Visit MSU Bakers’ new storefront

Customers can now visit MSU Bakers to purchase fresh-baked bagels, breads, cookies, doughnuts and more. Free, ample parking makes pickup and purchasing a breeze!

Follow signs to customer parking and enter through the west side of the building.
RHS THEN AND NOW: SUPPLEMENTING STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH OUTSTANDING EXPERIENCES

A MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR AUXILIARY ENTERPRISES

“Our students, and their academic success and wellbeing, are the lifeblood of our division. We will endeavor to provide a community for them. We must become a family that supports and offers security to them.”

The Division of Residential and Hospitality Services (RHS) has come a long way since 2008. When we embarked on the development of a comprehensive strategic plan in 2007, we focused on how our division would find the optimal balance of size while prioritizing improvements to offer desirable options for students. The Spartan Experience needed to align with academics, student development and the residential experience. How could we appeal to all those value propositions while remaining financially stable and responsible in the long term?

This plan led to many changes, including the rebranding from the Division of Housing and Food Services to our beloved Residential and Hospitality Services. It also paved the way for the creation of the MSU Neighborhoods, which capitalized on the needs of the Millennial generation and the refocusing of our “integrated dining experience,” meeting the varied needs of the MSU community at large. We’ve enhanced our facilities. We’ve reorganized our services. These changes and more have helped create a community and an environment that fosters bold, formative ideas for the division. Of course, there is certainly more to do.

It is true that Michigan State University is currently in transition, and that can be felt across the institution. This transition gives us the opportunity to evolve, to improve and also to reflect on our purpose. As we navigate this difficult time in MSU’s story, we must not waver in serving our students and guests. We will continue to anticipate their needs. We will remain audacious and use our imaginations to envision what we can be and what we can provide for them. We are committed to being a better place tomorrow than we are today.

At the core of the 2008 strategic plan were several guiding principles, including being customer-driven, serving the educational mission and championing a high-performance culture. Those same principles will guide us through the next iteration of the strategic plan.

This issue of Serving State provides a glimpse into some of the ways that RHS has grown in the past 10 years and where we’re headed in the next 10. Quality service will continue to be at the heart of our value system. Our students, and their academic success and well-being, are the lifeblood of our division. We will endeavor to provide a community for them. We must become a family that supports and offers security to them. And it is essential we deliver an outstanding Spartan experience to all we serve.

Vennie Gore
Vice President, Auxiliary Enterprises
CONVENIENCE AND VARIETY

- Use meal accesses to bring family, friends, colleagues and guests to eat with you in the dining halls.
- Faculty and Staff dining plans don’t expire — you can use your meals as long as your dining plan is active.
- Enjoy the convenience of walking to lunch without the stress of driving off campus and searching for parking.

Order your plan **ONLINE** at eatatstate.com/diningplans, **IN PERSON** at Culinary Services Office, 1855 Place, 550 S. Harrison Road or **CALL** 517-355-2274, Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
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INTRODUCING OUR TEAM MEMBERS

1 a culture of change

In October 2008, the Division of Housing and Food Services formally changed its name to Residential and Hospitality Services. The name shift signaled a culture of change within the division and serves as a constant reminder of opportunity and growth among the MSU community.

2 focusing on the Spartan experience

RHS realigned to help students establish a strong foundation and connection with the university. This included a new collaboration between Campus Living Services and the Department of Residence Life as well as moving to a more “integrated dining experience” in students’ residence halls. In addition, divisional brand managers were moved to their respective departments to better assist units in serving students and guests.

3 establishing neighborhoods

Previously aligned based on physical attributes and natural boundaries, the re-envisioned layout of campus was strategically created to accommodate administrative and financial realities. The rearrangement allowed for the creation of MSU Neighborhoods (previously known as residential zones) by revitalizing residential spaces and dining halls. The neighborhoods now play an integral role in establishing an inclusive culture within MSU, creating a sense of place and belonging at a student level and creating opportunities for student success.

4 nucleus of the neighborhood

Five Neighborhood Engagement Centers were strategically placed throughout campus, packed with important resources such as Math Learning Centers and Writing Centers to help students be academically successful. The space itself acts as an environment in which students can connect with faculty, support staff, other students and resources in a space close to where they live.
5 door access
Living wings in residence halls are locked 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and a valid MSU ID card is required to gain access and to activate elevators within the residence halls. Among one of the biggest additions to increase safety in the residence halls was the implementation of building access technology that restricts door access to the exterior doors, living wings and elevators.

6 leading with food
Focusing on culinary excellence, RHS has created neighborhood dining experiences that have resulted in national recognition and enthusiastic response from the campus community. This was accomplished in part by renovating and re-branding several dining halls. The integrated dining program provides a seamless experience for the customer and leverages shared resources complete with the Spartan experience.

