At the end of every year in Residential and Hospitality Services (RHS), we celebrate our successes at an event called Values and Victories. We take a few hours out of a chilly December morning to reflect on everything our division has accomplished and all the outstanding experiences we have delivered to our Spartans and guests. This year’s theme was “Do you believe in magic?”

What we do is magical. There is no doubt about that. But like all magic, it’s an illusion executed by hard work and dedication often pulled off behind the curtain, invisible to our students and guests. We witnessed the magic this January during the polar vortex. As Michigan State University suspended classes for only the seventh time in its 164 years, RHS team members made their way to campus to take care of our Spartans. Team members volunteered to help in dining units, shuttled their fellow team members around in the subzero temperatures and worked into the late evening hours. I could not be more grateful for our team.

Some say that magic is ruined when the truth is revealed; that the effect is lost when details are explained. “Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain,” an average man once said from behind an imposing image. However, there’s something to be said for the work that is put into perfecting the magic tricks.

It takes magicians time and effort, training and discipline, to master their craft. Perhaps most importantly, it takes passion; the drive to perfect the trick and really wow the audience. They truly only get one chance, one moment to get it right. Sound familiar? In RHS, it only takes one interaction to leave an impression on our Spartans. We strive to do the right thing right the first time, but we do not have to hide our process. We want to celebrate our efforts.

This issue of Serving State provides a behind-the-scenes look into the rebranding of the Spartan Spirit Shops, REHS facilities and maintenance, the Thanksgiving Unity Dinner and much more.

In our great Emerald City, as it were, we treasure the details. We know that in every moment, every interaction and every decision there is a spark that can make an everlasting impression — and that impression leads to MSU becoming our Spartans’ home away from home. And as we all know, “There’s no place like home.”

Vennie Gore
Vice President, Auxiliary Enterprises
HELP TACKLE HUNGER FOOD DRIVE

March 11 - April 13

Proceeds go to the MSU Student Food Bank
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INTRODUCING OUR TEAM MEMBERS
Custodial Maintenance makes every effort to use cutting-edge technology to sanitize spaces while protecting the health of building occupants and the environment. Recently, the team started using 100 percent ozonated water. The crews no longer spray bathrooms down with chemicals but instead use hazardous-chemical-free floor cleaner and sealant. This leads to a reduced amount of chemicals washed down campus drains and an overall lower water consumption across campus.

The Facilities Custodial Maintenance team is comprised of more than just full-time team members. Currently, RHS employs 40-60 student employees who work seven days a week between 3-11 p.m. More than 30 full-time managers lead student and on-call team members in day-to-day operations.

The Custodial Maintenance team is responsible for cleaning and maintaining more than 7 million square feet of space, including 27 residence halls, 429 apartments in 1855 Place, 76 apartments in University Village and 345 apartments in Spartan Village.

Similar to how recycling is a priority in the residence halls, the Custodial Maintenance team makes recycling a top priority and is ramping up their recycling efforts.

Custodial Maintenance makes every effort to use cutting-edge technology to sanitize spaces while protecting the health of building occupants and the environment. Recently, the team started using 100 percent ozonated water. The crews no longer spray bathrooms down with chemicals but instead use hazardous-chemical-free floor cleaner and sealant. This leads to a reduced amount of chemicals washed down campus drains and an overall lower water consumption across campus.

September 2018 saw the launch of the new Live On website where students are now able to access a new and improved portal for submitting maintenance requests. Students living on campus can simply select their residence hall or apartment and enter their contact information and a brief description of the issue they’ve encountered. The request is then quickly routed to an available team member.
During carpet extractions, it used to take Custodial Maintenance crew members two days to sufficiently clean a 12-floor residence hall. With the addition of new ridable extractors, crew members like to call “chariots,” it takes team members only 45 minutes to clean the same residence hall. The chariots weigh more than 500 pounds and are used every day by full-time staff.

The Custodial Maintenance team is also responsible for replacing outdated light fixtures, some of them over 50 years old. One residence hall got an extreme makeover during winter break and fully transitioned to using only LED lightbulbs. This saves costs on energy expenses and further shows commitment to sustainable practices.

A residence hall Custodial Maintenance crew consists of two building service workers, two sanitation workers and one maintenance worker. These crews work collaboratively to respond to maintenance and service requests. Sanitation workers also clean the community.

