

## Facilitator — June/July 2013



### CRFP Spotlight

*Tom Jones*

What other restaurant companies have you worked for prior to your current position?

I hate to date myself, but my first real restaurant job was a short-order cook at Sambos. From there I went to a “gourmet” coffee shop called the Grinder Restaurant in Corona, Calif. I was promoted to Assistant Manager and then Manager and transferred to Huntington Beach. The store was right across from the beach and next to the pier. It was a great life being a young kid at the time. From there I was recruited to Denny’s restaurants and about two years after that I left the restaurant industry to become a machinist making oil-drilling tools.

After spending so much time in restaurants, do you cook? If so, what is your best dish?

From the first day I moved out on my own I learned to either cook or starve. Working in a restaurant at the time also helped but to this day I still cook almost every day that I’m home.

I like all food including BBQ, Mexican and Italian but I think my best dishes are desserts. I don’t eat a lot of sweets but enjoy making them and I enjoy the happiness it brings to others. I think my best dish is my tiramisu.

What was your first car?

My first car was a Chevy Nova I bought from my sister for \$500. Not as nice as the cars the kids drive these days, but it was fast and got me around.

What is your all-time favorite movie?

“Brian’s Song.” I like that it is based on a true story, it’s got real life history in it and it’s about football (my favorite sport). Now don’t get me wrong, I still cry every time I watch it, but I love it. For a TV series I love “M.A.S.H.” I bought the entire series on DVD and still watch the shows when I can.

What is the most challenging situation you’ve ever faced in a facility or on the job? How did you handle it?

I worked at a medical-device company and went through a lot of certifications, inspections and audits within the field, but I think my toughest challenge was having to terminate someone for something other than blatant disrespect for company policy.

I had an associate who was late for work more than he was on time. He was a great worker and a great ambassador to the company with great people skills, but he was always late. I worked with him for a long time to try and resolve his challenges of getting to work on time. I tried one-on-one counseling, changed his schedule and even tried calling him before his shift. Being a single father and working two jobs to try and support his family, he just couldn’t keep up with the long hours.

I had to do what I had to do and when we were with Human Resources, he said great things about me as his supervisor. He said I had been one of the best mentors and managers he had ever worked with, which made me feel good as a manager, but I still felt bad for having to terminate his employment.

If you weren’t a restaurant facility professional, what you would be?

If I had a choice, I would like to be a medic on a helicopter medevac team. I believe my purpose in life is to help others, and what better way than to help save lives?

What was your very first job?

When I was a kid I was always trying to find ways to make money. I would sell golf balls and sodas on the golf course. I still remember they would complain about the price of 25 cents for a soda. Where are those old men now?

We had lemon and orange trees in our back yard, so I would also sell oranges and lemons door to door when they were in season.

When I could legally work, my first job was at a golf course. I did everything from scheduling tee times to painting the stripes on range balls. (Yes, we used to do that by hand.) I drove carts, washed dishes, waited tables and helped the chef in the kitchen when I could.

What is the best advice you ever received?

People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care. I had a supervisor when I was at Baxter Healthcare by the name of Rick Moe. He was the best boss I have ever had (aside from my current one). I realized later that he would open doors for me to better myself both as a person and as the Director of Facilities. He would not push me through them, but he did give great opportunities and advice. He also knew just how hard to push me to help me be the best I could be at everything I did. He helped me to continue my education and coached me through my degree. I believe if I called him today, he would be there with any help I needed.

To what would you attribute your success in achieving your CRFP?

I think I passed the test because Debi Kensell said I would pass. Wait. I think what she said was, "you better pass." All kidding aside, I believe the years of working in the industry helps. It's a been there, done that kind of thing.

Would you recommend attaining a CRFP to other colleagues? Why?

I believe any time you get an opportunity to better yourself, you should grab it. Having a certification helps your career, your resume and, in this case, puts you in a group of great ambassadors to the profession and the organization and in direct contact with a wealth of knowledge.

What has been the most significant change in the restaurant industry and how has it affected your job?

The environmental challenges in California. I had a store in San Diego where a county employee took a picture of a string bean that someone had dropped outside. She sent the store and me the picture and threatened to fine us if she ever found our landscape to be in that condition again.

The days of hosing down sidewalks and driveways are over. Getting store associates to understand and buy into the environmental impact is a challenge as well.

What do you do for fun in your spare time?

I'm currently helping with my son's baseball team. It's a great opportunity to spend time with him. Getting to watch him grow and develop as a person, a teammate and an athlete is pretty cool. I'm very appreciative that my supervisor also sees the importance of family and work/life balance, and that allows me the opportunity to take the time to be with my family for important events in their lives.

If the baseball season ever ends, I also enjoy hunting and going to the river in the summer and riding off-road vehicles in the desert during the cooler months.

What's the one thing most people would be surprised to learn about you?

I flew a jet from California to Michigan.