

Motion

A MEALS ON WHEELS PEOPLE NEWSLETTER



SPRING 2024

INSIDE

Letter from the CEO	3
Delivering More Than Meals	4-5
Bite-Sized News	6-7

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Letter

FROM

the CEO



SHOWERED IN GRATITUDE

Picture this: It's pouring rain — I mean, pouring — as I'm chasing GPS directions that seemed more like wild guesses, navigating a labyrinth of apartment buildings, making my way on foot to front doors with a bag of meals in one hand and quarts of milk in the other. My adventure started at our Ambleside Center in Gresham with the sky opening up just as I set off on my meal delivery route. My deliveries that morning were filled with moments of confusion and chaos and even included an extra trip back through the downpour for forgotten milk for our participants.

Although I deliver meals to our participants a few times a month, this route left me filled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude and appreciation

for our incredible community of volunteers who are out there, come rain or shine, day in, day out. This month we're celebrating National Volunteer Month and the more than 1,750 people who volunteer each year delivering meals, making Friendly Chats calls, serving lunch at our dining centers, and more. Their resilience and dedication truly embody the spirit of service that drives our mission forward every day.

But here's the thing — every meal delivered, every Friendly Chats call made, is also powered by you, our donors. Your generosity keeps these wheels turning. I hope you feel a deep sense of pride in the community you support. You are a crucial part of our work. So, thank you. Thank you for enabling us to

keep showing up for those who count on us. Your generosity doesn't just fund meals — it weaves the very fabric of our community, bringing meals, care, and connection to our aging neighbors and making a tangible difference in their lives.

Suzanne Washington
CEO, Meals on Wheels People



Delivering More Than Meals

Join us on a journey as we ride along with Meals on Wheels People volunteers, delivering more than just nutritious meals. Discover the profound impact of each visit, fostering connections and lighting up lives, one doorstep at a time.

It's Thursday, 9:30 a.m., and Ellen Goldschmidt and her friend Barbara Stafford-Wilson arrive on cue and start loading the trunk of Ellen's car with the day's precious cargo — brown paper bags of nutritious meals, quarts of Alpenrose milk, and loaves of Franz bread. Despite the lack of sunshine, there's a warmth to the routine, a familiarity that Ellen and Barb have cultivated over their two-plus years of service. These two volunteers have fostered deep connections with the folks on their route, understanding their diverse backgrounds, challenges, strengths, and personal stories. "We've been doing the same route the whole time, so we know them really well," Ellen says. "There's a sense that they really rely on us and depend on us. It's sweet and also a lot of responsibility."

They deliver meals to people who live with the aftermath of trauma, addiction, and mental health issues, while others, like Terry, a veteran, grapple with cognitive challenges. Ellen and Barb strive to offer support, companionship, and, at times, additional resources. The gratitude and trust they receive in return is immeasurable.

Ellen believes that while the meals are crucial, it's the human interaction that truly enriches the lives of the older adults they deliver to. Even a simple conversation can mean the world

to someone feeling isolated. "The food is important to all of them, but it's the consistency," she says. "It's the relationship that we have developed with them. I feel close and connected to all of them."

Adds Barb: "Having the chance to visit with people and see directly how impactful it can be for people who don't have a lot of visitors throughout the week — they're really ready for companionship."

Meet a few of the folks who eagerly await Ellen and Barb's visits each week. Each portrait tells a story of resilience, community, and the profound impact of kindness.



TERRY

Terry, a veteran who has served his country with honor, lives in solitude and finds solace in the company of his television. However, the regular visits from Ellen and Barb break through the silence. Their deliveries offer more than just the essential nutrition Terry needs; they bring moments of genuine care that pierce through the isolation. "My

left leg — it has been acting up lately," he says and confides that he finds the task of navigating his phone to make a doctor's appointment dauntingly complex. Barb immediately offers to help, ready to extend support beyond the meal delivery, acknowledging the different needs that arise in the lives of those they visit. Terry, in his enduring independence, declines the offer but is moved by the gesture. It's moments like these that underscore Meals on Wheels People's impact, where the delivery of nutritious meals is just the beginning. The volunteers embody a broader mission of companionship and practical support. For Terry, this moment, though brief, reinforces the sense of community and care that surrounds him, offering a gentle reminder that he is not alone.



SUSAN + LUCY

Susan, with her steadfast cat companion Lucy nestled in her arms, cherishes the support and warmth provided by the deliveries. The cold winter months bring particular challenges for Susan, as her

arthritis flares up, making even simple tasks like cooking a trial. Without the ability to drive, her world became smaller, more confined. However, the arrival of Ellen and Barb brings more than just food; it brings a sense of relief and gratitude. “By the time dinner rolls around, I’m so grateful for the meals,” she says. “I don’t have to stand and cook.” The service also eases a significant worry—the tough decision between feeding herself and ensuring Lucy is cared for. With the nutritious meals provided for her, Susan can afford to purchase pet food and keep both herself and Lucy nourished. “It makes it so much easier,” she says.



KIRK

Financial stability has always been a struggle for Kirk, who currently has no income. Meals on Wheels People steps in to fill a critical gap, ensuring that Kirk doesn’t have to worry about where his next meal is coming from or if he’ll have to sacrifice other necessities to feed himself. For Kirk, the program is more than a meal delivery service; it’s a crucial support system that helps him maintain his independence and dignity, offering relief as he works to resolve his financial situation.

