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NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2022



Changing lives, one meal at a time | Donate & volunteer: mowp.org

From the CEO

As the darker days of winter fade, I'm left with optimism and hope for the brighter spring and summer months ahead. Emerging out of two particularly isolating years, we see a bright path ahead that includes more in-person connections and shared joy with our aging neighbors.

Spring is already off to a great start here at Meals on Wheels People. On March 17, our entire staff enjoyed the benefits of a company-wide mental health day to recharge and prepare for the exciting season ahead. The services and programs we collectively provide with the support of our beloved volunteers, supporters, and partners would not be possible without the dedication of our staff. Working in nonprofit direct services for something so critical as providing meals to our food-insecure neighbors creates a unique type of pressure in the workplace. To provide our hardworking staff with much-needed respite, we're working diligently to ensure they have the support, balance, and resources they need to keep serving our older neighbors.

On April 16, we look forward to hosting our fifth-annual Stride for Seniors

event in person, and later this month, we will begin reopening our dining centers to provide critical spaces for social connection for our clients. We will remain flexible to anticipate potential changes to COVID-19 protocols, but we are hopeful we will all connect in person again soon.

Also, in the coming months, we will continue to grow our newest program Safe Homes for Seniors, which expands home repair and maintenance services to approximately 1,000 older adults in the greater Portland, Oregon, and Vancouver, Washington areas. Matching homebound seniors who need support around the home with handy volunteers makes independent living safer. We are so grateful to our volunteers, the National Community Cares Corp and the Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of SW Washington for supporting this program.

With the Safe Homes for Seniors program thriving and Stride for Seniors on the horizon, we will continue to engage those we serve through Friendly Chats and Wellness Checks and plan new ways to reduce the effects of isolation among older people. Exploring and testing new

technology and intergenerational engagement remain top priorities along with providing good, nutritious meals.

Spring is a time of growth, and I can hardly wait to see what this new season has in store for Meals on Wheels People initiatives.

All the best,



Suzanne Washington, CEO



We Need Volunteers!

You can give back and change the life of an older adult in your community. We need volunteers to provide critical support to the homebound older adults we serve. As one client shared: "Weekly meal deliveries have been life-changing for my health. I also really love the time I get to connect

with Joan, my delivery volunteer. She always makes me feel so special when she takes the extra time to talk with me each week."

Get involved as a meal delivery driver or volunteer from home through our Friendly Chats program. Become a

part of our volunteer family and help change a life, one meal and friendly connection at a time.

Visit mowp.org/volunteer, or reach our volunteer coordinator at volunteer.coordinator@mowp.org.

Honoring Worth Caldwell, Jr.

"In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years."

— Abraham Lincoln

The people who contribute to Meals on Wheels People, whether through financial donations or gifts of their time and talents, are our most valuable treasures. When we lose those treasures, our hearts break. Recently, our community lost a wonderful man, Worth Caldwell, Jr.—a long-time supporter and volunteer for the organization. Worth and his wife delivered meals to homebound older adults in their neighborhood for years; he was on the Board of Directors for nine years, sat on the Capital Campaign Committee, has been donating since 1991, and was the 2012 Compassion for Seniors Award

recipient. Through donations from him and his wife, Worth provided more than 20,000 meals to older adults in our community. Worth impacted the lives of many with his kindness and incredible sense of humor. His dedicated service and commitment to Meals on Wheels People ensured that many of our older neighbors in Northeast Portland received nutritious meals and regular human connections.

"Worth was one of the first people that I met after joining the organization," said Suzanne Washington, CEO at Meals on Wheels People. "Right away, I could tell that he was one of the kindest, most generous, and most giving people that I'd ever met. He was supportive of me coming on board and with the organizational changes we made, and I will be forever grateful for that. I miss him a lot."

Worth not only made regular meal deliveries on his MLK route, but he

was also a big supporter of Meals on Wheels People's Stride for Seniors, which brings our community together for a healthy stride to shed light on the issues of food insecurity and social isolation many of our older neighbors experience each day. And, in true Worth form, he continues to give back to this year's event.

"He was just a wonderful human being — super respectful of everybody, regardless of what they did or who they were," said Washington. "He was just one of those special people. The world would be a better place if more of us were like Worth."

Please help honor Worth and the impact he continues to make through his Stride for Seniors fundraising page:

give.mowp.org/NE-Neighborhood-Heroes

Learn more about ways to get involved by visiting mowp.org/volunteer.



