

Ryan Tardif named Head Chef at Presidential Oaks

Presidential Oaks Retirement community recently promoted Ryan Tardif to Head Chef. During his 10 years with Presidential Oaks, Ryan has worked his way through the ranks in the kitchen. As Head Chef, he and his culinary team regularly serve 300 meals each day plus an additional 50 meals during special events.

Born and raised in Methuen, his culinary passion began as a teenager with his first job inside the kitchen of the *Hampstead Manor* in Methuen, Massachusetts. “That sparked my interest in restaurants,” he said. The youngest of five children, Ryan said neither of his parents were masters in the kitchen. His father, Richard, was Deputy Fire Chief of the Lawrence Fire Department and his mother, Beverly, owned *The Pet Inn*, a pet grooming business. “My Dad couldn’t even boil an egg,” Ryan said with a laugh, but said his father was a big supporter of his passion for cooking.

He eventually moved on to *The Green Barn* in Salem, New Hampshire and *Route 97 House of Pizza* in Methuen before enrolling at Essex Agricultural and Technical Institute where he mastered the skills of a “chef garde manger,” a French term for pastry chef. Through this program, Ryan said he learned fundamental knife skills, baking, buffet and banquet style cuisine, as well as restaurant management.

His culinary path eventually lead to Presidential Oaks Retirement Community in 2001 where he started as a morning cook. He has since completed a dietary and management course through the University of North Dakota. “I learned a lot in the course,” he said, noting that topics from managing food service to food safety and nutrition, and developing and maintaining a culinary budget were all covered.

“Working with Corporate Chef, Guy Despres and Culinary Services Operations Manager, Janice Faggiano has been a great experience,” Ryan said, adding that he has gained a wealth of knowledge from both of them.

“He’s an all-around great worker, said Faggiano, “He’s ambitious and he knows his stuff.” “Ryan is a hard worker. We have a lot of fun,” added Despres.

And what is Chef Ryan’s favorite food to make? “I enjoy making authentic dishes – Oriental, Italian, German and Southwest. I should mention our New England seafood for sure. Then there is comfort food – chicken pot pie, soups, and stews. I like to make sauces and gravies,” he said. “I’m proud of my knife skills, good sauté work. I am always open to other’s ideas and suggestions for things to make.”

He is married to wife, Lucy, and has two children, 12-year-old Kristyann and Justin, 8, and their 2-year-old German Shepard, Luther.