REHS was awarded with two high levels of achievement attained in the cleaning industry — the ISSA Cleaning Industry Management Standards (CIMS) and the Green Building (GB) certification. There are approximately 100,000 cleaning organizations in North America, and only 250 have received this designation. The recertification with honors is the second time the REHS Facilities team has been awarded this distinction.

With the far-reaching day-to-day impact of their work, positive interactions with Custodial Maintenance team members can help make all the difference in a student’s Spartan experience.
Residence Education and Housing Services’ (REHS) Associate Director for Diversity and Inclusion Sharon Chia Claros discusses diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives offered by her unit.

**DINNER WITH 12 SPARTANS**

Chia Claros successfully held three Dinner with 12 Spartans events during the fall semester, bringing together an array of individuals; both graduate and undergraduate students, faculty, and staff. This initiative is fully funded by the Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives’ Creating Inclusive Excellence Grant.

“I did enjoy the dinner and think it was a great way to meet people you wouldn’t otherwise talk to,” said one student in attendance.

For each dinner, the first twelve students living on campus to sign up attended.

“The purpose of the dinner is to build communities of cross difference to encourage our MSU community to go out of their comfort zone, share stories and share the commonality of being a Spartan,” said Chia Claros, adding, “Also to learn from diverse backgrounds, cultures and life experiences.”

To motivate further dialogue, Chia Claros plans to give attendees notecards at the end of each dinner to encourage the exchange of contact information in a more formal process.

The spring semester will have three dinners: one in February, March and April.

**DIVERSITY/INCLUSION CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

Michigan State University is piloting a Diversity and Inclusion Certification program during the 2019 spring semester. Chia Claros along with the University Intercultural Pillar, in partnership with various departments, including Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives and Student Affairs, helped create this program, in part, to help prepare students for the workplace. This initiative is fully funded by the Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives’ Creating Inclusive Excellence Grant.

“A lot of employers now are looking for recent graduates or professionals who have intercultural competency and skills to interact with cross difference and are able to work with diverse groups of people,” Chia Claros said. “We’re hoping this gives students a value added to their degree.”

The selection committee is seeking 20 undergraduate students who have a graduation date of May 2020 or later to assist in the development of the program through over three semesters of participation.

MSU’s certification program was purposely structured to be different from other Big Ten School’s diversity and inclusion programs.

“We want to make this pilot program transformative,” Chia Claros said, “We are actually pairing up students with faculty and staff members, having students upload artifacts and reflections and meet cohorts, so they can show and verbalize they have the capacity employers are looking for.”

Students who complete the program will receive a certificate that can be added to their co-curricular record.

As Chia Claros asked, “We can have the most diverse campus in the world but if people don’t step outside of their comfort zones how can we learn from each other?”
Culinary Growth at MSU

1907

The First
Abbot Hall boasts the first ever college-operated dining hall.

1938

Just One
As MSU grows through its formative years, every student eats their meals in the basement dining room located in Williams Hall.

1940

The Rules
The Spartan Women’s League releases “Etiquette Books” to MSU students every year. These guides outline proper behavior, how to dress, “courting” standards, and acceptable table manners, among other things.

1956

SUIT AND TIE
All men who would like to eat in the Abbot Hall dining facility are required to wear suit coats and ties to do so.

1960

Dressing Down
The 1960s are a time when rules and expectations of Spartans are loosened. The strict coat and tie requirement for men had been in effect since World War II, but is adjusted thanks to the results of a student survey. The new rules require men to wear clean, neat dress slacks (not jeans or shorts), dress shirts (no T-shirts, knit shirts, plaid or bold stripes) and dress shoes (no slippers, tennis shoes, clogs or flip-flops).
The Breslin is Born
Breslin Student Events Center opens and begins its tenure as a venue for students and the greater MSU community, sponsoring major educational and entertainment events, and of course, concessions. Breslin is also home to Michigan State Basketball.

Get Read, Get Set, Cook!
The annual Culinary Cup competition is established. This annual "Chopped" style cooking challenge consists of multiple rounds of competition. Teams of two, representing MSU dining neighborhoods and the Spartan Hospitality Group, are given specific ingredients to prepare a dish.

Welcome, Sparty's
On-campus convenience stores, dubbed Sparty's, make their grand opening.

The Beginning
As a part of the Division of Residential and Hospitality Services’ (RHS) 10-year plan, Snyder/Phillips dining hall is the first of seven to be renovated. Over the course of the project, three dining halls will be LEED certified.

