



Dining Team Looks for Ways to Innovate

When our community decided to restrict access on to and off campus in April, the Dining team, headed by Haider Mahmood, swung into action. With dining rooms closed, the Dining team began meal delivery, three times a day. This delivery service has continued even as the Penthouse Dining Room has re-opened. From April to June, the Dining team also offered complimentary meals for all VHRC staff members. In addition, Dining, through its connection with food vendors, designed and supplied the items for the in-house grocery program. Recently, Dining began offering catered meals for special occasions. Add to all of this the resumption of Happy Hour and the re-opening of the dining room, the Dining department is a very active place.

"For me the key is innovation," said Haider. "How do we innovate in this time frame when everything is so constrained? How do we provide additional flexibility so residents don't feel like they are missing out?"

To illustrate his point, Haider mentioned how, on occasion over the past several weeks, the chef has prepared special treats, such as popcorn on Friday nights or a bread pudding dessert. These extras, said Haider, "were to let our residents



Two of the behind-the-scenes members of the Dining team – cooks Richard Rouiller and Ernesto Escalier – who have helped ensure that the Dining team can continue to innovate.

know that we are here to offer our services, so they didn't feel so stuck."

This doesn't mean everything always runs smoothly. "On occasion, orders get misdelivered or messages missed," he said. And logistically, there are scheduling challenges – "6:30 is when we have staff delivering meals and other staff working in the dining room. It's the busiest time of day."

However, Haider and his team continue to look for new opportunities to provide services to the community. He is considering how to bring back the Farmer's Market, for example. But more generally, Haider said that he is hoping for "the return to laughter. The feeling of life getting back to normal – even just a little bit, in little ways – is huge."

The Survivor Tells his Tale

Dick Holm's story is riveting. In 1965 in his 20s, he had just come off his first successful tour as a CIA operative, running guerrilla teams in the mountains of Laos. "I was young, single, spoke French so I was a prime candidate to go to the Congo," he says. His mission: to organize local agents against an anti-government rebellion. On a reconnaissance flight, a storm forced him and his pilot to crash land in the jungle, and Dick was severely injured. "I got ignited fuel in my face, hands and leg... burns had singed my eyelids shut. I was in shock, but I was determined to get out of that plane."

Dick's tale of remarkable courage – the 10 days he spent near death and hidden in a hut in hostile territory, the village tribesmen who risked their lives to save his, the rescue team of Belgians who extracted him, and the long road to recovery – can be heard for the first time through the "I Spy" podcast series produced by *Foreign Policy* magazine (www.ForeignPolicy.com/podcasts/ispy). He wrote two books about his career, but "I've never given a speech on that per se," he says of "The Survivor" podcast episode that aired on April 28. "It surprisingly seemed to go over well. There were over 50,000 hits in the first week, and they told me they'd never had that before."

Growing up in Illinois, "I really had never heard of the CIA. But after college, when I went in the Army, that's when I became aware of intelligence work." Dick, who has "a platoon of daughters," saw the



*Dick Holm shares his experiences in the CIA in his book, *The Craft We Chose*, and in a new *Foreign Policy* podcast.*

podcast as an opportunity to put down a record for his kids. He acknowledges that "the whole incident is sort of you-can't-make-it-up kind of stuff" – but downplays the courage it took to survive. "You got to think that anyone in that situation would do the same thing. You want to live, so you push through."

The Campus Voice

This publication is created for Vinson Hall Retirement Community in an effort to inform and delight. This publication is produced by the Office of Philanthropy and Engagement, but attempts to reflect the work and efforts of all VHRC residents and staff.

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