

Beth Fromkin, deputy executive director of Lifestyles for the Disabled, and Richard Salinardi, executive director.

Mary Pannese serves lunch at the Lifestyle Cafe.

# Agency finds jobs for developmentally disabled clients

**By JANE MILZA**  
ADVANCE FOOD EDITOR

"We do whatever we can to find something each person can do," said Lifestyles for the Disabled's deputy executive director Beth Fromkin. "We do everything we can to find a job each person can do."

Typical is the messenger service developed specifically for two consumers who found the Lifestyle Cafe's restaurant setting too restrictive.

Their job now is to deliver daily menus to people working in nearby buildings.

"It gives them a sense of self-esteem. We have to continue creating environments where individuals can work according to their own abilities," said Ms. Fromkin, who is enthusiastic about each phase of the project.

"The field has come such a long way; people are much more aware of the developmentally disabled

now, and the disabled learn to do things for themselves as far as their abilities allow."

Individuals who are mildly to severely retarded as well as those who have dual diagnosis are involved in the Lifestyles for the Disabled programs. They range in age from 21 to 60. About 75 percent of the people involved in Lifestyles for the Disabled live at home; others live in apartments or in community residences where there's always a support staff available.

Service coordinators attached to the agency work with consumers and their families to make sure individual goals are met. They'll even accompany consumers to clinics, and speak with them on a daily basis.

"We think they all can work in some way," said the executive director Richard Salinardi. "This is like going to Harvard," he said, noting how jobs are adapted to meet consumers' needs.

The restaurant concept complemented other programs set up by the agency since it was established in 1994. According to Salinardi: "Our goal always is to create a productive environment for consumers to do something positive."

Staff members, Camille Distefano and Angela Donatone, have been employed in the program since its beginnings. They've noticed the progress the disabled consumers have made since the menu consisted only of breakfast items.

"When they added lunch, we got more delivery orders," recalled Mrs. Distefano, an Annadale resident. "The cafe started with eight consumers, each with a special job, and they only worked three days a week. It really expanded because the people who participated did such a good job and were able to do more."

The program's executive team refers to Lifestyles for the Disa-

bled as "an agency without walls" because of its outreach to the community.

A laundry project, for example, services the state's multiply disabled unit and day treatment programs. A housekeeping team, meanwhile works in various buildings on the premises as well as in senior citizen housing in various Staten Island neighborhoods.

The community beautification team started as an affiliate of Borough President's Office several winters ago when the Island experienced severe snow and ice storms. A telephone hotline called for Lifestyle workers to remove snow from sidewalks all over the borough.

Once their skill was established, the Borough President's Office would ask for their help whenever requests came in for such projects as fence repairs and yard cleaning.

Now crews are sent into the community on a regular basis.

Team members work in cemeteries, plant flowers in conjunction with the Lyme Steinman Foundation, and do yard cleanup for heart patients and the elderly. They even have contracts with several Staten Island business firms to do paint and clean-up work.

Lifestyle's functional academic and computer programs give consumers the choice of learning a variety of independent living skills, travel training, safety measures and telephone skills they need to maintain jobs in the community. Math, reading and instruction on money handling also are available.

A related trip program gives consumers an opportunity to take day trips with staff members to museums and such historic Manhattan sites as Battery Park and the South Street Seaport.

cooked dishes, it is best to add it at the end, as heat tends to decrease its flavor.

Don't bother drying tarragon; its flavor will be lost. Instead, if you have extra, transform a simple white-wine vinegar by placing a sprig in its bottle. Cut tarragon leaves in summer, blanch in boiling water briefly, then freeze them in a plastic bag. They'll keep until winter, when you can fold them into a white bean soup at the last minute.

## Too much tarragon can overpower a delicate dish

■ Tips offered on how to buy and use the herb

**By JEANNIE MCMANUS**  
ADVANCE WASHINGTON BUREAU

Tarragon should be used with discretion. Like bay leaves, too many tarragon leaves can overpower a delicate dish or other herbs. When paired with parsley, chives and chervil, it forms the traditional French blend known as

finer herbes, common in chicken and fish dishes and as a basis for salad dressings.

On its own, tarragon used to be a common ingredient in chicken salad; its sprig was always stuffed in the cavity of a chicken before roasting. But rosemary, basil, cilantro, flat-leaf parsley and other flavorful herbs pushed it aside.

It also has the misfortune of being an essential ingredient in the cholesterol-laden bearnaise sauce and other creamy white sauces that are somewhat out of fashion.

How to buy:

There are two kinds of tarragon: French tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculoides*) is the sprig or potted plant you are most likely to see in your grocery store or nursery.

It has a refined yet distinct flavor, essential to French cuisine. You are much less likely to encounter Russian tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculoides*), which has a bitter flavor and lacks the licorice subtlety of the French version. The two are similar in appearance, so if your herb plant is not marked, check at the garden store.

In the grocery store, it's safe to assume you have the French version.

How to use:

Sparingly, sparingly, sparingly. But substitute it for herbs you've grown tired of in some of your reliable dishes: chicken salad with grapes (instead of parsley), poached salmon (instead of dill), scrambled eggs (instead of chives), marinated tomatoes (instead of basil).

Rub tarragon on roast chicken (instead of rosemary) or mix it with your turkey stuffing (instead of sage). When using tarragon in