteria Safety

*Café Services*

*Cafeteria Management Insights*

**A Unique Outsourced Food Service  
Management Program for a Special New  
Hampshire Non-Profit**

**CATEGORIES:** Corporate Cafeteria (9), Corporate Catering (4),  
Food Service Case Studies (25), Food Service Management (11),  
Health & Wellness (13), Self-Checkout Micro Markets (2)

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# Café Services



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Community Campus Corporate Cafeteria Foo...



In contrast to many national foodservice providers that have inflexible tiered offerings, Café Services offers maximum flexibility for clients' specific cafeteria food service needs and budgets.

One client with unique needs is the non-profit organization, [Foundation for Seacoast Health](#), which owns and operates a location in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, called [Community Campus](#). Community Campus is a multitenant non-profit space with a mission to serve all individuals in the seacoast community. The campus offers outsourced foodservice management to its tenants, which include people ranging in age from 8 weeks old to elderly.

On any given day, there can be up to 200 people at Community Campus as full- and part-time employees and volunteers of the non-profit organizations residing onsite.

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Plus, there is an early childhood education center with 150 children requiring daily USDA-aligned breakfasts, lunches, and snacks. The campus has a wide diversity of clients and visitors, many with disabilities, who can use a healthy breakfast or lunch. For instance, there is a day program for adults with acquired or traumatic brain injury and some of the individuals have deficits from strokes or accidents. The campus also provides services to seniors, young families, and low-income people who can enjoy a healthy and affordable meal while onsite.

To add even more to the moving target of people who may want breakfast or lunch at Community Campus, the location has shared meeting room space that can be used by any non-profit in the state or region, on a space-available basis for a meeting or event.



## **A Little History on Prior Cafeteria Food Service Providers A Little History on Prior Cafeteria Food Service Providers**

Prior contract foodservice companies met the Foundation for Seacoast Health's food delivery needs for several years. *"But as the children's programs grew exponentially," Deb said, "it became apparent that we needed more specialized services, particularly in regard to working with USDA requirements and allergy sensitivities for children's food delivery. We needed someone who had that as part of their core business – along with corporate dining experience."*

Deb looked at traditional vendors to support a corporate dining café and children's meals programs and had an additional consideration in mind. She said, *"I also wanted to find a creative food provider solution to reduce the required food subsidy."*

Foundation for Seacoast Health put out an RFP and received several bids. Café Services was quickly at the top of the list and has been the food service vendor partner since 2014.

Café Services is able to provide a high-quality and accessible corporate dining service to the clients and visitors of Community Campus while keeping costs reasonable for the Foundation for Seacoast Health.

Deb said, *"Café Services really understood the complexities of providing meals to children, and they work with us to extend a welcoming and caring environment to everyone who visits the campus for services."*

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Somersworth school district, comprised of seven schools.

*"This position is a good marriage," Michael said, "because I came from the school division and I knew the USDA applications, plus I ran three private restaurants for 15 years before joining Café Services, so I have the corporate dining experience."*

The café had to close for a week to have the café, walk-in refrigerator, and floors cleaned, and new equipment installed. *"Giving notice to tenants about the café closing for a week wasn't a big deal,"* Deb said. *"But any downtime for the children's meals wasn't an option."* Twenty to 25% of the families are on state scholarship or a sliding-scale fee and requiring the families to provide meals for their children for a week could have become a hardship for the families.



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Café Services worked out the meal plans with Seacoast Community School so there wasn't any downtime or any skipped meals. Michael said, *"We worked out of the Dover school to provide boxed meals to the children during that time. Then we moved in over a weekend and were up and running on a Monday morning."*

Deb said, *"We hit the ground running from the Café Services perspective due to Mike and his staff. They have been wonderful to work with and they are absolutely phenomenal when interacting with all of the different individuals. He and his staff are patient, kind, and empathetic. I really can't say enough about them. They've been a perfect fit for us here."*

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Another tenant at Community Campus is [Families First Health and Support Center](#), which just combined with Goodwin Healthcare. The organization helps people in the seacoast region of New Hampshire and Southern Maine who need health services, regardless of whether they have insurance coverage or not.

