So Much More Than A Meal . . .
A Message From Our Executive Director

Our motto “so much more than a meal” does not only refer to the many things we are able to offer our program participants besides a daily meal. It also speaks to the fact that equally as important as feeding a hungry, homebound individual, is the daily visit from a caring volunteer who checks in and makes sure they are thriving.

One in four senior citizens in America lives alone and in isolation. This figure amounts to 417,681 seniors in New Jersey. 62% of those we serve live alone. With the senior population set to double by 2050, the need for socialization will increase substantially.

Senior isolation has been identified as a health risk, and is linked to poor health outcomes, including increased risks for mortality, dementia, injuries, and re-hospitalization. The average cost of a hospital readmission for this population is $10,913.

Feelings of loneliness can negatively affect both physical and mental health. We all have experienced the feeling of loneliness at some point in our lives. Imagine if you experienced these feelings on a daily basis. Even the perception of loneliness contributes to cognitive decline and an increased risk of dementia. Socially isolated seniors are more pessimistic about the future.

Social isolation makes seniors more vulnerable to elder abuse. That is why a daily visit from a volunteer, who not only eases the isolation but checks in to make sure our seniors are healthy and safe, is a crucial component of what we do.

Our follow-up procedures when a person does not answer the door has also saved lives.

People who are lonely are also more likely to engage in unhealthy behavior. This includes not only bad eating habits but also substance abuse, and can lead to rapid decline in their health.

The Meals on Wheels model of meal delivery has been recognized as a crucial component of maintaining seniors’ health and longevity. When seniors remain at home and out of long-term care, they live longer and healthier lives. It also provides a huge cost saving to an already taxed healthcare system and to family members. In addition, we are the only model of meal delivery that also addresses the social isolation component that is lacking in so many other home delivered meal programs.

Those we serve benefit greatly from the selfless dedication of our volunteers whom they see everyday. They are our “eyes and ears” and both they and our participants grow close and miss each other if they miss a day.

We build community, and it takes a community to care for those who lack a support network. We are blessed to play a key role in this on a daily basis.

MOWMC Bids Farewell to Staff and Welcomes Another

Meals on Wheels of Mercer County was blessed to have in its employ for almost two years a young man who, in addition to serving his immediate community, also serves our country. Kareem Cropper, our Volunteer Coordinator up until February 2017, is a marine reservist and is being deployed abroad. While we are very sad to see him go, upon his return home, he will be working towards completing his college degree.

During his time with us, Kareem built up the number of volunteers that deliver our daily meals. His calm and easy going personality added so much to our daily operations, and he will be greatly missed by everyone. Our country is so lucky to have him defending our interests in the world!

However, we are excited to welcome Brandon Verrault who has stepped into the Volunteer Coordinator role. Brandon comes to us with a wealth of experience, as he ran a similar program at the Red Cross of Central Jersey. Previously, Brandon served as our courier which allowed him to get to know everyone.

We say Godspeed to Kareem and welcome Brandon!
MOWMC Welcomes the TCNJ Bonner Scholars

This past Fall saw the start of a new partnership with The College of New Jersey’s Bonner Scholar Program. This program provides students, that have high financial need and an ethic for service, four years of financial aid support and an opportunity to participate in an intensive cohort experience. We became one of their service sites, and welcomed 30 freshmen who deliver meals every day.

In addition, they provide “friendly visiting” and phone calls on weekends to some of our most vulnerable and isolated seniors. Our Bonners always step up to help with many other projects like participating in the CROP Walk and creating holiday cards for our participants. It has also been a way to involve young people with an aging population. They have shared on many an occasion what an eye opening experience it has been, and our seniors just love them!

The freshmen Bonners will continue with the program in their subsequent years, so we are excited at the opportunity to continue working with them over the course of their 4 years at TCNJ!

MOWMC Golf Outing will mark 25 years this spring!!!

June 8th 2017 will mark the 25th year Meals on Wheels of Mercer County has hosted a golf outing at Mountain View Golf Course. We are very excited to be honoring two great community partners and supporters.

We honor the commitment of the Hughes Family, as we have had the honor of having three members of their family serving on our Board; John, Helen, and until recently, Adam. It is rare in the not for profit community that several family members all support the same cause. All have contributed in varied and significant ways to the organization over many years.

The Touch of Taste Catering of the ARC Mercer has been providing our meals since 2012. Our partnership is unique to our industry, and brings together two important causes working together to our mutual benefit, and to that of the community. Partnering keeps the costs to our participants low, and provides opportunities to ARC consumers for service and training.

For ticket info, please contact our office. Come join us for a great day of golf!

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Meals on Wheels America Filming of Our Program and Participants

On December 15th and 16th of 2016, we were honored with a visit from the staff of the national office who came to film our program and participants. They visited the kitchen at the ARC and met our volunteers. They also photographed and filmed several of our participants, all of which will be included in their national “Let’s Do Lunch” campaign aimed at recruiting volunteers to our programs nationwide. Please look for the ads on television, radio and social media. We are very pleased to have made a direct contribution to the campaign.

The Loss of One of Our “Veterans”

We recently lost a dear friend, and one of our long standing volunteers, Mr. John Coulbourn. John volunteered with us for over 22 years!

John was a quiet man, who always picked up his “runner” on Fridays, and sat quietly waiting for his meals to deliver. He always arrived early, and always had a smile on his face. He had a wonderful laugh, and embodied everything one would want in a “grandfather”; gentle of spirit and very wise. He always spoke fondly of his home state Maryland where he would return to visit his family.

John served in the US Army and received an honorable discharge. He retired from United States Steel in Fairless Hills, PA. He was a member of King David Lodge #15 Free and Accepted Masons - PHA for over 52 years, serving as Worshipful Master from 1972-1973. He was also a Deacon at Shiloh Baptist Church in Trenton since 1987.

John is sorely missed by all of us who came to know and love him.

Seeking Volunteers from Houses of Worship

Is your house of worship or outreach ministry looking for new volunteer opportunities? We are always looking for new volunteers, and would be happy to come speak to your group! Please call our office to set up a convenient time and we will be there!
In an effort to save on postage and trees, Meals on Wheels of Mercer County posts all our donors names in the online edition of our newsletter on our website.

Please go to www.mealsonwheelsmercer.org to view our acknowledgment.

Thank you to all our loyal supporters!
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Monsignor Hugh Ronan, President of MOWTE, presented Ellen Baker with a crystal vase honoring her 36 years of service at the July luncheon.

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SAVE THE DATE
March 2017: March for Meals
April 15, 2017: Can Day at Ewing Shoprite
May 10, 2017: Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon at Rho Restaurant in Trenton, NJ
June 8, 2017: 25th Annual Golf Outing

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