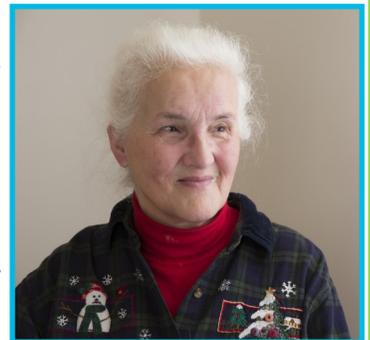


EXPRESSIVE ARTS PROJECT

In September 2021, MOWMC began a new initiative called Expressive Arts. It is a discipline of helping and healing that uses the arts as its basis for discovery and change. It can combine any combination of the visual, movement, music, drama, and writing, which provides clients with an inspired rich inner and outer life. It is an activity combining creativity and inspiring wellness with human warmth and connection, especially crucial during this pandemic.



In its pilot stage, we identified several seniors we knew to have extraordinary life stories to tell, and so much love and talent to express through the arts. Facilitated by Rochelle L. Stern, former Trenton and Bordentown librarian and Expressive Arts Facilitator, the activities provided for our participants include things like short story and film discussion, writing, working with clay and watercolor, genealogy and much more.

Through this program, one participant, Victoria, is writing her extraordinary autobiography through her poetry, by listening to beloved songs, and through her beautiful singing voice. Victoria was an adopted orphan from Italy post-war in the late 1940s. She came to the United States in 1951 as a child through Ellis Island, and was part of a group of transported orphan children who survived the Holocaust. She remembers learning English at first through a Tony Bennett song, "Because of You." Perhaps the song will be the start of her first chapter as she is busy recounting her amazing life with a mystery family left behind in Italy. She was also in attendance in Washington, D.C. when Dr. King gave his "I Have a Dream" speech. She is only one of the amazing seniors we serve! There are many other stories to be told!

Expressive arts is a vehicle for many participants to express their rich lives in different and unique ways. The activities have helped them find joy through dreary, winter days, as we all get through the pandemic.

If you would like more information on expressive arts sessions, please contact our offices!

THE BONNER SCHOLAR PROGRAM



Karan Gupta, back center

The Bonner Scholar Program is a nationwide, student volunteer program that is focused on helping those in need. MOWMC has been working with The College of New Jersey

(TCNJ) program for many years, which focuses on education inequity, food insecurity, environmental sustainability, and much more. TCNJ students who have shown an interest and passion for these issues have been given the opportunity to directly serve the Mercer County community and make a better future for those in it. It also gives these students a real-world experience throughout their 4 years in college. Karan Gupta has been a Bonner for the past four years and has worked with Meals on Wheels Mercer County during that time. Karan shares his reflections on his experience below:

I have had the opportunity to work with MOWMC and its hardworking, kind, and understanding staff. Through their hard work, the MOWMC team has made the process of delivering food seamless for myself and those I work with. In addition to serving regular meals, we have been able to provide dog/cat food, fruits and vegetables, and restaurant meals and

thus going above and beyond the need of a single meal a day. My service with MOWMC has also allowed me to interact with our participants and make sure that they are able to thrive in the later years of their lives. Seeing their happy faces and hearing their genuine “thank-you’s” really makes service worth it.

One part of MOWMC service that gets overlooked by people who do not know much about what they do, is the wellness checks that we do. When we go to the doors of our participants, we try to look for signs that show an inability to live comfortably. On one occasion, I was delivering a meal to one of our participants and saw that there was broken glass and black sludge on the floor. When I looked up at the participant, I noticed that they were wearing heavily torn clothes and were disabled. This prompted me to let the MOWMC staff know what was going on with this participant. A few weeks later, I was able to go back to the participants house and was delighted to be greeted by a cleaning lady, spotless floors, and a smiling participant. Being able to make a positive impact in this manner is what makes me want to continue serving with MOWMC even on my bad days.



VOLUNTEER PROFILE: DAN BALKO

I've been volunteering with MOWMC since March, 2020, after reading an article in the paper about the need for volunteers when the pandemic was just ramping up. In that scary time of uncertainty and helplessness, I thought it might be good to help to keep needy folks fed!

My mom, who was suffering from dementia, had been living with us since 2015, and her care required a lot of time from me. After her passing in August of 2020, and being retired myself, I found that I had a lot of spare time. Since I had committed to a particular route 5 days/week, I found the structure in my day that was required for my commitment was a good thing for me! . Also by having a dedicated route, I was able to get to know my clients on a personal level. We looked forward to seeing each other, and that was good for everyone involved, including me!

I've lived in Trenton for over 20 years now, and delivering for MOWMC has taken me into parts of the city that I had never seen before and never would have ventured into. It showed me that this program is vital to the lives of so many people in this city. I've also learned that there are a lot of good people here in Trenton who just happen to be less fortunate financially than others.

One of my clients is an elderly Polish woman. One day I said "good morning" to her in Polish, and she started rattling on to me in Polish! "Good morning" is the extent of my Polish language knowledge though. I had to tell her I didn't understand a word she was saying! We now talk every day for a few minutes. She tells me about her aches and pains. We talk about her cat. We talk about the old days when she was in Poland. She's always very pleasant and appreciative of the service we provide her.

My husband of 28 years and I have a vintage Airstream trailer as our "shore house". We live in a 97 year old house in Trenton, which is furnished mostly with vintage things. I like old things!. We have 2 dogs, Bessie and Oliver who are siblings, and 3 cats....mama and her 2 kids.

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

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March 1 - 31, 2022

March for Meals

As you eat out, remember those who need to eat in.
Help us celebrate 50 years - donate today.



Meals on Wheels in Our Community

Meals on Wheels of Mercer County serves approximately 700,000 meals to home-bound residents in our local neighborhoods. We subsidize 86% of those we serve who cannot afford the \$6 cost of a nutritious, home-delivered meal. MOWMC turns no one away; there is no wait list.

Give what you can!

\$5 \$15 \$25 \$50



Scan code or visit:
www.mealsonwheelsmercer.org

Thank you to our restaurant partners
for their continued support.



Premier Nutrition Program

Meals on Wheels delivers daily healthy food created from thoughtful meal planning directed by a licensed dietitian and prepared with the support of Rider University and its partners.

The Daily Visit

Social isolation is a painful reality many of our recipients face. Meals on Wheels' volunteers save lives by being a consistent touchstone and a daily friendly face.

OUR MISSION

ASSIST PARTICIPANTS IN MAINTAINING INDEPENDENCE, DIGNITY, HEALTH & WELL-BEING
BY PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE NUTRITION SERVICES AND HELPING EASE SOCIAL ISOLATION.