Michael said, *“They help folks with Obamacare or who don’t have insurance and need dental work and vision care for example. One day a week their health bus stops here. Another day, the vision bus. It’s really phenomenal for seniors and others in need to come to Community Campus and get their healthcare, and then come into corporate dining for a great meal, as well.”* The café always serves high-quality fresh food and has daily heart-healthy items on the menus.

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## Customer Service



Keeping an eye on the costs helps with the subsidies which enable Café Services to offer great meal prices. Recent examples at Community Campus include a scone with hot chocolate for \$3; and stuffed chicken, roasted potatoes, and fresh vegetables for \$6.50.

Michael said, *"We offer a fresh salad bar every day; a deli station where you can build your own sandwich with several thin and trim meats, such*

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homemade calzones, Italian food, buffalo chicken, an ice cream dessert bar, corned beef on St. Patrick's Day, and a cookie station for Christmas where people decorated their own gingerbread cookie.



Café Services has monthly specials and promotions. One month, the features were powerbowls and roasting. A breakfast powerbowl included noodles cilantro, tomatoes, with scrambled eggs on top. A lunch had a stuffed cranberry chicken with a roasted red potato and fresh green beans. There was a beef barley soup made from scratch. A lunch for the early learning center was a sweet and sour chicken with Asian noodles, bok choy, fresh fruit, and a milk.

*"We get great customer feedback quite often," Michael said. "And I'm always open to suggestions for improvement, for new food items, for anything the customer would like to tell me. I make sure people know they can get whatever they want. If it's butter, toast, hot water for*



Campus. It is an early childhood education center that serves children from 8 weeks old to 5 years old. The school is licensed for up to 240 children and currently provides daily onsite services for about 150. The school also subcontracts with the Greenland and Portsmouth school districts, to supply before- and after-school care for elementary-age students. Deb said, *"They have very specific licensure around their meal service for their children."*

Community Campus café provides meals five days a week to the children. Allergy sensitivities are quite important, too. *"Children can have allergies,"* Michael said. *"And each one can be allergic to something different. There are also food restrictions based on individual religious beliefs. We cater to each and every one of the special restrictions. Some children can't eat soy, some can't have dairy, some can't have soy-dairy-and-milk, so we cater to that child and alter the menu for them."* The café runs a six-week menu cycle. Frank Gillespie, the manager of training and nutrition for Café Services' school division, Fresh Picks Café, is the dietician who verifies that the meal plans for Seacoast Community School are in USDA compliance with the state guidelines.

With Seacoast Community School, Michael said *"There is no room for error in my eyes when it comes to the children. I've labeled every room for every child that has an allergy. We absolutely know where everything is going every day."* Part of Café Services training and customer service is talking to the teachers to make sure everyone has the same understanding.

The location is also unique in that it follows the Portsmouth school district schedule in regard to holidays and inclement/snow days. During



## A Food Service Company that Meets All Onsite Catering Needs

All onsite catering is through Café Services. This includes meetings and events, as well as daily catering to the children.

The children's meals are 100% catered. Each classroom uses real dishes and silverware. For each meal service, the food is transported upstairs on carts. Between breakfast and lunch and lunch and snack time, the dishes and utensils need to be collected and washed, dried, and ready to use again.

A fun catered event with the Seacoast Community Center children was a grandparents' day. Michael said, *"We did turkey sandwiches, whole grain bread, lettuce, and tomatoes. All the grandparents came in one day and made sandwiches with their grandkids. It was fun to see them all interacting."*

Michael said, *"The senior center provides a lunch to its members of soup, salad, and half a sandwich for \$5, which is catered through our kitchen twice a month."* Sometimes they'll have bigger catered events for line dancing, for instance, with about 60 people, as well as Thanksgiving and Christmas events which are easily about 200 people.

