

Good evening. My name is Sean and I'll be your server tonight.

I'd like to start by reminding you that while dining at Chez Cub, it's easy to forget that parents will be at the table alongside the boys. And while it's easy to set a table for the boys, it's a little more difficult to seat their parents in such a way that everyone is satisfied.

Truly, they are two different meals!

But here at the Chez Cub we pride ourselves on serving the finest meals for boys, parents and family alike.

You may be asking why we bother accommodating a mixed clientele? Simply put, because parents are the lifeblood of Cub Scouting! Let me ask a question if I may be so bold... How many of us here are parents ourselves?

You see, we all sat down to a meal and enjoyed it enough to stay, but at the same time felt that we had an obligation to roll up our sleeves and help out a bit in the kitchen.

So parents are the leaders and assistants, the volunteers that help out behind the scenes. They make phone calls and pick up awards for us, arrange outings and get paperwork signed. They help us financially, and work with the boys on their achievements. They are the drivers, the Webelos activity badge counselors, the people that weigh pinewood derby cars and judge the father son cake bakes.

At our establishment, we've found that if you treat parents right, your pack will be successful, and you'll be able to sit down to an enjoyable meal, professionally prepared and served at your table. However, if you don't care for them, you may find yourself at the buffet, where you serve yourself. Or worse yet, sitting at home preparing your own meals!

And one more thing about our establishment: Unlike many restaurants, our chef is pleased to share his recipes with his guests. So, without further ado, allow me to go over our menu for this evening...

We have some wonderful selections prepared for you tonight!

First up is the appetizer. We take a fresh mix of timid parents and excited boys at their first Cub Scout function, and toss in a generous helping of fun and adventure, seasoned with the Aims and Purposes of Scouting. Our chef is an expert, and though you can't taste the Aims and Purposes, if they were missing the dish would be lacking and bland!

I don't know how much you know about the restaurant business, but if I may, I'd like to share a secret we've learned. It seems that successful establishments make their first time diners feel so comfortable and welcome that they want to come back again and again. So you, too, must make your parents feel as much a part of the program as the boys.

How do we do this? It's actually very simple, and consists of three simple steps:

We must welcome them to our establishment! Treat them as if they're old friends, and introduce them to your other diners! In fact, you might even hire a Maitre 'd to take care of this job. They should be friendly and outgoing, and good with names—alas, a skill I myself lack!

Follow up with your new diners with a phone call, a note in the mail, or an email. Simply letting someone know that you were glad to have them at your table and that you're available to answer any questions can work wonders for your customer loyalty! And it never hurts to drop in a little reminder of when the next celebration dinner will take place!

Which brings me to keeping them informed. If I tell you about a special that we have, you'll probably remember, but you won't remember the entire menu! It's too much, but still important because you want to know your choices. Simply put, announcements are boring. So don't announce. Instead, prepare a menu; some might call it a newsletter, instead. Let it include all the details, and you can simply point out the things that might appeal to their palate. They can browse it later at their leisure!

You could even consider a telemarketing approach for your restaurant. A phone tree is great way of reminding parents that you have a dinner party scheduled, and that there's a place card with their name on it.

Finally, we must do a good job of making them feel important. After all, they are our guests! If they are new, introduce them to the group, and feel free to stand on ceremony here! That's right, a little ceremony shows that you're especially happy to have them there. It demonstrates the effort you're willing to put into welcoming them and making them feel a part, and shows your sincerity!

Another effective way of making our guests feel important is to involve them in your meetings in a fun way. Let them help with a game or activity. This provides a wonderful introduction to the boys and the Cub Scouting program, without involving any type of long-term commitment on their part.

Above all, though, remember their comfort. Some folks are a little more bashful or reserved, so if you have a welcoming ceremony or activity that they can participate in, give them a little taste first. We don't like to waste food here, and we'd feel awful if we served up something that wasn't to one of our guests liking, no matter how wonderfully prepared and presented!

Now let me tell you about our Entrée!

Tonight we have an exciting sauté of volunteers, leaders and assistants served in a rich sauce! This is an exquisite dish, and though it may appear difficult to prepare properly, each of us has all the necessary ingredients in our own kitchens. It's simply a matter of proper technique to get this just right. I must say, our chef prepares it "se magnifique!"

I might remind you that compliments will result in larger helpings... That is to say, the more you compliment, the more help you get. But I am skipping ahead to dessert already!

Once we have given our parents a taste of the program, they'll hopefully be wanting for more. This is the time that you tell them about one of the unique aspects of Cub Scout cuisine.

That is: Everyone will be served a meal. However, everyone is also asked to serve a meal to another guest, buy the ingredients, help prepare the dish, print out the menu, take reservations, set the tables, clear them, or wash the dishes.

That's because we have no paid staff here. It's only through the help of others that we're able to serve meals that everyone can enjoy! Now, guests should not expect to simply sit and be served. They must earn their dinner!

This is contrary to what we have learned over the years. So we must ask our guests to take part in the program or they will revert to the habits that they've developed.

So ask, and expect a YES as a reply. Sometimes the best way to get people to agree is to not give them the choice of saying NO.

For example, if I were to ask you if you'd like a glass of sparkling cider before your meal, you can answer yes or no. Perhaps you don't like sparkling cider. But if I were to ask, "Will the lady have the sparkling cider or the bug juice with her meal?" it leaves no room for yes or no, simply either or.

Recall that our appetizer included involving our guests in the simplest of tasks—helping out with a game or activity. So, our appetizer prepares their taste buds for the next part. In fact, this is the secret of our entrées award winning reputation—we start small, and learn how large a plate each diner is able to dine from!