Special Events
Beginning in 1970, meal transfers are introduced to increase flexibility in the dining plan structure. Throughout the decade, salad bars, special dining rooms and special events scheduled in the dining halls are implemented with a continuous focus on meeting the evolving needs of MSU's students.
Culinary Growth at MSU

An Investment
RHS is dedicated to creating better customer experiences, without compromising efficiency. Because of these investments, RHS is able to move toward greater flexibility in formats and facilities. Sustainable practices are a point of discussion, thus the Farm to MSU program begins.

Accessibility is Key
The Combo X-Change program begins in order to make dining options even more flexible and available to students, as well as carry out the retail integration dining plan. Another key element to on-campus dining, the ever-popular Brody Square, is built and opens.

New Things
Spartan Signature Catering (now Kellogg Catering) is debuted as a way to improve flexibility. The dining venue at Owen Hall is renovated and opens as Riverwalk Market.

Another One
Holden Dining Hall is renovated. Sparty’s, which at this point has 21 on-campus locations, celebrates its 20th anniversary. Starbucks becomes a welcomed addition to campus in Wells Hall. And kosher meals become available in the dining halls.

Catalyze Connections
Dining continues to be a catalyst for developing on-campus neighborhoods, but additional focus is placed on being a stimulant for connections to broader communities such as international students, faculty and the surrounding community. South Pointe at Case Hall is completed, the mobile Eat at State ON-THE-GO Food Truck is introduced and another Starbucks is opened in the Broad Business College complex.
Culinary Growth at MSU

2013
The Vista at Shaw Hall is Renovated
Those dining at The Vista can now enjoy hearth-baked pizzas, hearty pastas, deli-style sandwiches, soup and a full salad bar—plus full breakfasts to jump start the day. Student Spartan Chefs are introduced to campus.

2014
Heritage Commons at Landon Hall is completed in August
The renovated dining hall features wholesome breakfast in the morning and protein dishes, salads, and soups in the afternoon and evening.

Options
Takeout in the dining halls becomes a tangent of the Combo-X-Change program.

2015
The Edge at Akers opens
Offering a diverse menu, from West Asian tandoor oven-made dishes to southern-style baby back ribs from a smoker, The Edge has something for everyone.

2018
More, more, more — 2018 and beyond
In keeping with the trend of making food accessible to students living on and off campus, students can now use their Combo-X-Change six days a week as opposed to the previous limit of five. Sparty’s Market, an urban market-style grocery store, opens in 1855 Place.
For the past 15 years, Spartans on campus have had the opportunity to gather on Thanksgiving Day and enjoy a warm meal among company. It all started in 2003 when Felipe Lopez, then an out-of-state student, invited others to join him for dinner in the East Akers lounge. Several students pitched in to purchase food, and 20-30 people from domestic and international areas shared pizza and bonded.

Juan Flores-Soto, one of the students attending, collaborated with Lopez to carry the concept forward. They were inspired by the opportunity to connect Spartans who might otherwise be alone during the holiday break.

Currently a coordinator for the Office of Cultural and Academic Transitions (OCAT), Flores-Soto shared that throughout the years campus partners have helped sustain the event. “I am extremely grateful for the support from RHS and other campus departments,” he said.

When he accepted his current role with the department in 2010, Flores-Soto was able to help make the Unity Dinner an office initiative that will continue beyond his time at the university.

Thousands of students have benefitted from the tradition that began in Akers Hall, with 488 signing in on-site this year, including 52 volunteers. In addition to RHS, 17 local sponsors collaborated with OCAT to offer food, games and other activities.

On the menu this year, among other delicious fare, was turkey, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, green beans, stuffing, pie and custom-image cookies from MSU Bakers. Attendees could show their creative side by decorating the tablecloths with colorful markers and more.

“This event provides a community-building experience for all who attend,” said Juan. “We talk about the history of Thanksgiving, why we celebrate, how we celebrate it and why we eat turkey.”

Beyond the educational component, an important goal of the gathering is to celebrate diversity at MSU, honor different cultures, and support students from various racial, ethnic, international and domestic backgrounds. From OCAT team members, to sponsors, to volunteers, strong partnerships built over the past 15 years will help this tradition continue to thrive.
Michigan State University is home to some of the most unique collegiate garb and, luckily, it can all be found within six on-campus Spartan Spirit Shops. About two years ago, there were five on-campus retail stores, all of which went by different names in accordance to their respective on-campus location. But when a sixth MSU storefront came to fruition, it just made sense for each location to come together under one uniform brand. Before the unification, the five existing stores were located at Forest Akers Golf Courses (east and west), Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center, MSU Union and MSU Tennis Center.
The biggest advantage we have is we are smaller — we’re more like a boutique,” Benkert says. “We have individual buyers with a lot of experience on campus. Other shops are third-party owned, the buyer is corporate and they don’t necessarily understand everything about the Midwest and MSU.”

