

Mother-Daughter Duo Finds Joy and Success at Canterbury Woods

Maria and Josie La Sala have quickly become known for being a mother-daughter powerhouse team at Canterbury Woods because no job is too big or too small for this dynamic duo.

Maria is an experienced dining room lead having joined the Canterbury Woods team more than 15 years ago. She has a long history in the hospitality industry, mostly working in housekeeping. Her daughter, Josie, has been a senior living coordinator in the marketing office since 2022. She started as a part-time, weekend receptionist in 2014.



Josie and Maria La Sala.

“My mom started at Canterbury first and she encouraged me to apply here,” Josie said. “Before I worked at Canterbury Woods, I would visit my mom at work. I got to know many of the residents and I imagined working here myself. When I started I think I already knew at least half of the residents and they knew me. My mom always told me the residents were like her second family. Now I know that’s true for me too.”

“I wanted her to get the job on her own,” Maria remembers. “I really wanted her to work here so I pointed her in the right direction but did not try to influence her hiring in any way.”

With little experience in food service, Maria started out as a server, learning on the job, but soon found herself loving the work, which eventually led her to be promoted to a supervisory role. “It is interacting with the residents I enjoy so much,” Maria said. “Sometimes this job can be challenging but I enjoy coming to work every day. I think it was meant to be.”

Although they both have “official” roles and duties, their willingness to pitch in anywhere and everywhere does not go unnoticed. When the dining room gets busy, Maria doubles as a server and

helps out with other dining room and kitchen work.

Josie's primary job in the marketing department is to help new residents move in to Canterbury Woods and support sales. But she also fills in as a vacation relief receptionist and part-time dining room server. She has spent time in the independent living and skilled nursing care center life enrichment departments and sometimes served as an escort, accompanying residents to doctor's appointments or to run errands. This is a testament to staff's willingness to pitch in where they can to better serve residents.

"I enjoy making each resident's day special, any way I can," Josie said.

During work hours, Maria's and Josie's paths cross only briefly as Josie usually works the day shift and Maria works swing. When they have time off, residents often ask either of them how the other one is doing. "Most residents soon realize she's my mom and they think how lucky we are to work together and they are right."

Although they see each other only briefly each day at work, Josie and Maria are very close. They share a love of baking. Josie's ultimate career goal is to become a private chef, using many of the skills her mom taught her.

Canterbury Woods is located on the Monterey Peninsula close to Carmel-by-the-Sea and Pebble Beach, one of California's most stunning locations. Residents stay connected with each other and with staff. They get involved and get creative with multiple events, life enrichment opportunities, activities and amenities.