7 branding realities and opportunities
A call for greater integration and appropriate capital investments for campus auxiliary facilities and their programs were tied closely to an effort to enhance student life. Renovations and improvements have been made to the Breslin Student Events Center, MSU Tennis Center, Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, Forest Akers Golf Courses, and the MSU Union improving service to the MSU community and enhancing the overall student experience.

8 long-term sustainability
As a leader in sustainability among its peers, RHS strives to minimize its carbon footprint by supporting stewardship, fiscal responsibility and partnerships. The division has taken innovative and balanced initiatives toward energy, water, food waste and sustainable procurement strategies that has resulted in RHS diverting more than 20 million pounds of material from landfills over the past 10 years.

9 a social environment
The division as a whole has become quick to adapt to change, especially when it comes to the world of communications. Going beyond the realm of print, RHS has stepped into the social media age to help develop successful strategies to reach its audience and connect with MSU students to relay instant information.

10 1855 Place
Opened in fall 2017, 1855 Place was built to expand the living-learning environment on the Michigan State campus while fostering student engagement in the community. Collectively, the housing includes 429 units that house up to 1,200 students and their families, while MSU’s first grocery store, Sparty’s Market, stocks more than 4,500 products, and the office building is working toward LEED Silver certification.
Residence Education and Housing Services’ (REHS) Associate Director for Diversity and Inclusion Sharon Chia Claros discusses the many diversity, inclusion, equity and social justice trainings offered by her department.

**DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TAILORED TRAININGS**

These personalized diversity and inclusion trainings specifically tailored to meet the needs of a requesting RHS team are facilitated by Chia Claros. The trainings are in place to give team members the tools, resources and strategies to make their workplace environment more inclusive in hopes these strategies will translate to interactions with student team members.

“I’m a very big believer that our supervisors have more knowledge and context into what their student teams need,” Chia Claros stated. “Initially, the goal [of the tailored trainings] is to be more intentional in terms of meeting the needs of our different student team members and building off of the bias training as it relates to bias in the workplace, which all full-time employees are required to take.”

Chia Claros asks for a two-week notification when signing up for the trainings to give herself enough time to shape the conversation beforehand.

“I take what their needs are and create a tailored presentation that would keep the people attending the training and the people they want to educate engaged in the process,” she said.

By partnering with the intercultural work team at REHS, Chia Claros has affirmed their end goal is to be more proactive when it relates to having conversations around inclusion. Anyone can sign up for the trainings. They’ve even been used outside the division for associations such as the Associated Students of MSU regarding free speech.

“We want to make sure each community leader, on a one-on-one level and a collective level, treats each other with compassion, understanding and empathy,” Chia Claros said. “We need to provide more opportunities for folks to connect with each other.”

**QUILL TRAININGS**

Similar to the diversity and inclusion tailored trainings, Chia Claros, along with the Office of Regulatory Affairs and the LGBT Resource Center, have initiated Queer Inclusive Learning and Leadership (QuILL) trainings.

“It’s a professional development opportunity, and it’s supplementary: If you really value diversity, inclusion, equity and social justice as a supervisor, then you may want to attend this because you will most likely benefit and also interact with folks who identify as queer and gender non-binary,” Chia Claros said.

The QuILL Web Course: Foundations of Queer Inclusive Learning and Leadership, part one of the QuILL trainings, is conducted through an online module comprised of definitions, acronyms and brief introductions to the difference between gender, sex and gender identity.

The second part of the training – QuILL Workshop: Creating Queer Inclusive Learning and Leadership Environments – looks at different case studies within the context of MSU and the resources given to LGBTQ+ students, guests and team members on campus. The workshop is an in-person training and includes a group of 30-40 people who delve deep into what it means to create queer-inclusive learning and leadership environments. They touch on what it means to be a supervisor who is queer-friendly and queer-inclusive and give examples on how to create a queer-inclusive environment in the workplace.

“It’s important we have these trainings here to learn more about our queer communities, what their needs are and what they struggle with,” Chia Claros said.
HATE HAS NO HOME HERE AND SPARTAN SPOTLIGHT CAMPAIGNS

Hate Has No Home Here is a campaign that rolled out following multiple bias incidents in the residence halls in hopes of creating something that would hit social media and highlight the intolerance MSU has on incidents of hate. Posters and stickers have been executed by RHS Information Services Creative Services and displayed throughout the residence halls by resident assistants.

“Especially with the polarization of our country, we wanted to get that message out there that Hate Has No Home Here, and we wanted to enhance that with the Spartan Spotlight,” Chia Claros stated.

Spartan Spotlight is a similar campaign run by REHS that captures the narratives of students living on campus who are trying to affect change. The first feature talks about experiences of people of color in a predominantly white campus. Another highlights the experience of a student who is a first-child immigrant.

“We wanted to really highlight the experiences and narratives of folks who don’t necessarily get a chance or opportunity to do that otherwise,” Chia Claros said.

