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

Our name, “Meals on Wheels” has become synonymous nationally with meals delivered to those seniors who are homebound. While being a comprehensive nutrition program is the heart of what we do, it is often easy to overlook the equally important mission of a daily “check-in” with our participants, made possible by another group of people we value equally as much; our volunteers. It is why we are “so much more than a meal.”

Did you know that last year, 62% of the participants in our program live alone? I bet you didn’t know that 56% are over 70 years of age, and 62% are female. 46% of our participants live at or below the Federal poverty level, and 31% are vulnerable. Finally, many of our participants receive no daily visits from anyone other than our volunteers.

Many of our participants lived similar lives to ours; they were active community members, held jobs, had families. Now, toward the end of their lives, they may be living on a very fixed income, or simply not have enough resources to cover their expenses. Oddly enough, food is too often the last thing on their list of daily priorities when faced with other expenses. All they want is to remain in their homes, healthy and out of long-term care facilities, for as long as possible. Meals on Wheels of Trenton/Ewing and our volunteers are privileged to lend a helping hand!

Again this past fall, one of our volunteers saved another life, when they arrived at the home of one of our participants, who was feeling ill and asked to be taken to the hospital. As it turns out, she had left the gas stove on, and was slowly being poisoned by carbon monoxide. Had we not arrived when we did, the outcome might not have been as good as it was, neither for our participant, or the neighborhood.

Meals on Wheels of Trenton/Ewing is proud of our mission, and proud that we can provide meaningful community engagement opportunities for our volunteers that make all the difference in our community!

We are very excited to let all our supporters and friends know that MOWTE was offered new office space by Bert Steinmann, Mayor of Ewing Township, in the Hollowbrook Center! We are thrilled to move our administrative offices into a larger space in February. We will continue to work out of the ARC with our daily meal delivery, so there will be no changes for our volunteers. However for us, it will mean larger office space and right around the corner!

On MLK Day, a group of volunteers facilitated by the Bonner Program at the College of New Jersey came to paint our new space with donations made by the Ewing Home Depot. They were joined by Sasa, our Executive Director, and Kelly, our office assistant, and her son Jyjon! We are very grateful to Mayor Steinmann for his generosity and recognition of the important role we play in the lives of many of the homebound in Ewing township. And we also wish to thank our Board member and Ewing resident, Col. Jon Gribbin, who facilitated our meeting.
Jordyn’s Cause 4 Paws: Helping Participants and their Pets

Jordyn Cascone, 13, saw a need. She did her research and discovered that many homebound seniors, who live on a fixed income and own a pet, will feed their pets before they feed themselves. She understood in that moment how important those pets are to these seniors. She knew she could make a difference in the lives of these pet owners and their pets. So she reached out to Meals on Wheels of Trenton/Ewing to see if in fact, they would partner with her to help. “I organized this program because the companionship of pets plays an important role in the quality of these recipients’ lives,” said Jordyn. “I was very happy that Meals on Wheels of Trenton/Ewing was so open to working with me on my project!”

“I was very impressed that such a young person would even have our population on their radar screen,” said Sasa Olessi Montaño, Executive Director of Meals on Wheels of Trenton/Ewing (MOWTE). “It is always a challenge for us to recruit the younger volunteer, and when Jordyn reached out to us with such a novel idea, I knew immediately this would be a fruitful collaboration!” MOWTE has always distributed pet food, but it depended on if food was available at the food bank, or from individual donations. Jordyn’s program “Cause4Paws” organizes weekly food bags tailored to the individual dietary needs of the pets. She prepares a survey for each participant, and then drops off the bags once a week for distribution by MOWTE volunteers. She gets the food through donations and purchase.

At the same time, Meals on Wheels of Trenton/Ewing saw an opportunity to apply for a grant to the Banfield Charitable Trust (BCT) to support the program. For our homebound participants, their pets are their family. Banfield Charitable Trust’s mission is to keep families and pets together. Each year, BCT helps more than 500 Meals on Wheels programs nationally and MOWTE was thrilled when they received a grant for $2,500 to start their program. “From sharing human meals, to going without needed medications, seniors will do whatever it takes to keep their pets with them,” said Dianne McGill, executive director and CEO of Banfield Charitable Trust. “Pet food donations are literally a lifeline for seniors and we are so excited to support this new program for Meals on Wheels clients in Trenton and Ewing.”

