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Busch Gardens and Water Country USA rolling out food allergy initiative

October 10, 2012 | By Jon Cawley, jcawley@dailypress.com | 757-247-4635

SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment — owners of Busch Gardens and Water Country USA — has rolled out a new initiative aimed at making the in-park dining experience better for visitors who have food allergies.

The effort, which ranges from increased personalized service to new menu options, involves all 10 of the Orlando-based company's theme parks. SeaWorld Parks partnered with the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN) to educate and train more than 6,000 culinary employees to better assist guests with related needs, a SeaWorld Parks statement said.

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"We serve millions of guests each year and are committed to provide each a great experience," said Jim Atchison, president and CEO of SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment. "For families with allergen concerns, we understand how challenging it can be to safely dine out, especially on vacation."

According to SeaWorld Parks, the new initiative includes:

- Increased personal attention to ensure the safety of each meal. Restaurant managers and supervisors will assist guests one-on-one and oversee preparation of each "allergen-friendly meal from start to finish." In advance, guests will be able to fill out special "Chef Cards" that outline to kitchen staff foods to avoid.
- All park restaurants are equipped and trained to take care of guests with allergen needs.
- Additional menu options range from gluten-free pizza to allergen-friendly "Shamu-shaped chocolate bars. Pre-packaged snacks from companies that specialize in allergen-friendly foods are also available.
- Each park's website includes detailed information on allergen-friendly services and helpful safety tips. Guests can download Chef Cards and fill them out prior to visiting. In-park educational handouts are also available.

John Lehr, FAAN's CEO, commended SeaWorld Parks on the program.

"Families often exhaustively research vacation options that will keep their loved ones with food allergies safe," he said, in the statement. "SeaWorld has taken extra steps to educate its employees about the risks that families managing food allergies face on a daily basis."

For more information, visit <http://www.bushgardens.com/>, <http://www.seaworld.com/> or <http://www.foodallergy.org>.

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