

“Best of the Best” Unite to Create Cutting-Edge Correctional Foodservice

To satisfy the unique needs of correctional foodservice, a team of experts in their fields worked together with Burlodge to create an innovative food delivery system.



Correctional foodservice has challenges unlike any other segment in the foodservice industry. Security issues are paramount. And the sheer number of people who need to be fed can be a major obstacle. On top of that, budgetary constraints and food quality and safety issues come into play. The new, state-of-the-art California Health Care Facility (CHCF) in South Stockton, California, is an example of how those challenges can be overcome when all team members focus on serving the customer.

Built at a cost of \$839 million, the CHCF has been hailed as a groundbreaking facility since its opening in July 2013. This impressively sized complex consists of 54 buildings covering 1.4 million square feet. Operated by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), 2,500 employees staff this facility that provides housing and treatment for more than 1,700 inmate-patients with severe and long-term needs. Obviously, with that many employees and patients to feed, having an efficient meal delivery service was critical.

Of course, given its size and scope, a project like this does not come together overnight. In fact, planning began in 2009. "William Caruso & Associates was brought into the project in the very early stages due to our knowledge of large healthcare and correctional facilities food planning, and for our past work on some of the most well-known foodservice projects in the country," says foodservice consultant Stephen Young, FCSI, of WC&A. "The project programming phase had the best correctional and healthcare architects and the best engineering groups from around the country, all in one place working on what was to be the most amazing correctional healthcare environment in the world."

Enter Burlodge

Since WC&A wanted to ensure that the design team was exposed to only the latest and best meal delivery system technologies, there was only one logical choice for the project: Burlodge. "Due to

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[our] long-standing relationship with Burlodge, it was a natural choice to bring them into the project," he says. "Burlodge was instrumental in bringing sample equipment to the users, setting up demonstrations and providing hands-on training and support throughout the design, implementation and commissioning process. We all had one common goal: to provide a world-class project on time and on budget to CDCR."

"We designed a meal delivery system for the special needs of a prison hospital," says Stace Carrington, a Regional Sales Executive for Burlodge who began work on the project in 2010. "The system needed to be very specific to work within the logistical handling program the facility had envisioned, while at the same time, comply with correctional hardware specifications. It also had to ensure safe food handling within a cook-chill plating application."

Carrington and his team worked closely with the Burlodge factory in Italy to develop a prototype Retherm system based around the type of service and tray the CHCF had selected. "The system components included a docking station and cassette for the trays, along with a dolly to move the cassette to point of service," Carrington says. "Our factory made an excellent prototype which we trialed with CDCR to make sure it met all their criteria of holding food at the correct temperature."

Burlodge brought to the project many years of successful large-scale project planning and the ability to customize



Stephen Young, FCSI

After reviewing the initial prototype, CDCR requested some minor modifications for the final version. Burlodge had to supply a system that would hold 42 hot and 42 cold trays per Retherm unit, yet meet all safety requirements associated with correctional foodservice. That presented another unique challenge, Carrington says. “We were not only serving inmates in a prison system but the equipment had to meet strict healthcare guidelines at the same time.”

According to Carrington, the key to completing this project was constant and consistent communication. “We developed a direct communication line between the key

players so that everyone was kept apprised of the status of the project at all times. This way there would be no miscommunication as the project and manufacturing moved forward. We exchanged many ideas and post-prototype designs until a final product was accepted. All parties worked very closely together to remain on the same page at every turn.”

The Burlodge involvement didn’t end there. Upon delivering the final products, Burlodge provided training and implementation of the system for the start-up of the facility. As with all Ali Group companies, Burlodge is finding that this type of post-sales service is becoming more critical to all segments of foodservice and helps build loyal, repeat customers.

The success of the CHCF project, says consultant Young, is due to “seasoned designers, contractors and manufacturers that can produce and deliver in a professional manner.” Carrington calls it “rewarding to be part of a group of dedicated professionals” and sums up the project this way: “Anything is possible if you have the right combination of talent and qualified people who share a passion to work together toward a common goal.”

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Stace Carrington, Regional Sales Executive for Burlodge

