

Abstract:

Today, more and more elderly are either active in local senior centers, or are living in assisted living cares and nursing homes. These locations are the new homes for many seniors; however, most of the time, senior facilities fail to incorporate a warm and friendly homestyle living atmosphere. In this paper, I approach the problem of dining services in senior centers, assisted living cares, and nursing homes throughout Knox County, Ohio. I explore the issue of local foods and what prevents certain facilities from using fresh ingredients into their meals. During my research, I follow Paul Higgins, a former chef of an assisted living care who has spent years attempting to promote local foods in senior centers. Along the side of Paul Higgins, I am able to travel to several senior facilities, speak with residents and managers, and the Area Agency of Aging. During the duration of the fall semester 2011 at Kenyon College, I collect through interviews and field observations, the knowledge of local food and I am convinced that fresh ingredients will increase the happiness and well-being of senior residents and diners. As Paul Higgins shares with me, I agree and find that simply nothing keeps a facility from using local foods other than the management. In order to have a tasteful, memorable, and social meal at a senior facility, the management needs to be well-staffed, active in using fresh foods, and emotionally connected to the residents.