Personal stories evoke emotion and a sense of connectedness. They can also drive traffic to your social media channels. A great way to do this in dining services is to show what it’s like behind the scenes by providing a glimpse into the interests and history of your dedicated staff members.

UAlbany Dining learned the true impact of this strategy when they tweeted out birthday wishes to veteran employee, Panchita (Pan) Miller. Pan, 74, exemplifies the best in customer service. Greeting and swiping students in at the all-you-care-to-eat Indian Quad dining room for 47 years, Pan has become the unofficial ‘mother’ at that residence hall.

“The metrics were unprecedented,” stated auxiliary services’ Marketing and New Media Manager Brendon Phillips. “We had the best response that we had ever had on Twitter with 2,302 total engagements, including 189 ‘likes’ and 109 retweets.”

Pan was modest about her ‘social fame.’ “I am flattered that my birthday created such a response. I just try to look out for the students everyday and remind them to eat their veggies,” she says with a grin.

Pan began her career at UAlbany in September of 1968. “The world was a very different place,”
said Pan. “The Vietnam War and Civil Rights Movement were in full swing. It was a confusing
time. But my students weren’t that different than they are today.”

Since Pan’s ‘viral’ post, UAlbany Dining regularly features staff members on Twitter, Facebook,
Instagram and Snapchat doing a variety of things like cooking demos of their favorite foods,
celebrating anniversaries and even dancing while making pancakes.

“It just goes to show that a human connection is a powerful way to message your services, and
we try to leverage this whenever possible,” concluded Phillips.

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