OUR PLEDGE AND PROMISE

Chia Claros said she and her team have developed a “pledge as a department to continue our work toward diversity and inclusion, equity and social justice,” which was sent out to Michigan State students, team members and peers by REHS Executive Director Dr. Ray Gassar Feb. 26, 2018. The document reads:

“We, as the Department of Residence Education and Housing Services, have reflected upon our fundamental mission to foster a diverse, inclusive and safe environment for all Spartans living in our on-campus communities.”

The document goes on to state an REHS pledge to further support students and improve campus climate as it pertains to sexual violence, racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, religious oppression and other forms of marginalization.

Chia Claros explains, “We hold ourselves accountable for these following actions: offering resources, training, conversation tools for supervisors, resources for survivors, racial justice, and initiatives that support and empower women, people of color, the LGBTQ+ community and more.”

In the future, REHS is planning to form a Sexual Assault Task Force specific to Live On students to increase sexual assault awareness, prevention and response. The task force will also focus on bystander-intervention skills, creating forums for team members to talk about their experiences and give feedback on how to make the environment more inclusive.

“We want to learn how we can partner with SARV [Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence], MSU SAP [Sexual Assault Program], etc., and how to start building relationships with fraternities and sororities,” Chia Claros said. “How do we make our headways into these spaces? Because we know our students are a part of these clubs and organizations as well.”

One idea revolves around making use of certain months of the year recognized nationally, such as Black History Month (February) or Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April), to push out content and create awareness. While the Diversity and Inclusion team recognizes it won’t be relative to just that month, it is important to capitalize and put our programming that connects with student groups, campus partners, faculty and other units within student affairs to further a campus-wide collaborative effort.
RHS 2026: Envisioning the Future
Do you ever find yourself awake in the middle of the night thinking about what the future holds? These worries can creep up on you like the monsters in your childhood closet; they are triggered by uncertainty, provoking anxiety and a fear of the unfamiliar.

Institutions like MSU, particularly its student experience-focused divisions like Residential and Hospitality Services (RHS) have these same general worries. What will the future bring? How will students change in the coming years? Does the organization have the ability to adapt to the varying needs of incoming generations? These questions and more linger in the minds of RHS leadership and many other team members when their heads hit the pillow.

So, the question becomes, how does RHS combat these worries? The answer seems simple: by planning.

Research and the consideration of options allows for selecting a path, ultimately settling minds. For RHS, that researching and weighing of options comes in the form of a strategic plan: the RHS 2026 Strategic Plan.

RHS has always played a significant and complementary role in the mission of higher education. It could be argued the division is the foundation of the overall Spartan experience. RHS’ ultimate goal is to contribute to the persistence, retention and academic success of MSU students through its mission of delivering outstanding Spartan experiences. The division prides itself in creating and delivering unequalled experiences, products and services to the students and many guests of Michigan State University. What incoming students consider “quality service” and “an outstanding experience” changes with each generation, and their academic success depends on the division’s eagerness to fulfill their evolving needs. That is why RHS is currently engaged in an effort to revisit and update the 2008 RHS Strategic Plan.

CULTURE OF CHANGE
In October 2008, under the direction of Vice President for Auxiliary Enterprises (VPAE) Vennie Gore, the previously named Division of Housing and Food Services embarked on a journey to prepare for the challenges of a new millennium, restructuring venues and departmental units. By renaming itself Residential and Hospitality Services, the division signaled a culture of change, breaking down silos and creating opportunities for the future.

The 2008 strategic plan identified four strategic goals:
1. Define and enhance the student experience by promoting learning and development through interaction.
2. Create vibrancy and renewal that compels higher levels of satisfaction and achievement.
3. Celebrate student life by providing diverse spaces for a globally minded, 24/7 student who is uniquely MSU.
4. Initiate a transformative world-class model of residential experience with accessibility, sustainability and stewardship principles.

These strategic goals inspired many updates, including reorganizing the division into cohesive functional areas; playing an integral role in establishing neighborhoods at MSU; developing and opening five Neighborhood Engagement Centers; integrating Campus Living Services and the Department of Residence Life to Residence Education and Housing Services; and creating neighborhood dining centers with a focus on culinary excellence.

A follow-up plan in 2013 expanded on these areas, and included an additional strategic goal: Maintain fiscal responsibility to provide long-term financial viability and sustainability.

The 2008 and 2013 strategic plans have allowed MSU to evolve as a world competitor in university housing and dining. Throughout the past 10 years, strides taken by the division and its eagerness to plan for the future have created an environment that fosters bold, formative ideas for RHS.

MILLENNIALS AND CENTENNIALS
This renaissance was fueled by the needs of the current generation of students, Centennials, or students born between the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s.

These students grew up with handheld technology. They are defined by their need for customization and their attachment to their smartphones. They have distinct concerns about their safety, security and privacy, as the world they’ve grown up with has been marred with crises and catastrophes. RHS continues to keep this generation in mind.

