

Spring Harbor at Green Island

How Community Transformed Resident Satisfaction Through Culinary Partnership (Columbus, GA)



The Background

Spring Harbor at Green Island, a Columbus, Georgia-based life plan community, faced a variety of challenges with two previous culinary providers, leading to an extended period of unsatisfactory dining experiences and outward frustration among residents. As a third consecutive change to their culinary services loomed, management was in a dire position to find a provider that would listen to and execute on their vision. In October 2021, the 296-bed community partnered with Forefront to revamp and diversify their approach to dining. The shared goal was to embrace a resident-centered dining model intended to promote independence, affordability, food intake, social engagement, and healthier lifestyle choices.

The Challenges

In early 2019, the community at Spring Harbor was struggling with prescriptive support services solutions that disregarded the explicit wants and needs of the community's residents. High, flat-rate meal costs, uninspiring dining options, and "one-size-fits-all" scheduled meal times ostracized residents and caused frustrations to boil over at community food forums.



"Our dining is now a true strength of our value propositions. Our partnership with Forefront has absolutely helped elevate our occupancy due to their unique, personalized approach."

- Shane McDougall, Executive Director of Spring Harbor at Green Island

Case Study | Senior Living

As a result, executive leadership made the decision to explore new partnerships in an effort to pivot toward a more resident-centered culinary and nutrition solution.

“We were falling flat on food costs, the look, and the taste. After two consecutive partners that missed our mark, we were looking for a total pivot to finally meet our residents’ wants and needs,” said Shane McDougall, Executive Director of Spring Harbor at Green Island.

The Solutions

Spring Harbor’s leadership team found comfort in Forefront’s approach that led with hand-in-hand partnership, transparency, and a shared intent to establish resident independence and choice.

“When we put this strategy together, we came to the table to see how we could execute their vision, not our vision,” said Ryan Williams, Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer at Forefront.

To alleviate the limited access to dining while increasing food intake, Forefront helped deliver Spring Harbor’s vision to renovate their bistro and

establish The Blue Heron Bar & Grill, an on-demand, upscale restaurant that serves affordable, daily specials and low-cost, to-go options. Additionally, Forefront’s commitment to dining throughout the continuum of care led to an expansive education effort and a “meeting the resident where they’re at” concept, delivering the diverse dining experience from independent living, to memory care, to skilled nursing, and beyond. Forefront’s on-the-floor presence and collaboration leads by example, through open communication and leadership in the kitchen, dining areas, alongside executive leadership, and throughout the community. Spring Harbor leadership attributes this effort as a reinforcement of Forefront’s culture of partnership and that our presence helps “define their community.”

The Outcomes

