



Key to Fine Cooking

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Michael Key, the new executive chef for Morrison's Food Service at Alton Memorial Hospital, is a Collinsville native with a long career in the restaurant business.

Michael Key Starts as Executive Chef at Alton Memorial Hospital

ALTON, IL – When visiting Alton Memorial Hospital, the cafeteria is more than just a place to kill a few minutes. New executive chef Michael Key will see to that.

Key began at Alton Memorial in late December after a long career cooking and managing for several restaurants in Illinois and Missouri. Most recently, he was the chef at Lockhaven Country Club in Godfrey.

“This is my first experience at a health care facility,” Key says. “It’s very challenging when you’re dealing with all the different diets. It’s a totally different animal than what I’ve done before, but I am really enjoying it. Maggie Heger (Morrison’s Food Service manager) and Robert Cousett (patient services manager) are just wonderful, and all of my co-workers are excellent.”

Key is originally from Collinsville and began cooking at a young age in a one-parent home.

“I found that I was pretty good at it and I enjoyed it, so that led me to consider it as a career,” he said. “I started at Andria’s Restaurant when I was still a teenager. I jumped right in and learned the butchering and everything else about the business.”

Key also spent some time with the old Stix, Baer and Fuller restaurants (since bought by Dillard’s) and also had stints as a chef and manager at the Olive Garden. He got his

formal training at a culinary academy at the Eagle Creek Resort in Findlay, Ill., located between Decatur and Effingham.

“I really had a lot of fun working for 13 years with Holiday Inn Worldwide,” he said. “I went all over the country helping to open restaurants in those facilities.”

From there he moved to Lockhaven and now to Alton Memorial.

“Michael is a great addition to our staff,” Heger says. “He is going to continue making our food service excellent.”

Key said he enjoys just about every cuisine, and especially enjoys Italian and Thai recipes.

“I love everything about cooking,” he said. “And it’s great to be at Alton Memorial.”