Even so, the last class of the Centennial generation will arrive in 2025. It is time to carry over that same passion and commitment in preparing for the class of 2026.

The 2026 incoming class marks the introduction of a new generation, beyond Centennials, and is expected to be quite different in terms of demographics, migration patterns and graduation rates. These differences could result in a significant change in student needs. Therein lies the division’s key challenge – the biggest monster in the closet – as it plans for the future: What will the Spartan experience look like in 2026?
A VISION FOR THE DIVISION

In order to begin answering this largely theoretical question, the division held a strategic visioning workshop in March 2017 with RHS executive and senior leaders. This event brought in experts from across the country and outlined the possible future in higher education, hospitality and technology.

Participants learned more about the shifting trends in higher education, discussed the implications they may have on the future of RHS and documented strategies, which were examined amongst all RHS departments. Before taking steps forward, leaders needed to have an understanding of what RHS will look like in 2026 with respect to those it will serve and how it will fulfill such services.

“The division must consider RHS goods production and service delivery as it will be in 2026, based on the freshman class of that time,” noted VPAE Gore at the workshop. “We need to explore possible scenarios and potential outcomes to the numerous shifting trends, whether internal or external to higher education, and develop readiness plans for them.”

The internal and external trends in the world of higher education include shifts in high school graduation rates, student migration patterns, demographic and generational changes, demands on admission functions, and the rise of alternative learning models. Other changes the division will keep in focus range from societal perspectives on the cost and value of higher education to the growing role of technology and digitization of services.

Each of these trends appears to be merging into one “perfect storm” for higher education. RHS intends to maintain a proactive investment in its scanning of the external (market, benchmarks and competition) and internal (values, mission and perceptions) sources of change so the division is not caught off-guard.

FANTASTIC FOUR: FUTURES, THAT IS

Ultimately, a collection of four “futures” was formed from the visioning workshop (left). These futures form the strategic vision for RHS 2026; the division is seeking to realize this vision through a variety of short- and long-term actions.

A report regarding RHS 2026 elaborates on the findings of the visioning workshop. The report is a launching pad for a series of workshops that will, in the words of RHS Chief of Staff Ken Horvath, serve as a “bridge between where [the division stands] today and the RHS of the future that [the division is] symbolically referring to as RHS 2026.”

FOUR FUTURES

During the strategic visioning workshop, four futures were formed that advise the RHS strategic vision for 2026.

RHS should allocate its resources such that by 2026:

I. Culinary Services are valued because the division:
   a. Provides quality and affordable dining.
   b. Provides a variety of menu options.

II. People INSIDE MSU perceive REHS as a system where academics are a major theme, and the neighborhood model provides both social and academic resources.

III. Academics is considered one of the highest gains of living in our communities.

IV. People OUTSIDE MSU perceive SHG as serving both the MSU and Greater Lansing communities by providing a wide range of products and services, including, but not limited to, high-quality hotel rooms, attractive meeting rooms, exemplary restaurant dining and entertainment options.
Concurrent with the RHS 2026 Strategic Plan, Auxiliary Enterprises (AE) has been working to strategize the revitalization of the Spartan Village acreage. The goal of the aptly named Crescent Road project is to determine the best usage for the site. Possible uses include housing for visiting faculty, office locations and retail spaces. “The Crescent Road Project encompasses the long-range thinking and planning [regarding] the future of the Spartan Village land,” explained Erin Carter, project manager for the Crescent Road project.

The current housing at Spartan Village is set to be demolished within the next three to five years and the 140-acre site will be cleared for new development. The master plan for Crescent Road began in August 2017 with the request for quotation (RFQ) distribution and the search process for an architecture firm to lead the master plan process. The team selected Perkins+Will in November. Though Perkins+Will is leading the way, AE and MSU still have a hand in the process and are represented by the project team, Advisory Committee and Steering Committee.

“Joining me on the project team are VPAE Chief of Staff Ken Horvath and consultant Ginny Haas,” noted Carter.

The Advisory Committee on this project includes individuals from RHS, Government Affairs, Student Affairs, IPF (Infrastructure Planning and Facilities) and MSU Foundation. The MSU president and the executive cabinet represent the Steering Committee.

“[Perkins+Will] began work in earnest in January, with their visit to campus Jan. 10 and 11, to meet with executive leaders of the Steering Committee and the initial members of the Advisory Committee. Work will continue all spring semester and will wrap up by August 2018,” said Carter.

The team is also conducting a market study analysis for the potential of a University-based Retirement Community (UBRC). Love & Company, a company specializing in analyzing and marketing senior communities, has been working with MSU on determining consumer interest in the project via surveys and research events.
The preparation leading to the March 2017 strategic visioning workshop and the collaborative effort in assembling the resulting white paper revealed the division cannot afford to simply stay the course. If these impending trends cause student enrollment numbers to decrease to the projected levels and tuition keeps rising, the value equation of on-campus living will be called into question. RHS cannot sustain its quality standards of service without students living on campus.