Another component that sets Spartan Spirit Shops apart from the rest is an updated social media presence advertising sales, linking to the online store and interacting with guests.

“Everybody is trying to get a piece of the retail pie for MSU, and social media allows us to be right in front of everybody,” Benkert says. “It’s a natural extension of our brand, relatively inexpensive in comparison to other media forms and where the future is going.”

Though the six stores go by the same name now, the merchandise sold is handpicked, unique and unparalleled by other retailers. Take a walk through each of the newly-branded stores below and see for yourself!

**Spartan Spirit Shop at MSU Union**
This is where students, faculty, staff and alumni meet to make that perfect campus visit last with a special MSU-logo apparel item or accessory. It is also the home of Commencement Connection, where excited graduates “to be” come to find their caps, gowns, diploma frames and all the accessories they need to make their graduation even more memorable.
MEET RHS
INTRODUCING OUR TEAM MEMBERS

MEET JENNIFER DAWSON
HOMETOWN: Davison, Michigan
JOB TITLE: Auxiliary Enterprises Finance and Business Office Accountant
TIME AT MSU: Five months

CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE?
I work on the reconciliation team for dining, which includes brands like Eat at State and Sparty’s. I work with the student teams to make sure everything is going smoothly on campus.

WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT BEING AN RHS TEAM MEMBER?
The sense of community and friendliness. Everyone is like one big family.

WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE PIECE OF CLOTHING YOU OWN?
Jeans.

WHAT HOBBY WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET INTO?
Yoga! I just started taking classes at IM East and West.

WHAT JOB WOULD YOU BE TERRIBLE AT?
An elementary school teacher.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEAL?
Pepperoni pizza.

WHAT SONG DO YOU KNOW EVERY WORD TO?
Anything by Taylor Swift — I love her new music.

FAVORITE KIND OF MUSIC?
Taylor Swift and anything on the top 40.

WHAT’S YOUR IDEAL WEEKEND LOOK LIKE?
I always go out to dinner on Friday nights. I’m new to the area, so I’ve been trying to visit different spots and breweries around Lansing. Then, I would binge-watch Netflix.

WHAT’S THE FARthest YOU’VE EVER BEEN FROM HOME?
Riveria Maya in Mexico.

WHAT COULD YOU GIVE A 40-MINUTE PRESENTATION ON WITH ABSOLUTELY NO PREPARATION?
Giving a presentation with no preparation is one of my nightmares, but the one thing I could do it on is my family and friends.

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU THINK EVERYONE SHOULD DO AT LEAST ONCE IN THEIR LIVES?
Go skydiving.

WHAT’S THE BEST WAY TO START A DAY?
With a cold glass of ice water.
CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE?
I get stationed to a pod. Then I have my Bible – that’s my journal of everything that we are serving that week. I deal with my teammates, make a lot of food dealing with raw meats. I do a lot of cooking and running around. I walk probably eight miles a day. I do a lot of organizing and teaching because I have a lot of experience outside of here.

WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT BEING AN RHS TEAM MEMBER?
I like how unlike any other job I’ve had, I have extreme exposure to different cultures. I think that’s very important for perspective and its very interesting. I look forward to continuously learning.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE PIECE OF CLOTHING YOU OWN?
Does a blanket count? I have an old afghan blanket that’s all retro colors, which my grandmother made me before she passed away and I love that thing.

WHAT HOBBY WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET INTO?
Woodworking.

WHAT JOB WOULD YOU BE TERRIBLE AT?
Probably an unemployment office employee.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE DRINK?
A Capri-Sun.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEAL?
Beef Wellington, it’s a roast of beef and then crusted with bread — I’ve only had it a couple of times, but it’s rare and decadent.

ARE YOU TYPICALLY EARLY OR LATE?
Always early.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW MORE ABOUT?
People.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS GUARANTEED TO MAKE YOUR DAY BETTER?
Knowing I put my hard work in and earned my money.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE KIND OF MUSIC?
Mostly ‘90s. Any kind of genre from the ‘90s — I was born in ‘86.

WHAT’S THE FARTHEST YOU’VE EVER BEEN FROM HOME?
Probably San Antonio, Texas. I lived there for a year.

