



*The Florida Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
Innovation Exchange*

Submission Form

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<i>Date of Submission:</i>	May 11, 2009
<i>Title of Innovation:</i>	“The Bistro”
<i>Topic for Submission:</i> (Please choose a topic from the list included in the attached submission guidelines which best describes the innovation you are submitting.)	Topic: “Quality of Life”
<i>Audience:</i> (Choose one or more, as appropriate.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Affordable Housing (HUD, tax credit, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Assisted Living Facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Home & Community Based Services <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing Homes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retirement Communities (CCRC or Fee for Service) <input type="checkbox"/> All of the Above

1. **Description of Innovation:** Please succinctly describe the innovative program or service, creative idea or best practice and the resulting benefits to your organization or the consumers you serve. Limit the narrative to 3 pages, excluding attachments such as forms.

Imagine the frustration and disappointment when you have been looking forward to an evening out of “fine” dining with family and friends, only to have the day arrive and realize you will be unable to attend because of a physical ailment, or a transportation situation or any number of other problems that may potentially arise. This situation plays itself out in virtually every Nursing Home, ALF and Independent Living facility. At Mease Manor, we were no different. On one particular day, I had a discussion with a resident who experienced this very disappointment. While sitting at my desk, the solution dawned on me. If residents cannot get to a “fine” dining restaurant, then why not bring the restaurant to them?

That is exactly what we did. I created “The Bistro”. It is Mease Manor’s version of the finest dining experience our residents could imagine. It is presented to our residents once each month. Residents call and make a reservation, as we do limit the seating, by design, to ensure top tier service and attention. We convert our private dining room to a unique and elegant setting that rivals the finest restaurants. The evening begins with our residents arriving at 6:00 pm, at which time they are greeted at the door where the ladies are given a fresh flower. They are then escorted to their table, while a pianist softly plays a relaxing array of beautiful music. When all are seated at their reserved tables, Hors D’oeuvres begin to be passed, as well as a selection of wines being poured. The evening then progresses through a seven-course meal that may include Chateaubriand, Lobster Tail, Rack of Lamb, Veal Oscar, or any number of other mouth watering entrees. There are selections of homemade soups that may include, Red Pepper Gouda Bisque or Lobster Bisque. There are delicious salads such as Mélange of Baby Greens with a Raspberry Vinaigrette or Shrimp Cocktail. The meal concludes with the most tantalizing desserts from our dessert cart. The selection may include: Banana’s Foster, Jack Daniels Chocolate Fudge Cake, Tiramisu or many other “sweet treats”. Throughout the evening, the pianist plays soft dinner music, the wine is enjoyed by all, and the personal attention is second to none.

The response we have received has been overwhelming. Upon opening the reservations each month, they fill up within the first day. We are currently discussing the possibility of offering “The Bistro” twice each month if the demand continues at its current pace. We have residents who invite family and friends, as it gives them the opportunity to show them the lifestyle and options available to them, and best of all, it is right in their own home. We have had guests and family members comment that they have never dined in such a special setting and that it was one of the most enjoyable evenings they have ever experienced. We do charge an a la carte price which generally runs in the \$25.00-\$30.00/person range, which no resident has ever come close to balking at. If anything, we have heard “How can you present such a special evening at such a reasonable cost?”

It is a magical evening that gives back to many residents something they thought they would never be able to do again, that being the ability to dine out in a fine restaurant and sharing the experience with family and friends. That is what the entire program is about.

2. **Budget:** Provide information about the annual budget or total cost of your innovation (if a one-time expense) and the number of staff or volunteers used to implement it.

We purchased special separate flatware, china, glassware, table over-lays, etc., but this can be done very nicely without having to spend a large amount of money. It can also be done without purchasing any special items at all. You could utilize current tableware if need be. Since we limit the group to 20 people, it was not necessary to purchase dozens of items. Two dozen of most items were sufficient. How far you would want to go will dictate the costs you encounter. Since we charge an a la carte price for the meal, food costs are covered and there is no real “extra” costs when it comes to the raw food costs. It can be done elegantly by spending a little or spending a bit more -- the choice is yours. We do have 2 servers and a supervisor at each Bistro, but by adjusting their schedules, there is no overtime or additional costs for labor.

What we have found is the small initial investment we have made has been well worthwhile based upon the feedback from residents, family and friends (potential future residents).

A menu from “The Bistro”:

The Bistro

Hors D'oeuvres':

*Scallops Wrapped in Bacon
Port Wine Cheese Canapés*

*Red Pepper Gouda Bisque
Shrimp Cocktail
Chateaubriand Vin Surrey*

Or

*Savory Broiled Maine Lobster Tail
Fruited Orzo*

*Steamed Fresh Greens w/Mango Vinaigrette
Fresh Baked Croissants
Banana's Foster*

Or

*Crème de Menthe/Vanilla Bean Ice Cream
Selection of Wines Available*