FAST FORWARD TO TODAY

So, what now? It’s been a year since the strategic visioning workshop, and there is still work to be done.

After analyzing the information gathered during the workshop and preparing materials for bidders, the MSU Purchasing office issued a request for proposals (RFP) in December 2017 on behalf of the division. Firms were instructed to include visions for future Spartan experiences, housing, integrated dining and Spartan hospitality in their proposals, with a theme of enhanced technology at the forefront.

Qualified firms were to submit RFPs by late January 2018. After interviewing potential firms, RHS selected Hanbury, an architectural firm from Norfolk, Virginia, to help lead the 2018 strategic planning process. The firm returned to Michigan State University for consultation twice in March, with Jane Wright as the lead design principal and Buddy Hall as the project manager. Culinary Services’ own Registered Dietition Gina Keilen is serving as the RHS project manager. Kickoff meetings for the project included campus tours, student focus groups and department interviews. Hanbury returned to campus for follow-up meetings in late March. This visit included tours of the Culinary Services facilities, as well as more focus groups and interviews. To make sure Hanbury acquires the full vision for the future of Spartan experiences, a survey was then released to students in April regarding RHS’ dining and housing programs.

LOOKING AHEAD

The strategic plan, ultimately, must be guided by the RHS values that form the division’s value pillars of Purpose, Practice and People. Specifically, the plan must focus on RHS team members and how their processes will need to adapt for this incoming class. One thing assured to remain unchanged will be teams throughout RHS maintaining a strong focus on students’ academic success.

The incoming generation will be unlike any RHS has seen before. Between the demographic shifts, the ever-changing technological advancements, graduation rates and even the political climate, it will be difficult to predict what the future may hold for them. RHS, and all higher education institutions, have a lot to consider over the next eight years.

It is important to note the mission and vision of an organization does not change even if the strategy, or strategic vision, changes RHS’ methods of service. Striving to improve the persistence, retention and academic success of students by delivering outstanding Spartan experiences is at the heart of RHS’ values.

THE CHILDREN OF MILLENNIALS

The first class of the post-Centennial generation is currently 10 years old. Most of these preteens aren’t yet particularly concerned about their college plans. They’re thinking about sleepover plans for next Friday night. They’re preoccupied with signing up for summer camp. It’s up to RHS to anticipate their needs and provide the quality service they will require, whatever that may be. This exercise in strategic planning is an exploration of potential outcomes and scenarios and establishing readiness for them.

As long as the division leads with MSU students’ academic success in mind, RHS will be ready. The hardest part will be entertaining both positive and negative scenarios and outcomes and coming to peace with uncertainty, ambiguity and variability. The process, however strenuous, will put the division at ease. RHS leadership and team members will sleep easier at night.

Because with the right amount of research behind a plan, monsters in the closet, cloaked in the mystery of darkness, quickly reveal themselves to be far more manageable obstacles. They’re no longer unimaginable threats, but far more familiar shadows of a stack of clothes here, a pile of shoes over there. And rather than the daunting task of facing a monster, the goal suddenly becomes simply going about the task of cleaning out the closet.

With the 2026 Strategic Plan, RHS is turning on the light and getting to work, ensuring outstanding Spartan experiences for generations to come.
At Residential and Hospitality Services (RHS), the goal remains what it has always been: to deliver outstanding Spartan experiences.

Perhaps the most critical element of delivering these experiences is providing a safe and healthy environment in which students, guests and team members live and work. Each RHS department strives toward this goal in various ways, often teaming up along the way. It's this collaborative effort that propels the division to create an environment that functions as an enjoyable, safe place for all students, guests and RHS team members alike.
PLANNING AND PROJECTS OFFICE

In support of RHS’ values of Purpose, Practice and People, the RHS Health and Safety Office serves as the main contact point and resource center for the division on a variety of issues including Occupational Health, Life Safety and Security, and Emergency Management.

RHS Health and Safety Coordinator Joe Petroff ensures the Planning and Projects Office (PPO) acts as a resource that provides training, expertise and advice when it comes to safety and security.

Petroff describes the importance of his role, saying, “Engrained within RHS values is the imperative to provide spaces that are safe, clean and free of hazards for residents, guests and team members. Maintaining high levels of safety and security is a standard of care that supports and demonstrates how much we value one another.”

Throughout 2018, RHS Health and Safety will continue to offer Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) training to key RHS team members in partnership with MSU Police. FEMA’s mission: to lead America to prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from disasters with a vision of “A Nation Prepared.”

