

The New Friendship Table

By Fred Sommer, member of the RVM [Dining Services Advisory Committee](#)

It is estimated that there are more than 150 RVM residents living independently who are single or whose partners cannot dine with them. With COVID there are limited options for dining or for meet and greet. Hopefully once all dining options are open and there are no restrictions, we can implement plans for welcoming and including those who might otherwise dine alone.

Meanwhile, there is a great need. Some of the postings on ListServ are “my hardest thing is finding people to dine with here at the Manor” or “I’ve lived in a cottage for 5 years. Without a friendship table life would have been very lonely”.

I am glad to report there is now a grass-roots movement of friendship tables. I believe it started with Yvonne Lynne suggesting “Invitation Tables”. This was picked up as a challenge by the Millers who reserved a table for six and invited others to join them. The response was so great that they could have had filled five more tables. At least six residents have reserved tables and invited others to join them. Most invitations were open, some preferred newer residents, others preferred foreign service or Peace Corps graduates. All tables were filled and all hosts had a good time.

We have found that the responders that filled the tables were overwhelmingly established residents who have resided at the Manor for many years. We have not reached our newer residents, either as hosts or as responders, who are in greater need of creating friendships. Perhaps some of them are too shy or uncomfortable, or they are awed by and afraid to try Open Table.

Open Table is easy. Go to MyRVM.org, click on “Dining” in the top row, and scroll to the bottom. You will see a headline “Open Table Online Reservations”. Simply select the number of people the date, and the time for your reservation. You will see a new screen showing what times are open. If you see a time that works for you, click on it and confirm. This takes you to a new screen where you are asked to fill out your name, phone, and address. That’s All.

The problem is getting the reservation on the date and time you requested. My solution is to make a reservation as early as 7:00 AM for a date one week out. Please note that there are only six tables for six and these tend to go quickly. If you can’t get one, try a table for four.

Now that you know how to make a reservation, all you have to do is have the courage to make one. Then send an email to rvmlist@groups.io (this is ListServ) inviting others to join you by responding to your email. You select your dinner companions from those responding. You have nothing to lose, and who knows, you may meet a new best friend. Do try it!

So far, this program has been limited to residents who have and use a computer. We need suggestions for expanding it to those without a computer. Please email any suggestions to fredsommer4@gmail.com. Thank you.