WHAT COULD YOU GIVE A 40-MINUTE PRESENTATION ON WITH NO PREPARATION?
How to make a pope-pie pizza.

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU THINK EVERYONE SHOULD DO ONCE IN THEIR LIVES?
Take a risk.

WOULD YOU RATHER GO HANG GLIDING OR WHITE WATER RAFTING?
White water rafting!

WHAT’S THE BEST WAY TO START A DAY?
Cup of coffee and sun shining.
CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR NEW ROLE?
As the executive director for Culinary Services, I oversee the culinary operations, including Dining, Retail, and Support Services. Prior to this role, I worked at the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center. I was brought in as a rooms division manager and then transitioned into the general manager role.

WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT BEING AN RHS TEAM MEMBER?
Just being in the atmosphere and in the environment. I love being surrounded by so many great people and resources. There’s a lot of room for growth and development and a lot of opportunity to build connections across the division.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE PIECE OF CLOTHING YOU OWN?
My go-to is a light pink Lululemon sweatshirt, it’s just so comfortable.

WHAT HOBBY WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET INTO?
I don’t really have a lot of hobbies. But I like to run, and I have two sons. I also like to cook, so I guess I could start cooking more.

WHAT JOB WOULD YOU BE TERRIBLE AT?
A scientist – I just don’t see me being stuck in a lab anywhere.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEAL?
I don’t really have a favorite meal, because I enjoy all food, but it’d be a meal I get to prepare with my family and share together.

ARE YOU TYPICALLY EARLY OR LATE?
Early. I hate being late.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW MORE ABOUT?
I wish I knew more about Ultra running, because I want to do an ultra-marathon.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS GUARANTEED TO MAKE YOUR DAY BETTER?
The simple things.

WHAT DOES YOUR IDEAL WEEKEND LOOK LIKE?
Spending time with my family and also going outdoors.

WHAT’S THE FARthest YOU’VE EVER BEEN FROM HOME?
I’ve traveled to England.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE KIND OF MUSIC?
Probably R&B. I kind of just put my phone on shuffle and listen to whatever comes on next.

WHAT COULD YOU GIVE A 40-MINUTE PRESENTATION ON WITH NO PREPARATION?
Probably being a professional and being a mom and managing that work-life piece.

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU THINK EVERYONE SHOULD DO ONCE IN THEIR LIVES?
I’m going to say travel abroad, but you should definitely do that more than once in your life.

WHAT’S THE BEST WAY TO START A DAY?
A good cup of coffee.
MEET ALEX LORENCZ
HOMETOWN: Chesaning, Michigan
JOB TITLE: Spartan Hospitality Group Forest Akers Operations Manager and PGA Professional
TIME AT MSU: Eight years

CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE?
I run the range staff, hire, train and oversee custodial staff, teach lessons to all age groups, fit players for clubs. And Forest Akers is ranked as a top 50 public golf course range by Golf Range Magazine, which is a joy to uphold.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT BEING AN RHS TEAM MEMBER?
The people. I am a people person and interacting with team members and guests is the highlight of my day.

WHAT HOBBY WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET INTO?
Guitar.

WHAT JOB WOULD YOU BE TERRIBLE AT?
A monotonous cubicle desk job.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE DRINK?
Coffee.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEAL?
Chicken wings.

WHAT SONG DO YOU KNOW EVERY WORD TO?
Any Eminem song.

ARE YOU TYPICALLY EARLY OR LATE?
Early.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW MORE ABOUT?
I wish I had more mechanical knowledge so I could fix personal and work vehicles with ease.

WHAT DOES YOUR IDEAL WEEKEND LOOK LIKE?
Weather permitting, it would start with a round of golf and end hanging with family.

WHAT'S THE FARTEST YOU'VE EVER BEEN FROM HOME?
Jamaica.

WHAT COULD YOU GIVE A 40-MINUTE PRESENTATION ON WITH ABSOLUTELY NO PREPARATION?
Club fitting.

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU THINK EVERYONE SHOULD DO AT LEAST ONCE IN THEIR LIFE?
Hit a solid golf shot. Even with people who have never played before, their eyes just light up when they hit one.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT ARE GUARANTEED TO MAKE YOUR DAY BETTER?
Coffee. Just kidding, I think having a positive attitude helps the most.

WOULD YOU RATHER GO HANG GLIDING OR WHITE WATER RAFTING?
Hang gliding.

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO START A DAY?
With coffee. 😊