PPO also works closely with MSU’s Infrastructure Planning and Facilities (IPF) to assess the needs of buildings as they age, taking into account maintenance necessary to maintain building safety based on age and time. Ensuring the safe operation of heating and cooling units, following up on enviroment hazards (such as mold and flooding), and inspection, testing and maintenance of life safety systems are a few examples of issues that, when incorporated into a plan, allow PPO to respond in a financially responsible and prompt manner.

SPARTAN HOSPITALITY GROUP

The Breslin Student Events Center is one such area where safety and security control are of particular importance. Jeff Latinen, Breslin Student Events Center manager, speaks to why safety and security are so important to him and his team:

“Security is the bedrock of the success of our building mission for both the daily and event goals,” he explains. “We strive to provide a building that can host successful events that are safe in all capacities and help enhance the university mission. This includes safety of parking, entry ways, seating, etc.”

The building staff at Breslin, part of RHS Spartan Hospitality Group (SHG), is responsible for monitoring the entrances and exits on both a daily and event basis. To make this possible, the team must work with a multitude of building partners including MSU Police and IPF to grant access to entry ways. Recently, there have been many precautions taken at Breslin to ensure visitor and team member safety.

Latinen explains, “We now have metal detectors on-site in use for all large-scale events and a no-bag policy.”

In addition to the new policies, the Breslin team has worked both internally and externally this past year to implement social media tactics when thinking about patron safety and security to increase awareness of the new security protocols, which in return, helps create a better Spartan experience at the Breslin Center.

“Our goal is that a visitor’s experience is not impeded by any type of danger,” Latinen says.

RESIDENCE EDUCATION AND HOUSING SERVICES

SHG isn’t the only unit of RHS that has taken a heavy social media approach to promote safety and security. Residence Education and Housing Services (REHS) has also taken to the web to provide safety information to students, guests and team members using campaigns such as Safety Awareness.

Made up of representatives from across RHS and its campus partners, such as MSU Police, the Safety Awareness Campaign is led by the REHS Communications team. The committee meets quarterly to discuss
current issues on campus. Messaging for residence halls and apartments has included posters, table tents and social media that cover a range of topics, including personal safety, cybersecurity, drugs and alcohol, mental health, and safe celebrations.

REHS also uses the MSU Live On Twitter and Facebook accounts to communicate best practices and link to information about fire safety, personal safety, the MSU emergency notification system, the reverse-911 system, emergency green phones and door access in the residence halls.

The reverse-911 system is used in halls with telephone landlines to broadcast emergency instructions as well as to contact students with emergency information. Emergency green phones, on the other hand, are used in residence halls without landline room phones and are installed on every floor. This allows anyone with a safety risk or concern to quickly get to a phone with one-button emergency capability, greatly increasing emergency response time.

Door access in the residence halls is built around electronic building access technology restricting access to the exterior doors, living wings and elevators in all residence halls. In addition, living wings are locked 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and a valid MSU ID card is required to gain access to living wings and to activate elevators within the residence halls.

While physical safety procedures and precautions are important to RHS, liveon.msu.edu/safety also contains information on mental health resources available to students living on campus, such as Olin Health Center and MSU Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS).

“Mental health diagnoses are increasing in number across the country, and for a number of reasons, and in our world at MSU, we have always focused on mental health because everyone is going to have a time where they need some resources in their life,” Associate Director for Academic Initiatives, Student Behavior and Leadership Mackenzie Fritz notes. “When it comes to the severity, we need to make sure our staff has access to these resources and is properly trained.”

These resources mentioned include a variety of community partners, safety plans, and first and foremost, training in crisis management. Assistant Director of Residential Student Conduct Maja Myszkowski explains just some of the training RHS team members complete.

“At least once a year, all of our live-on staff, including community directors, assistant community directors and resident assistants, are trained on mental health in general. What we focus most heavily is QPR. It is the process that is nationally known for talking to students who might be suicidal: Question, Persuade and Refer. They are trained and prepared to ask those challenging questions. We also have a flip-book resource with step-by-step procedures, and in addition to getting all this information, the grads and our [resident assistants] have a role-play simulation where they act out a scenario where there is a student in distress and they learn how to deal with it,” Myszkowski says.

Myszkowski represents REHS on the behavioral intervention team, which includes the Behavioral Threat Assessment Team, Student Life, Office of Institutional Equity (OIE), and Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS).

“Another thing we do is implement and utilize our Residential Learning Model, which is fairly new,” Fritz says. “It is a co-curriculum learning model, and one of our learning outcomes is ‘Spartans will employ strategies for wellness.’ Specifically, we create strategies.”

These strategies include directing in-hall staff to focus on wellness in the months of October, November, January and February.

“History teaches us that October and February will be our highest incidents of mental health concerns in the halls,” Fritz explains. “So, in these months in the building, we do things specifically targeting mental health.”

In January, for example, resident assistants (RAs) are required to do a “res chat,” which is a one-on-one chat with each resident.