Some of you may have noticed from your own experience that some folks prefer a desert plate, and others will eat from a trough.

Your job should be to be sure that everyone gets their fill, and no more. Our chef hates to see plates returned with food still on them!

So it is important that when we present the either-or option to them that we provide them with choices that they will be able to swallow easily!

It's also important that we help our guests do their job well and give them the tools they need. For example, if we convince someone to be a chef here at the restaurant, we would never send them to the kitchen without both recipes and ingredients! Yet so many establishments recruit help and then leave those parents in just such a jam.

A written job description works wonders here. It serves as the recipe the parent needs to do their part, do it well, and feel satisfied that they've met the expectations of the management. They'll be able to sit down to their meal with a sense of accomplishment and pride in the work they've done.

Not only should you give your parents an idea of what is expected, but also supply them with the variety of tools they need to do their job. For example, there must be 1,000 different ways to fix an omelet. Give them the option to use the recipe that they're most comfortable with.

Fortunately, there are some wonderful cookbooks and classes available. Today's event is one, but you can also find them at Roundtables, Leader Training, and the Internet. And don't forget to guide them to BSA publications like the How-To Book, Program Helps, Scouting Magazine, Ceremonies for Dens and Packs, and so forth!

Finally, my one last suggestion on preparation of our entrée is that you cannot do it all yourself. When properly prepared, this dish has a fragrant bouquet, a complex mix of many flavors and textures that please the tongue and leave the diner wanting more. If there is not enough variety in your ingredients, the dish will be bland and tasteless. And without adequate help in the kitchen, you'll find that it has burned on the stove while you were taking a reservation or setting the table, or that it didn't cook long enough because you had to do the shopping!

Now, last but not least, the crème de la crème, our signature dessert cart!

Tonight we have a decadent selection of chocolates, a generous display of candies, as well as prizes, gifts, certificates and commendations!

I might note to you that dessert is a required part of the meal, but it is complimentary...

Remember that while each diner in our establishment is served their meal, every diner is expected to help at some point. But dining is not the reward for the service your parents will provide. No, you must serve them with dessert.

There are any number of ways to serve this dish. It can be anything from a simple "Thank You" to an extravagant production. However, dessert is best if it's obvious that it contains more thought than costly ingredients.

What do I mean by this? I mean that anyone can go out and buy a card and sign their name, but it's more impressive to make the card, or rather, let some of the other diners—the boys—make the card for you.

You see, people like desserts, and they like compliments. And when you demonstrate that your compliment has been prepared in advance, they're assured of your sincerity. This dessert has an amazing effect on parents, bringing about a strange euphoria that causes them to be more receptive to doing more for the pack.

Yes, this dessert is habit forming. It will cause your parents to come back for more just to experience the feeling of recognition again and again!

I might add that there are two times of year when thanks are in season and especially delicious. They are the annual Blue and Gold banquet and at an end-of-the-year graduation.

Ripe thanks, fresh from the vine, blend marvelously with Scouting's anniversary celebration and bridging ceremonies.

Late winter thanks, which you might serve at a Blue and Gold banquet, seem to be most appreciated by your adult volunteers, but not so much by leaders. I've provided you with a handout with some recipes for these thanks that are tailored to each job a parent does.

Summer thanks seem to be most appreciated by den leaders and Cubmasters. These are usually a little plumper and juicier, and might include some certificates, a plaque, or a gift basket.

Thanks are delicious year-round, though, and plentiful to boot, so don't be stingy by serving them up once or twice a year, though. And remember also that thanks can go stale if picked but not eaten.

That's why it's important not to forget anyone's dessert. If they helped out in the preparation of the meal at any time, you owe it to them. And, that dessert should be served in the restaurant while the other guests are dining. It doesn't taste nearly as well if you overlook someone, and serve it up a few days later! Besides which, the atmosphere of being among the diners contributes to the euphoric feeling that draws your guests back for more!

Customer service is important to us at our establishment. While some fast food enterprises may handle complaints this way, we prefer a different method!

We like to listen closely to what our customers have to say, in an effort to keep all of our diners happy.

We ask them what they would like to see changed to make future dining experiences more gratifying for them and the other diners.

Once we've heard their concern and come up with some ideas about improving our service, we begin the work of fixing the problem. Because we are somewhat of a self-service operation, we have found that a very effective way of keeping our customers happy and resolving their complaints to their complete satisfaction is to invite them into the kitchen to lend a hand. After all, most restaurant critics have some sort of cooking background, or at least a refined palate, that gives them a unique perspective on the inadequacies of a particular meal!

For example, a parent might suggest that the announcements at the last dinner party seemed a little bland and overdone. We might ask what they think could have made it better. Cooking time? Ingredients? Better preparation? We ask them to step into the kitchen, roll up their sleeves and lend their opinions to the pot. Maybe they're the perfect person to collect all the flyers from the monthly Roundtable and put the information into a simple menu for other diners to browse.

Above all, be receptive to new ideas. It's easy to go onto the defensive, especially when you're doing a lot of the jobs in the restaurant, but that sort of attitude is not going to solve the problem. Instead, look at the critic as a potential ally, a coworker, and look at the problem as a common goal to be reached. You may realize that their concern is legitimate once you step back, and this may be exactly the person to help you solve it!

Thank you for dining with us this evening. We hope you have enjoyed your meal, and that it has left you satisfied and not wanting for more.

We ask that you leave a gratuity for your server in the form of filling out the evaluation form you've been provided, as it will help us improve our service, and perhaps be invited back in the future!