The certainty of receiving nutritious meals is a beacon of hope.



IN MEMORY OF THERESA

Theresa’s story was one of resilience in the face of life’s challenges, including living with diabetes, surviving a heart attack, and the grueling path to recovery that followed. These experiences marked not just her health but also her spirit. “I’m breaking down,” she once confided to Ellen and Barb, her voice a blend of weariness and defiance. “It’s hard.” Yet Theresa found a glimmer of hope and warmth through Meals on Wheels People. “As prices keep going up, this,” she had gestured to the nutritious meals delivered by Ellen and Barb, “makes a real difference.” For Theresa, the service was a lifeline, ensuring she didn’t have to choose between medication and sustenance. Beyond the meals, it was the warmth and genuine care from Ellen and Barb that brightened her days, offering companionship and a reminder of her valued place in the world. “I’m so thankful,” she said.

Although Theresa passed away in January, her gratitude and spirit live on in the memories of those who knew her, reminding

us of the profound impact of kindness, the importance of community, and the difference one meal, one visit, can make in someone’s life.

HELP US FEED THE NEED

These stories aren’t possible without the generous support of our donors and volunteers. Your contributions fuel this vital mission, enabling us to reach more individuals in need, to ensure that seniors like Terry can live with dignity, that Susan and her cat Lucy can enjoy another warm meal together, and that Kirk can face his financial challenges without the added burden of hunger.

In memory of Theresa and in honor of every individual touched by this program, we invite you to continue your support. Your donation today can turn a meal into a miracle for someone in our community. Let’s ensure that meals and the moments of connection continue to reach those who await them, one delivery at a time.



Scan to see MOWP volunteers Ellen and Barb featured on KPTV.

Bite-Sized News

INTRODUCING OUR NEW COMMUNITY OUTREACH MANAGER

We are proud to announce the creation of a new position at Meals on Wheels People – a community outreach manager. This new position is a direct result of our 2023 Community Equity Assessment aimed at understanding ways we can better serve and build partnerships to support hunger relief and food security efforts for Black, indigenous, people of color, and Slavic and Eastern European communities. In December 2023, we were thrilled to welcome **Nim Xuto** to lead this crucial initiative, focusing on creating and strengthening strategic partnerships with community-based organizations.

Visit mowp.org/news to learn more about how Nim is using her lived and career experience to foster transformative community relationships and advance us toward a more inclusive and equitable future.



LOVE BLOOMS

AARP Oregon celebrated Valentine’s Day by offering beautiful roses to our dining center and meal delivery participants. The Cupid Crew’s visit and the lovely flowers they handed out during lunch at the Beaverton Center brought smiles and joy to everyone there. This thoughtful gesture by AARP made the day feel extra special.



ADVOCATING FOR HEALTH

Meals on Wheels People CEO Suzanne Washington joined forces with fellow members of the Medically Tailored Meals Coalition of Washington, of which she is chair, to advocate for the inclusion of medically tailored meals within the Health Care Authority’s latest approved Medicaid waiver. Their collective voice represents a significant step forward in the fight for comprehensive health care solutions that recognize the critical role of nutrition in medical care. “Medically tailored meals



are key to improving the health of Washington’s residents in an equitable way,” she says.

CELEBRATING THE HEARTBEAT OF OUR COMMUNITY

The spirit and dedication of our volunteers are the foundation of our mission. Over 200 volunteers lend their time, energy, and hearts every week to serve and deliver meals, touching the lives of more than 10,500 individuals with nutrition and invaluable human connection. This April, as we celebrate National Volunteer Month and National Volunteer Week April 21-27, we honor the extraordinary contributions of our volunteers. We’re thrilled to announce the winners of the 2024 Marcus Lampros Volunteer Awards: Bill Beckers, Mark Chapin, Rick Dwyer, and Don George. These four exceptional individuals have gone above and beyond, truly embodying

our core values of Integrity, Respect, Inclusion, Creativity, Commitment, and Teamwork. Their dedication not only enhances the lives of those we serve but also strengthens our entire community. To learn more about them, visit: mowp.org/news.

WATERFRONT BLUES FESTIVAL IS BACK IN JULY

Meals on Wheels People is excited to be a 2024 community partner for this year's Waterfront Blues Festival. Downtown Portland's largest and longest running music festival, Waterfront Blues Festival will once again take place at Tom McCall Waterfront Park July 4-7, 2024. The festival has raised more than \$10 million dollars for local community organizations through its 35-year history, and this year the tradition of community support continues. Tickets for the Waterfront Blues Festival's Cares Cruise benefitting Meals on Wheels People are on sale at waterfrontblues.com/tickets.

Impact STATS



7,352
individuals served



258,012
meals served



6,265
Friendly Chats calls made

*Jan 1, 2024 - March 24, 2024





Leave Your Legacy

Help us secure a future where no senior goes hungry or experiences social isolation. There are many ways to nourish and support generations to come:

- Include Meals on Wheels People in your will or living trust
- Add Meals on Wheels People as a beneficiary of your retirement
- Consider a Charitable Gift Annuity
- Give a gift of life insurance, real estate, or securities



Learn about these and additional planned giving options at mowp.org/legacy or call Margaret Clement at **503-953-8174**.

Follow us to stay up to date with events, volunteer opportunities, and more.

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mowp.org