“The philosophy at REHS is really trying to educate students on the skills they need to remain healthy by providing students the resources and trying to teach them how to know the signs,” Fritz says. “In order to teach the signs, one must recognize them.
That’s why it’s so important for our in-hall staff to know their residents.”
RAs also create bulletin boards about wellness that are placed in the hall for all residents to see and interact with. In February, other strategies are implemented and focus on both passive and active strategies regarding mental health. An active strategy implemented is the use of “care’s meetings.”

“Anytime a student is transported to the hospital for any reason, medical, mental health, alcohol transport, we follow up with a ‘care’s meeting,’ which is a structured meeting where they are offered resources,” Myszkowski says.

The REHS staff are concerned about the physical and mental health and safety of MSU’s students. The Safety Awareness Campaign, proper training of team members, and other necessary implementations allow the division to support students and team members in their successes by bringing attention to the health and safety issues they face.

“Most crimes are those of opportunity, and education can help reduce the number of these crimes, along with the regulations and technology we have put into place,” says Assistant Director of Communications for REHS Bethany Balks. “For other health and safety issues, the university offers resources to help prevent and aid students, and we want to make sure they are informed of those resources.”

One of the most recently developed resources to the benefit of mental health awareness in the residence halls is the implementation of embedded counselors.

“Six months ago, we began a program in partnership with CAPS where we have two counselors in residences currently, one in East Neighborhood and one in South Neighborhood,” says Fritz. “They are present in the community so students can utilize them. And this is brand new, and we are really excited about that partnership.”

Partnerships are an essential part of maintaining safe practices to RHS as a whole, and the residence halls continue to work with numerous units to maintain and ensure safety.

**INFORMATION SERVICES**

“We don’t exist without other units and partnerships, so we have to meet their needs,” Information Services (IS) Assistant Chief Information Officer John Letarte says. “Anytime someone is hired, they put in a request to us, and we add them into the system and give them specific access to what they need. That triggers a whole bunch of other things like creating a login account, creating an email, an account on systems like the hotel management system or the REHS room management system called Mercury.”

This process of hiring on is essential, as is the process of when someone leaves the company.

“For security purposes, we keep track of all their account information so we call pull all of that access back if we need to. That way, they can’t go back and make some sort of transaction when they are no longer working for us,” Letarte explains.

Student privacy is also a big part of the job in Information Services.

“For example,” Letarte explains, “if you connect a cash register at the golf course and it needs to go to the hotel’s management system, there are credit cards involved and they [the IS tech team] have to understand every point along that encounter and all the security pieces that are in place. There’s a lot of training on that and knowledge they have to pick up, and we have lengthy regulatory requirements that they have to meet.”

It’s crucial IS structures their training correctly so all team members are in compliance with the requirements in place. Team members must be aware these requirements exist and why they’re structured in a certain way. In training, physical safety is also a main point of focus. Every manager must complete site-specific training. However, some teams require additional focus.

“IS is made up of a bunch of different teams, and they have different roles. The tech team, for example, can go into any hall or workspace in the division so they have to be aware of the safety concerns if they’re working behind a kitchen or a front desk or in facilities somewhere. They also work with cameras and mounting things on the walls so they have to understand lifting, ladder safety, food safety, etc., so we go through all the training,” Letarte says.
The network team, another unit within IS, must be trained in electrical hazards because they often work at the data center, which has high voltage and a large battery system.

“General safety is a focus that primarily the tech team and network team need to be aware of because they do run around a lot on campus and they’re in different areas and have to be aware of their surroundings, where they’re at and what type of work they’re doing,” Letarte says.

**CULINARY SERVICES**

A constant theme throughout all units, general safety training, is especially apparent in Culinary Services.

“In Culinary, safety always comes first,” Senior Executive Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski explains. “Staff must be aware of what they are preparing, how they are preparing it and what they are preparing it with.”

To ensure safety in food prep, all full-time team members must go through two half-day training sessions called Serve Safe. The training includes information about cross-contamination, salmonella, proper cooking temperatures and proper storing techniques as well as an allergen training portion that identifies the eight major allergens on campus menu items: milk, eggs, soy, nuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, wheat, alcohol, beef and pork. At the end of the training, team members are tested on their knowledge.

Culinary Services works with REHS, MSU Athletics, the Alumni Association, summer conferences and camps, SHG, and other partners to offer a variety of healthy food options at all campus residential dining halls and retail food venues, including menu items to support ovo-lacto vegetarianism, vegan, dairy-free and gluten-free diets.

“Most recently, we launched a web-based program called MSUrition where people can look at every ingredient and recipe we use and are serving,” Kwiatkowski explains.

“There are allergen filters so you can select which ingredients you cannot have, and it will show you what you will be able to eat. But also, we encourage that face-to-face contact with the students and want to talk to the students about our process. We want students to know we are here and they can come talk to us.”

