



Changing lives,
one meal at a time.



NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2021

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Going, Going, Going Green

By Ben McBee

Like many promising undertakings, when Meals on Wheels People established its Green Committee in 2014, the process initially started with lots of ideas. And though creativity was encouraged, it was also important that the group kept its sights on realistic targets, because at the end of the day, the nonprofit's primary obligation is to the many seniors who depend on them for vital nutrition and socializing.

"We didn't try to do everything all at once. We didn't take the first thing that came along. We strategically said here are the projects we ought to focus on and get those done," explains Ernie Staley, the first Chair of the Green Committee. "The reason that worked out so well is because a lot of the things you do for sustainability, do in fact save you money."

Seven years later, their efforts continue to gain traction, and Meals on Wheels People has been included in the 100 Best Green

Workplaces in Oregon by Oregon Business. They are also certified GOLD by the City of Portland's Sustainability at Work division.

A large part of the committee's success is owed to the fantastic volunteers, staff, and board members who bought in across the organization from the get go. "When you asked them for ideas about how we could reduce waste, or improve the energy efficiency of the buildings, or reduce the amount of gas that we were using to deliver the meals, they were all over it," Staley says. "They leapt at the chance to participate in a way that would make us a greener organization."

The team also partnered with experts, including PGE and Energy Trust of Oregon, and with a mission-oriented approach, began to check off some boxes. Window film was installed at the Central Office, greatly increasing the efficiency of the heating system during winter and cooling in the summer



Meals on Wheels People's Green Committee is continually striving toward environmental and economic sustainability, and has become a 100 Best Green Workplaces in Oregon along the way.

months. Then, the Central Kitchen's equipment received an upgrade, enabling the chefs to cook food much more effectively than before.

Another meaningful change — for a long time, the refrigerators on the big trucks that deliver food to the centers required the diesel engine to be running in order to maintain a suitable temperature. With an impactful grant and donations, those units were converted to idle, drastically reducing our use of electric power and cutting down on emissions.

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For every project completed, there were several that weren't feasible, or at least not at the time. "You can see that there were lots of ideas out there, and some of them sounded really cool, but when you look at the picture of the organization and what we were really trying to do with our money, it wasn't quite ready," says Staley. "Which isn't to say it doesn't work sometime in the future, because the costs of things change."

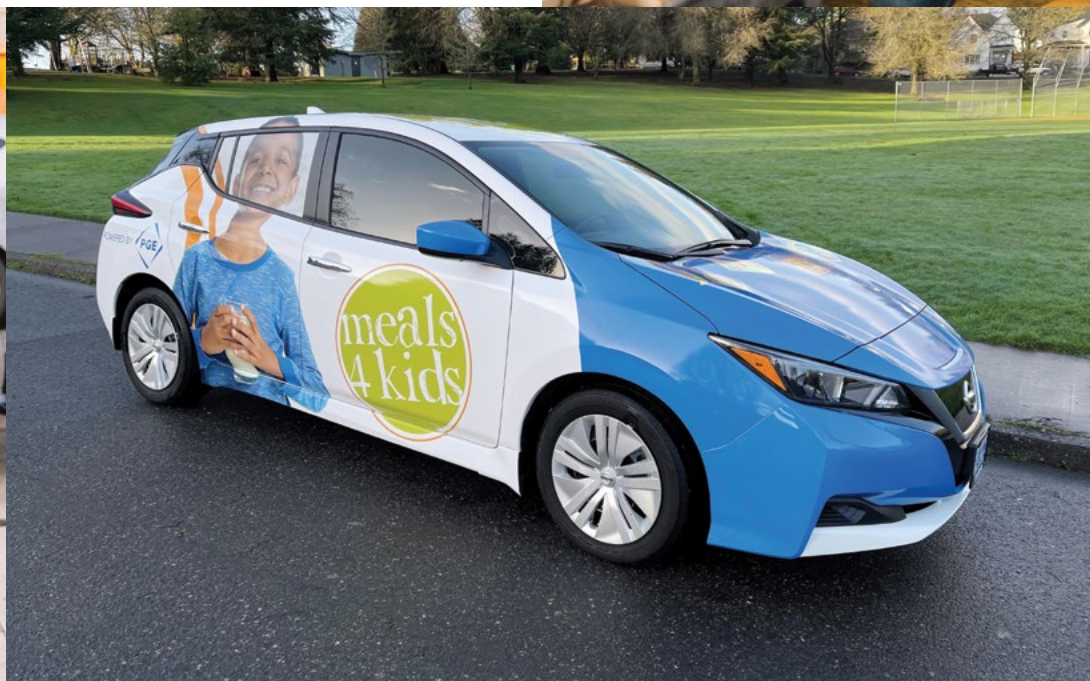
When the Central Office was constructed in 2002, it was designed with energy efficiencies in mind, most notably the capacity to utilize solar voltaic panels. Unfortunately over the years, taking into account the roof area, the cost per panel, and the price of energy, it never penciled out — until now. In collaboration with Neil Kelly Company, preliminary designs have been drawn up to convert the building to run primarily on solar power.

