

NEWSONWHEELS

A Meals on Wheels of Mercer County Publication

FALL 2021

FEED A SENIOR; HELP A RESTAURANT

The COVID-19 pandemic, unfortunately, exposed many vulnerabilities in our communities; a resilient, yet fragile, healthcare system; a long-term care network ill-equipped for an easily transmissible virus like SARS COVID II, a food distribution grid easily sent into disarray and sadly, many of our local, small restaurants owned by our neighbors whose dream is to share their love of food with family, friends, and their community.

As many of our supporters know, Meals on Wheels of Mercer County has been working with many of our local restaurants for many years through our March for Meals restaurant event. These hard-working restauranteurs partner with us during the month of March every year, and give generously to support the needs of the elders in their communities.



A few of our restaurateurs



When the pandemic hit, many stepped up wanting to help! They donated meals, they found donors to underwrite the meals they donated, and one restaurant, Marsilio's Kitchen in Ewing, went as far as setting up an online donation page "Hospitality Works" where donations went to underwrite the cost of paying waitstaff to deliver meals for us when we ran into a shortage of volunteers! How creative!

We gave a name to this program, **Feed a Senior**; **Help a Restaurant** so we could also solicit donations to provide much needed weekend meals when our own program was so limited. Between the restaurants and our donations, over \$3,000 donated by our own Board as an example, we kept the weekend meals coming through the most difficult months of the pandemic. Eventually, we were able to secure both local funding through the City of Trenton, as well as state funding through the NJEDA and their Sustain and Serve program, both that continue today. Thanks to this funding we are able to continue to serve weekend meals to <u>ALL</u> our older adults, and help support our local restaurants.

It is creative partnerships like this, and the good will of so many people, that keep our seniors top of mind for many, exactly where they should be!

OUR MISSION

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

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ABOUT IRA (FROM A VOLUNTEER)

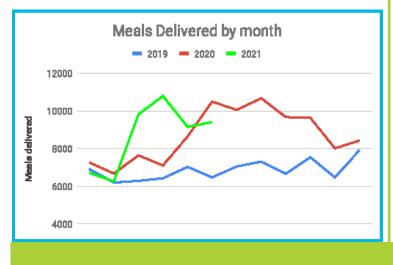


My first day of meal delivery took me into an assisted housing complex. A man stopped me and asked what I was doing. I said "delivering Meals on Wheels" and I noticed he had a cane and his eyes looked very small and pinkish. He replied,

"can you help me sign up for that; I'm blind" So I helped him apply for the program, and he has been a regular on my route ever since.

It gave me great pleasure to be of assistance to Ira and he is one of my "special" clients. He is always pleasant and reasonable when he answers the door. Even though he is blind, he maintains a positive attitude! Whenever I'm feeling pretty down about my life, I just think about Ira! and what an inspiration he has become; he is about my age... He has a piano inside of his apartment. When things open up and we are allowed to go into participants homes again, Ira said he will play the piano for me. I'm looking forward to that day.

A 3yr Comparison of Meals Delivered



OUR NEW INTITIATIVE!

This past spring, we initiated a mapping project with one of our partners, the Trenton Health Team, to determine what populations may be underserved along our delivery routes. We overlaid our routes with census, as well as demographic data such as a high concentration of seniors, little public transportation and cultural and ethic data in Mercer County.

As we long suspected, there were particular populations in certain areas that were underserved where we have a presence, specifically the South Asian community in the northern part of our county, and the Latino community in certain areas of Trenton.

Food that is not culturally appropriate can be a barrier to service. There are also cultural nuances which need to be overcome such as little familiarity with Meals on Wheels services in these communities. To begin to serve this population, which is also diverse within itself, it was important to identify community partners to work with.

The Greater Princeton Muslim Center was our first partner to help us reach the Muslim community within the South Asian community in the West Windsor area. Working with trusted community partners and culturally appropriate food vendors has helped open doors to reach more seniors by providing Halal meals, a first time for our organization.

We will also be partnering with a church in East Trenton to outreach to more Latino seniors who may be isolated and not familiar with our service. We are reaching new seniors every day!



IN LOVING MEMORY OF RICHARD SCHEETZ

The MOWMC family has lost someone very special, Richard Scheetz, known as Dick to many. Richard volun-

teered on Route 1, three days a week, for close to 17 years. Many knew him in his previous career as a teacher and principal in the Hopewell school system.

Richard's heart was big. He was a man of faith, a family man, and a good son to his mother Grace who lived to almost 103. He would always step up when needed, from MOWMC events to inclement weather driving in his Subaru. We would tease him as he would deliver his route in record time. His laugh was contagious and he knew how to laugh at himself, one of his most endearing qualities. He also served on the MOWMC board for many years, playing a big role in helping us get it to where we are today.

Our deepest condolences to his family. We will miss him terribly. Godspeed Richard.

WELCOME ZACH!

Zach Savino has joined our team as the new Volunteer Coordinator! He comes to us with his graduate degree from St. Johns University,



where he was the graduate assistant I charge of recruiting all campus volunteers to do service in the local community! He is well versed in volunteer recruitment, as well as building partnerships with campus communities!

"Growing up between Italy and the U.S., I witnessed a radically different European culture where the elderly are an active part of the community for their entire lives. I want to share that same love here with all of our volunteers and participants to help build a similar culture where everyone has a voice and is cared for."

Welcome to the team Zach!

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Anthony Colavita By Donaline Colavita

Venugopala Reddy Gundra By Ramakrishna Gundra, his son

Rameshwar Lal Gupta By Avnish Gupta, his son

> MOWMC Volunteer Bette Gray Hance By Marie DeBlasio, Linda Kreshover, Linda Montervino, & Carol Welsch

Alice P. Harkness By Brenda & Todd Frounfelker

> **Thomas Malloy** By Ida Malloy

Bruce & Edna Martin By Janet Martin Eva Mazzella

By Lucille Mayton & D. Duayne Whitehurst

Barbara By James Mulvan, her husband

> Shirley Wanda Pindle By BHF Territory Management Team

Suzanne Speer By Ruth Daciek Sonya Geisel-Hunt, & Emily & Ken Hang

Alice Valliere By John & Amy Chambers

Marge & Gene Varga By Jeanne Varga

The Mother of Cynthia Walsh

By Beth Grossman

Mary Zola By Friends of the Family

IN HONOR DONATIONS

Dolores M. Barnat By William Barnat

Margaret (Marge) M. Di Claudio By Catherine Grogan

Karen Garfing (on her birthday) By Robin Fogel

> William Mullowney By William Wiegmann

Sasa Olessi Montaño By Lynne Azarchi

Senator Shirley K. Turner Jonathan, Shirley, & Laura Allen

> Shelly Yedlin By Laura Sinderbrand

MOWMC Volunteer William (Bill) Walker By Ken Walker

CAN YOU SPARE A FEW HOURS A WEEK TO MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE?

Please consider joining us in providing nourishment for the body and the soul!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

call: 609-695-3483

or **email:**

volunteerservices@mealsonwheelsmercer.org

MEALS OF WHEELS MERCER COUNTY



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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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A HEARTFELT THANK YOU!!

...to all of the generous individuals, civic groups, houses of worship, schools, corporations, foundations, and our tireless volunteers who support us all throughout the year!!

Have you checked out our new website?



Don't forget to donate to MOWMC via your NJ 2021 tax return this year!

STAFF

Sasa Olessi Montaño Chief Executive Officer Lara Livne Chief Program Officer

Ruth Todd Director of Program Services

Zach Savino s Volunteer Coordinator

Jabeen Obaray Project Manager

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