To emphasize the chef-to-student relationship, Culinary Services launched a campaign fall 2017 where executive chefs and MSU Registered Dietitian Gina Keilen wore stickers on their uniforms to encourage communication in hopes that students would start a conversation about the food served.

“The students on campus really connected with the promotion,” Culinary Services Marketing and Communications Manager Cheryl Berry says. “I was trying to find a way for our students to connect with our chefs to foster more in-person communication. Currently, many students resort to social media when they have problems with their food preparation. The hope is that by knowing their chef in their dining hall, they will feel more comfortable approaching them to correct the problem.”

In addition, Keilen is always available to meet with students regarding allergies or specific ingredient concerns or who require information on a menu item not listed on MSUrition.

“I think the only way we can be successful is if we partner and communicate with our students and our other units,” Kwiatkowski says.

“It’s imperative because we can reach so many more people that way and it has that much more value to it. We talk about ‘delivering outstanding Spartan experiences,’ and with those partnerships, that’s how we are able to do what we do and give those experiences.”

**GOING FORWARD**

As RHS dives into the new year, delivering outstanding Spartan experiences will always be the goal. But ask any team member and they will all tell you the same thing: The only way to reach this goal is through communication, partnerships, and ensuring a healthy and safe environment for all students, guests and RHS team members alike.
MEET RHS
INTRODUCING OUR TEAM MEMBERS

MEET VU TRAN
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF RESIDENCE EDUCATION, EAST NEIGHBORHOOD

With a background including a master’s degree from the University of Michigan and a Ph.D. from The Ohio State University, Vu Tran was admittedly a little nervous to start his position at rival university Michigan State. After some initial teasing from his new team members, Tran was happy to find “everyone has been incredibly great and amazing with helping me transition to MSU.”

As the assistant director of education in East Neighborhood, Tran works directly with community directors, RAs, Culinary Services and other neighborhood partners to ensure quality experiences for students living in East Neighborhood.

“This position throws in everything. I see it as a connect-the-dots kind of job — making sure that every cog is functioning properly so that the vehicle, as a whole, drives well.”

His favorite part of his job? “Just being there for people,” says Tran. He explains that sometimes people just need an ear for listening and that he is always willing to lend a helping hand.

Tran’s greatest passions include soccer and music. “I actually sang in an a cappella group and a choir, so music has always been a big part of my life.”

IN HIS WORDS:
“My favorite memory here at Michigan State was when I finished my dissertation for my Ph.D. While I was relatively new here, I wasn’t expecting many people to make a big deal of it. When I came back (from Ohio State) everyone here was genuinely happy and excited for me. But, that is just the theme of the people here — everyone cares about you.”

MEET KELLI CAREATHERS
OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR, KELLOGG CENTER

As a native to East Lansing, Spartan alumna and former student employee, Kelli Careathers is no stranger to Spartan Nation. “I even grew up hearing the Spartan Marching Band practice and was born and raised a Spartan, so I’m happy to be here giving back to the community.”

Careathers is the new administrative assistant at Kellogg Center, a job she describes as, “a new experience every day.” Careathers primarily assists Hospitality Services Sales Manager Kristina Reitler, in the sales office, which has her currently planning new menus as well as assisting the sales team where needed.

Her favorite part of her current position? “I just love that it is something different every day. This office handles change so well, and I think it is because there is such a camaraderie, so we all work together really well.”

When she isn’t at the Kellogg Center, you can find Careathers working on her health and fitness or spending time with family. “I love just being able to cook and spend time with my daughter. Right now she is really into gymnastics, so we’ve been going to all the meets and spending a lot of time on campus.”

IN HER WORDS:
“I love being able to work with this team to make sure our clients leave having had an awesome experience here at the Kellogg Center. I love that this job also taught me so much about Microsoft Excel, before I didn’t know much about it, but now, I feel like I know so much.”
As a man who has spent the better part of his life in East Lansing, there is no doubt B’Onko Sadler’s blood runs Green and White. “I got my undergraduate and graduate degrees here, was a student employee at Brody Square, taught in East Lansing, stumbled upon a job with extension and stayed for 10 years, and just recently ended up at Culinary Services.”

In his current role, Sadler deals with the day-to-day operations of running a dining hall. His responsibilities range from oversight of the dining hall as a whole to jumping behind the counter of a venue to make food with the students when the need arises. “That is my favorite part, being able to interact and mentor students. It’s a family — it’s fun,” said Sadler.

When he is not juggling the duties of running a dining hall, you can find the new assistant dining manager at home with his three boys, 1, 4 and 6. “That is my world. I am so passionate about them and family and just trying to live a good, upstanding life for them.”

IN HIS WORDS:
“The best part of this job is coming here and having a lot of people express the fact that they were glad I was here. They are excited about my management style, my interactions with them. And for someone to come up and say that, is incredible for me to hear. I love promoting teamwork. It is a team effort, and I appreciate everything they do while they are here.”