Earlier this year, with a generous gift from the PGE Drive Change Fund and the DEQ's Oregon Clean Fuels Program, Meals on Wheels People was able to purchase two electric vehicles and install four charging stations at its headquarters. The Nissan Leaf and Ford Transit Cargo Van are already being utilized for its Meals 4 Kids program, which serves qualified

children and families within the City of Portland experiencing food insecurity. Plus, staff, volunteers and the public can charge their own cars on site.

In order to further cut down on food waste, surveys have been conducted to identify the least popular menu items and adapt them so people are more likely to finish what's on their plate. Additional solutions involve repurposing unused ingredients or dishes, such as turning vegetables into soups. Composting efforts are in progress across multiple sites, and the use of disposables is being reduced as well.

At the end of the day, environmental sustainability and the work that nonprofits do go hand in hand; it's all about getting the most out of what you have, and as anyone can tell you, it's an ongoing endeavor. Meals on Wheels People's dedication to consistent improvement is a statement not only about its mindfulness of the world we all share, but its appreciation for the support it receives from its donors. Ernie Staley adds, "Not only are we able to say we are doing the environmentally responsible thing, we can also show that more of every dollar they [donor] give us goes to a meal to help feed seniors."



From the CEO

As we close out our fiscal year and get ready to start the next one in July, I am reflecting on our work this year and want to share some of our accomplishments.

First, I am so proud of our staff and volunteers for their willingness to focus on staying safe through the pandemic. We did not have a workplace outbreak of COVID 19 despite being on the front lines – cooking, packaging, and delivering meals and extra food to older adults and families steadily through the year.

Over the course of this year, we provided more than **114,000** social connections – calls, meets and checks to more than 8,000 older adults to reduce isolation and increase human connection.

We delivered **1,713,179** meals to older adults and families, 500,000 meals more than last year.

We stepped up to feed others due to emergency situations brought on by the pandemic. We delivered over 51,000 meals to homeless shelters, homeless quarantine hotels, assisted living and housing sites locked down due to COVID.

In the midst of the pandemic, we continued to move our equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) efforts forward by conducting staff and volunteer equity scans and creating an EDI work-plan in preparation for the client scan. We trained all managers, committee members and board members in use of our Equity Lens. We added six new people to the board of directors, 66% of whom are people of color and we began an EDI committee of the board to work in collaboration with our staff EDI committee.

We were once again rated as one of the **100 Best Nonprofits to Work for in Oregon** (#12).

For the first time, we are one of the **100 Best Green Workplaces in Oregon** (#53), which includes both for-profit and nonprofit businesses.

We have a Platinum rating with GuideStar – the highest rating available.

Our 50th Anniversary Gala and Stride for Seniors were very successful events even though virtual.

We are proud to have received an amazing gift from McKenzie Scott, an \$8 million grant to support our mission.

Thank you to all who support our mission. We couldn't have done most of this without your help!

And lastly, we have been partnering with the Poetry Project and every quarter they send us a new poem that we send out to our participants. I just received the newest poem for summer by N. Scott Momaday:

Sweetgrass

I give you sweetgrass

That you may burn it

That smoke may touch you

That smoke may linger about you

The writhing smoke your dancing

The fragrant smoke your spirit

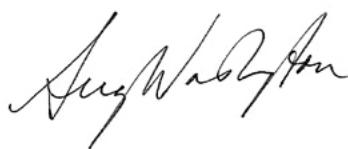
That the medicine smoke of sweetgrass

May welcome me to you

This poem is a gift that I hope touches you in some way as it has me.