PRESENTED BY TheStandard



Saturday, April 16, 2022
Portland International Raceway

Register to walk and donate
strideforseniors.org

Helping a Neighbor in Need

Living independently is extremely important to the older adults we serve. By providing nutritious food, human connections, and needed social support to our clients, we help assist in this independence. However, we recognize there is always more we can do, which led us to create our Safe Homes for Seniors program, which expands home repair and maintenance services to our clients. Matching homebound seniors with volunteers who need someone that can fix things around the home, the program supports continued independence and ease for our clients.

The Powells had never used Meals on Wheels People's services but needed some help cleaning up their yard. Mr. Powell did all the landscaping for years but nearing age 70, upkeep was challenging. Calling around to find help, they learned about the Safe Homes for Seniors program. "The yard is pretty big and I don't like yard work," said Mrs. Powell. "This is a time when we really need that help the most. So, it's good to have people helping."

Volunteers like Dave, are matched with clients like the Powells, to provide this needed support.

"I recently retired a couple of years ago and had a lot more time on my hands," shared Dave. "I wanted to do something to help seniors. I can still do this kind of work and it's good to help those that can't do this anymore. I'm grateful that I'm able to help out like this." Routine yard maintenance is particularly challenging for many older adults who struggle with mobility challenges, making mowing their lawns or getting rid of yard debris difficult. The Safe Homes for Seniors program allows our older neighbors to live more safely and independently, improving their overall quality of life.

"Caring is the most important thing there is," said Mrs. Powell. "Loving one another and helping somebody in need is important. It's heartwarming. People need that, especially older people. So many people are isolated and they need to know people care about them."

For more information, visit mowp.org/volunteer



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Giving Back at Any Age

Giving back is easy, no matter your age. And, as Cooper so eloquently put it, “If you give back to the world, you can make it a better place.” At 8 years old, Cooper teamed up with Meals on Wheels People, PDXPOP!, and Noss Familia Coffee to raise money for our older neighbors.

From a young age, Cooper’s parents have taught him that giving back to his community is part of their DNA. Starting as an annual holiday tradition, Cooper began creatively supporting a new charitable organization each year. In 2021, Meals on Wheels People was the lucky beneficiary of Cooper’s giving heart—which then

grew into a second pop-up event this past February, with an added bonus: his own limited-edition PDXPOP! Caramel Apple popcorn and Noss Familia coffee.

Cooper’s pop-up was a home run—raising thousands of dollars both at the event and throughout the month of February with extended popcorn and coffee online sales. By showing adults and children alike that anyone can give, Cooper is changing the lives of many.

A special thank you to our friends at Noss Familia Coffee for their generous donation of coffee for



the event, as well as a full month of proceeds from Cooper’s Coffee limited-edition coffee sales. We truly appreciate your partnership!

To learn more about this event, visit cooperscoffee.org.



Friends and Connections

Sam never thought that he would be alone in his 70s. He had married his college sweetheart, and after four kids and over 50 years together, he lost her to cancer. He was close to his kids, but after all four went out-of-state to college and planted roots in their respective cities, Sam found himself living alone and lonely.

Then, the pandemic hit. For two years, his contact with the outside world was limited. "I struggled during the pandemic," said Sam. "I wasn't able to see my kids or grandkids, except virtually, and most of my friends were staying away. I was lonely." He went on to share that as the vaccine became available and restrictions loosened, he met up with a friend at the park one day. "After I got my vaccine, I met up with an old friend—outside, of course. As we were talking about how lonely we'd been, he mentioned his experience with Meals on Wheels People. He was getting his meals delivered, and also talked about the friendly phone calls he was getting each week. It piqued my interest."

Sam reached out to Meals on Wheels People to learn more about service offerings and quickly signed up for both meal delivery and the Friendly Chats program. After just a few months, he also became a Friendly Chats volunteer. "I absolutely loved connecting with people every week and had some great conversations," he said. "After a few months, I realized that I could be that connection for someone, just like others had been for me. So, I signed up."

Now a regular Friendly Chats volunteer, Sam shared that he learns so much each week when he connects with others. "Friendly Chats has impacted my life so much over the past few months. I feel connected and useful. It's a great feeling to know I'm making a difference in someone else's day and hopefully helping them feel just as connected as I do!"

Be a friendly connection for someone like Sam. Sign up today at mowp.org/volunteer.

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mowp.org