Some large catered events include donor appreciation evenings for the Foundation, as well as the other non-profit organizations on campus. There have been events for Board of Trustees, for the senior programs, and the children's programs, such as gratitude dinners, fundraisers, and employee appreciation events. Events have included large breakfasts,

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responsibilities for large events. *"We make everything fresh, always, and it's fun to do something different from the norm of corporate dining breakfast and lunch now and then."*

Perhaps the second largest organization in the building is [Krempels Center](#), which offers day programs to help people living with brain injury. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the lunch crowd expands to accommodate 80 or so people from Krempels. The café is used as a real-life learning experience as patients recover from a brain injury and relearn day-to-day life skills. The entire meal process from getting in line, ordering food, getting their food, eating their food, and cleaning up after is part of the Krempels program.

Michael said, *"Seventy-five percent of them are in wheelchairs or on crutches. They've had strokes, heart attacks, aneurisms in the brain. They are relearning how to talk, how to walk. It's just phenomenal what Krempels is doing. It really hits home to me. It could be me or you any day of the week. My staff and I truly enjoy helping them however we can when they are in the dining room."*

## How Café Services Stands Out from Other Contract Food Services Companies

Deb said, *"We are always looking to reduce the cafeteria foodservice expense for the Foundation since we are subsidizing people to eat there – employees, clients, and visitors. It's become an important fabric of community campus. I feel that Café Services has been very sensitive to that, they understand that, Mike does a great job of managing and*



Michael's prior years in the restaurant business showed him in real time how every penny mattered. *"I have a good basis of food costs,"* he said. *"Food cost is generated by sales and that goes back to eye appeal and customer service. Everything combines together to impact the bottom line."*

Each of Michael's staff members have food service industry experience. The early childhood education center coordinator came to Community Campus after a few years at another Café Services location. She handles the 150 breakfasts, lunches, and snacks each day. The deli, salad bar, grill prep person came from a different corporate food service company and has an exceptional eye when it comes to displaying food. *"She knows when something doesn't look right,"* Michael said. The utility person – the one who fills in wherever and whenever there is a need – has a bakery background and Michael counts on her to make fresh cakes and other desserts. *"She makes a phenomenal brownie,"* he said.

*"We all interact,"* Michael said of his staff. *"And we help each other. We're cross-trained in all aspects of running this kitchen. When there is an extra function during the day and help is needed making sandwiches and salads, everyone jumps in to make them together."*

Michael said, *"I have great people around me and I can't say enough about the corporate end of things either. If I call corporate, I have an answer for my client in a couple hours at the most."*

The district manager, like all senior management at Café Services, has been in the food industry for years. *"He's done a great job getting me*





in the early childhood education center, the corporate diners, the Krempels' patients, and everyone else who comes in for a meal.

## Relationship with Café Services' Onsite Staff and Corporate Management

The corporate office keeps in touch with Deb regularly. Most commonly she's touching base with Michael when she sees him in the café a couple times a week. Deb said, *"And when we need to discuss bigger topics, we'll meet in his office."* Once a year, Deb meets with Michael and someone from the corporate office to go over the budget, how things went the previous year, how things can be done differently, any price increases that are being contemplated, and so on. There aren't any surprises since Michael is always available and the district manager, Rich Kvetkosky, checks in and is on campus for big events.

*"Café Services can do whatever the client wants,"* Michael said. *"We truly cater to the customers. We're able to deliver excellent customer service every day because of the great fresh food we serve and the happy employees who have positive attitudes who interact with the customers."*

As a highlight of her partnership with Café Services, Deb said, *"Café Services took the time to understand our business model and the diverse population that the non-profits serve. They really put the right team together for us. I can't say enough about how important it is to have a kind, patient, empathetic staff that is sensitive to some of the challenges that the people we serve face on a daily basis. And with our customer*

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very beginning of my career in the Silicon Valley and now, since 2001 in the Boston Metro Area. While working my way up through the ranks, all the experience has led up to my current position as the Corporate Executive Chef for Café Services, based out of Manchester, NH. I have the privilege to be able to utilize creativity, research and technology to dream up our company's new culinary programs and custom menus for corporate cafeteria clients and bring them to life. Café Services supplies the resources to ensure success of our ever-evolving companywide culinary initiatives and I'm very grateful for the opportunity. Seeing the success of new programs in the field is my motivation. It's a win win.

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## CONTACT US

749 E Industrial Park Drive, Dept CS Manchester, NH 03109  
sales@cafeservices.com

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1-877-375-3246

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