Summer is always sweet as it is my favorite time of year. Sweetgrass makes me think of lingering in the backyard late into the night on warm summer evenings, campfires with family and friends, sharing sun rises above timberline with my daughter, reminiscing about summers gone by with my mom, sliding through crystal clear waters in a kayak, and of course, dropping off a good meal to those in need!

Welcome to summer and renewal as we ease out of the pandemic!



Meals on Wheels People Innovates with Medically Tailored Meals

Meals on Wheels People joins a group of national cutting-edge providers that are serving medically tailored meals as a nutritional intervention for individuals with chronic health conditions. 133 million Americans, or 45% of the population, have at least one chronic disease. Chronic diseases account for 81% of hospital admissions, 91% of all prescriptions and 76% of physician visits. Medically tailored meal intervention breaks the cycle for high-cost utilization of emergency services and improves quality of life. Studies show outcomes resulting in 58% fewer emergency department visits, 49% fewer hospitalizations and 72% fewer admissions to skilled nursing facilities.

In concert with this vital nutritional intervention, Meals on Wheels People also offers social programming in the form of Well Check Calls, Change of Condition Surveys, Peer-to-Peer programs and Friendly Chats to reduce social isolation, which has been decreed as an epidemic by the Surgeon General. From March 1, 2020, through April 30, 2021, Meals on Wheels People has provided 15,992 Medically Tailored Meals to 331 clients. Many of these individuals are part of a national health care study to provide evidence of positive outcomes of Medically Tailored Meal Interventions and shape the direction going forward.



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SUSTAINERS CIRCLE



Join the Sustainers Circle and Help Us Meet Our Goal

When Barbara and Joe Macnab considered where they wanted to put their charitable contributions each year, they looked for organizations that dealt with food insecurity. “Sadly, we could see the needs of food insecurity faced by seniors and children were growing

and felt strongly that donating on an ongoing basis was the best way to contribute,” said Barbara.

The Macnabs have delivered meals for our Elm Court Center in downtown Portland for several years. “We have met so many wonderful people along the way and have always felt that we get more out of our Meals on Wheels People activities than do those we serve,” said Barbara. In addition, a family member received Meals on Wheels during a time of being homebound following surgery, which was a great help.

That’s why Barbara and Joe joined the Sustainers Circle, Meals on Wheels People’s monthly giving society. Meals on Wheels People depends on community support for

60 percent of its annual operating budget. Gifts from businesses, charitable foundations, service organizations and individual donors are what allow us to deliver 8,000 meals every weekday. Regular monthly gifts from donors like the Macnabs provide a steady stream of income and allows us to better plan our expenditures.

Meals on Wheels People has a goal of expanding membership in the Sustainers Circle by 100 members by the end of September.

If you would like more information about becoming a monthly donor through our Sustainers Circle, visit our website at mowp.org/donate and click the “recurring gift” box.



