

Familial Roots Drive Chef Chino's Passion for Food

Chef Chino Canapi recalls when he was a small boy, seeing his mother's and grandmother's joy and enthusiasm as they prepared traditional Filipino food for family meals.

"They were my inspiration along with my grandfather who was cook at a hotel in the Philippines," Chino said. "That's why I'm the executive chef at Kingsley Manor today. Doing this work has a place in my heart."



Chef Chino cooks up tasty dishes for Kingsley Manor.

As soon as he was able, Chino started from the ground up gaining experience anywhere he could toward his goal of becoming a chef. He was a dishwasher, worked in fast food and studied culinary arts at Mission College in Los Angeles. He moved on to hospital and restaurant kitchens, then got his chance to shine and share his passion for food and cooking in a family environment seven years ago when he joined Kingsley Manor as its sous chef.

"I was working at a restaurant and an old boss from a previous job was the executive chef at Kingsley Manor and he remembered me," Chino said. "Out of the blue he asked me to come to Kingsley as his sous chef. I didn't know what to expect, but wow, this turned out to be a great opportunity." After several years, Kingsley's executive chef left, but not before recommending that Chino replace him.

"I made it!" Chino said. "And I was, and am grateful for the opportunity. I've worked at many different places but there is something special about Kingsley. I get so much interaction with the residents. The residents are like my family and there is no better joy than to cook good food for your family. My mom and grandmother taught me that."

Chino enjoys creating a variety of interesting and delicious cuisines. On any given day, the dining room is filled with Italian, Mediterranean, French, Spanish, Mexican, Indian and of course Filipino selections, among others. "Our residents are very adventurous and appreciate diversity so they like the variety along with good old American comfort food. They make it easy for me to experiment with new ideas."

Chino is able to create menus for most diets, including gluten free, low sodium and low-fat, which residents appreciate.

“He’s a terrific chef,” said resident Virginia Elwood-Akers. “His daily specials are as good, if not better, than anything you will find at a nice restaurant. He goes out of his way to please you. He’s a special man.”

“He really makes an effort to accommodate everybody,” said resident Annabel Brennan, whose favorite dish is Chino’s spaghetti bolognese.

Even though he has realized his career goal, Chino remains humble in his work. He reminds himself of that with a computer screensaver that says ... “Stay humble, work hard, be kind.”

“My goal is to serve the residents the best food possible,” Chino said. “Our residents are a social group who enjoy good food and good conversation during meals. I’m glad I can play a small part in their joy.”