Ms. T, one of our participants, told us she is very grateful to receive the pet food for her dog, Ginger. “Ginger was having some health issues and had lost some weight. The pet food donations have helped give Ginger the strength to get around, putting some weight back on. The special food keeps her going and she is even sleeping better. Along with the food, Ginger loves the dog treats!”

Jordyn is also a Girl Scout, and is using her project to work toward her Silver Award. If you would like to help the Cause4Paws program, please make a pet food donation to MOWTE or, you can also visit www.JordynsCause4Paws.org for more information.

March for Meals Campaign: Help End Senior Hunger

MOWTE will again be participating in the March for Meals campaign. March For Meals is an annual campaign in March of every year, designed to raise awareness of senior hunger and to encourage action at the local level. Marsillio’s Kitchen, Mikonos, Frederri’s Tavern, Café 72 will again be participating this year, and we have two new additions; CrisPanino and the Blooming Grove Inn, both in Ewing. Last year, the restaurants that participated not only raised the awareness of senior hunger in Mercer County, but the restaurants donated $1986 to MOWTE! We were also able to get them new diners. A win/win all around!

In addition, during “Champion’s Week” last year, which this year falls during the week of March 16th, then acting Trenton mayor, George Muschal, delivered meals to some of our Trenton participants as did the new Trenton indoor football team, The Trenton Freedom! This year, The Trenton Freedom, Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes and Ewing Mayor Steinmann have all confirmed they will be delivering meals! Please come out and dine for MOWTE in 2015 and make a difference!

Children Making a Difference Benefit Concert

On November 16th, 2014, MOWTE was the recipient of the funds raised by the Princeton Girl Choir at their 7th Annual Children Making a Difference Benefit Concert. The concert, held at Trinity Cathedral in Trenton, raised over $3600, the most they have held the event.

The initiative was begun by the Choir’s Director Melissa Malvar-Keylock, who organizes it every year in her mothers memory. The girls sang a beautiful, multi-cultural holiday selection that was enthusiastically received by all!
MOWTE is Honored by the AKA’s!

At their 34th annual MLK Memorial Scholarship Breakfast, on January 19th, MOWTE was honored by the Ivy League Educational Foundation Inc, the charitable arm of the Epsilon Upsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. The AKA’s were the first black, female sorority in the US, founded on January 15th, 1908 at Howard University. MOWTE was nominated by two of our outstanding volunteers, Myrna Harris-Taylor and Sandra Campbell. It was indeed an honor to be recognized for the work we do by such an auspicious organization. We will forever treasure this recognition!

MOWTE begins the Books on Wheels (BOW) Program together with the Trenton Public Library!

As a comprehensive nutrition program, not only do we consistently provide nutritionally balanced meals to our participants, but we look for other ways to enhance their quality of life. We have partnered with the Trenton Public Library to get our Trenton participants library cards so they may check out books to read! Our volunteers deliver their books to them and return them to us when they are done. This is just another way MOWTE seeks to support our homebound participants! As always, none of this would be possible without the help of our dedicated volunteers!

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**In Honor of**
Fran and Laurie Kearse

In an effort to save on postage and trees, MOWTE now posts all our donors names in the online edition of our newsletter on our website. Please go to www.mowte.org to see our acknowledgment.

Thank you to all our loyal supporters!
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**Meals on Wheels of Trenton/Ewing**

320 Hollowbrook Drive
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Phone: 609-695-3483
www.mowte.org
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**Promoting the dignity and independence of home bound individuals in the Greater Trenton Area.**

Meals on Wheels of Trenton/Ewing is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. All contributions are tax-deductible.

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**SAVE THE DATE**

- **March 2015:** March for Meals
  - March 3 - Freddie’s Tavern
  - March 10 - Blooming Grove Inn
  - March 11 - Mikonos Restaurant
  - March 17 - Café 72 by Cugino’s
  - March 24 - Marsilio’s Kitchen
  - March 31 - CrisPanino

- **April 22, 2015:** Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, Rho Restaurant, Trenton, NJ

- **June 4, 2015:** 22nd Annual Golf Outing, Mountain View Golf Club, Ewing, NJ

**Grants**

The following foundations and corporations have awarded MOWTE grants since September 2014. We thank them for their support of the homebound we serve:

- **Anonymous Corporate Donor**
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