Barbara and Joe Macnab



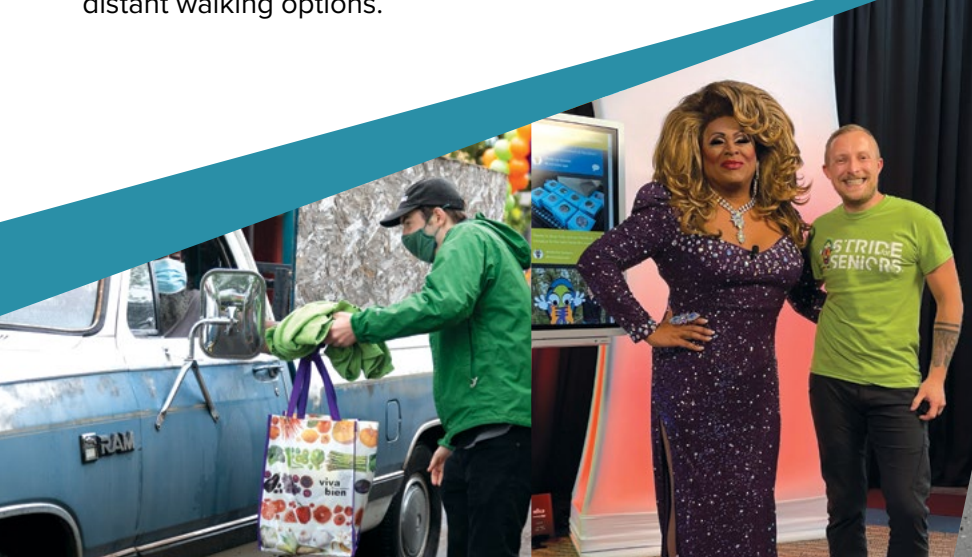
STRIDE for
SENIORS®



Stride for Seniors Raises More Than Half a Million Dollars for Homebound Elderly

Our fourth annual Stride for Seniors, which took place April 24, was the most successful walk to date! With 44 sponsors, 80 volunteers, 469 walkers and 76 teams, **Stride for Seniors 2021 raised more than \$511,000** that will provide more than 69,000 nutritious meals to older adults in need in our community. Four drive-through locations allowed walkers to pick-up t-shirts, walker bags, and a complimentary Cinnabon and maps to a variety of Adventure Trails, which provided socially-distant walking options.

To wrap up, we broadcast a live virtual Closing Ceremony hosted by Poison Waters and Emily Burris from KOIN 6. Thank you to our sponsors, including our presenting sponsor The Standard, and all those who walked, volunteered, formed teams and donated. We hope you will all join us next year for Stride for Seniors 2022 in April!





FriendlyChats

by Meals on Wheels People

Friendly Chats Program Celebrates One Year

When the pandemic forced Meals on Wheels People to dramatically change how meals were served and delivered, we looked for new ways to stay connected with our homebound participants. Since volunteers could no longer stay and visit with those receiving meals, we wanted to ensure that every senior who wanted someone to talk to was able to do so.

Just two weeks after dining centers were closed and socially-distant meal deliveries began, we started the Friendly Chats program. Anyone who received home-delivered meals had the option of signing up to receive a phone call from a volunteer once or twice a week just for a chat. Between April 7, 2020 and April 7, 2021, 511 volunteers and more than 40 staff members made 22,569 Friendly Chats calls to 1,612 homebound seniors.

Myra Siegel was eager to register for the Friendly Chats program. "I live alone and I'm lonely," she confessed. "I used to go to the Beaverton Center for lunch, but when that closed due to Covid, I had no one to talk to." Myra began receiving calls and has enjoyed them immensely. "I never feel like

I'm just a number on someone's list to call," she said. "All of the volunteers are fantastic and I can't praise the program enough."

"We wanted to ensure that every senior who wanted someone to talk to was able to do so."

Lorrayne Guild from Vancouver enjoyed receiving Friendly Chats calls so much, she volunteered to make the calls. "I was pretty low when I first started receiving Friendly Chats calls," Lorrayne said. "It was such an uplifting experience! I became more animated and engaged. Even my kids noticed the difference." So, when Lorrayne was asked if she would like to call others, she readily agreed. "The people I call have all led such interesting lives. It doesn't matter if they worked in construction or were a nurse or

a race car driver. Everybody has an interesting story to tell."

One of the volunteers who has been making the Friendly Chats calls since April 2020 is Gregory Crawford. An employee of Adventist Health, Greg delivered meals prior to the pandemic and then switched to calling homebound seniors. "Most of the people I call are so glad to have someone to talk to because they have not been out of the house for a year," Greg said. "I've even talked to a couple of people I used to deliver meals to, so that has been fun.

"One gentleman I called had once been a Meals on Wheels volunteer driver himself," Greg went on to say. "He said he loved his time as a volunteer and he is so grateful that, now that he is in need, there is someone willing to call and check on him."

Our Friendly Chats program is ongoing and we always need additional volunteers. If you are interested in making calls to homebound seniors, please register at mowp.org/volunteer



Waterfront Blues Festival will Help Benefit Meals on Wheels People

The annual Waterfront Blues Festival returned this summer after a year's hiatus and Meals on Wheels People was named one of two nonprofit organizations to benefit from the event.

The festival moved less than a mile from its traditional home

at Waterfront Park to The Lot at Zidell Yards, located in the South Waterfront neighborhood. Proceeds from a community concert on July 1, headlined by Curtis Selgado, were donated to both Meals on Wheels People and the Jeremy Wilson Foundation. Concerts on July 2 through 5 featured several

performances from amazing local, regional and national artists. To ensure the safety of festival guests, seating was provided in socially-distanced seating pods. Volunteers from both charities sold raffle tickets for a variety of packages and prizes. For more information, visit waterfrontbluesfest.com.



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