Oregon
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NEWS RELEASE
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Oregon Youth Authority hires nutritionist to ensure high-quality menus

The state juvenile corrections agency has hired a registered dietitian as its food services operations manager.

Elaine Adams, who has nearly 25 years' experience working in the health care industry, will be responsible for preparing consistent menus across the agency's 11 close custody facilities, ensuring the food service operation is cost-effective and managing food purchasing and operations of the OYA food services warehouse in Woodburn.

"Good nutrition is critical to the physical, mental and intellectual development of youth," said Colette S. Peters, OYA director. "Elaine Adams will work closely with our food-services employees across the state to ensure OYA youth receive the nutritious meals they need to get the most out of their treatment and education."

The agency serves approximately 2,700 meals a day, making food service essential to helping the agency meet its mission of protecting the public and reducing crime by holding youth offenders accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments.

Prior to joining OYA, Adams worked seven years as food service director for three hospitals in Indiana, California and Oregon, and also has experience managing food services for senior housing, for the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs domiciliary in White City, and for multiple facilities in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

OYA receives federal reimbursement as part of the National School Lunch Program, which requires participating programs to deliver USDA-required amounts of protein, iron, calcium and vitamins A and C; to limit salt, sugar and fat; and to provide a variety of foods including sufficient grains, fruits and vegetables.

A Linn County resident, Adams holds a master's degree in food systems management and a minor in computer applications from Oregon State University and a bachelor's degree in foods and nutrition from California State Polytechnic University in Pomona. She completed her internship to become a registered dietitian at the Los Angeles County/USC Medical Center in Los Angeles. Her master's thesis was published by the Journal of the American Dietetic Association.

"Youth who receive good nutrition, especially at breakfast, are less likely to become irritable, apathetic, lethargic or potentially angry or hostile," Adams said, "and more likely to experience success in learning and treatment." She said menus will reflect the different dietary requirements of young women and men.

"Kitchen managers and cooks in our facilities have their hands full with cooking and food preparation, ensuring food quality and safety, generating weekly food and supply orders and supervising staff and youth," Peters said. "A centralized menu will ensure we meet youths' nutrition needs while also delivering variety and staying within budget."

Local food service managers or cooks still will be able to customize menus for their populations by substituting menu items with similar nutritional compositions.

OYA has custody of approximately 900 youth offenders ages 12-24 in correctional and transitional facilities in Albany, Burns, Florence, Grants Pass, La Grande, Salem, Tillamook, Warrenton and Woodburn, and supervises approximately 1,100 youth on parole and probation in communities throughout Oregon.

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