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NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2022



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

From the CEO

Summer is in full swing, and with it comes new rhythms and activities in our daily lives. Here at Meals on Wheels People, we are embracing welcome changes brought on by a much-anticipated emergence from the pandemic.

For the first time since March 2020, our congregate dining centers are open and welcoming those over the age of 60 who are ready to get out and enjoy the benefits of socialization while receiving good, nutritious meals. Our recently launched Safe Homes for Seniors program can now safely provide indoor home repair and maintenance services in addition to previously provided outdoor assistance.



The return of these in-person services and shared experiences with our older neighbors brings great joy and excitement to our community—because connecting with one another is at the heart of everything we do. During this time, we're also hard at work implementing projects that will help better serve our community for decades to come.

Meals on Wheels People has established three major hubs across the counties we serve—one on each side of the Willamette and Columbia rivers—to ensure we can carry out our mission in the event of an emergency or unforeseen service disruption. Thousands of shelf-stable and frozen meals are stored at each site with easy access from the north, east, and west sides of the city. Even if the bridges go down in an earthquake, we will have meals and resources available on each side of the major rivers that run through our metropolitan area. Disaster can strike without warning, which is why we're putting resources in place today that will provide critical support to our most vulnerable populations tomorrow and beyond.

Our new site in Southeast Portland is currently in the permitting process for "phase 1". During this period, it will serve as a central hub for the area and allow us to create an emergency warehouse. As we embark on "phase 2" of the development process, which

includes designing the rest of the building, we are gathering input from our community to ensure the space best supports and engages those we serve. If you feel passionate about our mission, please consider sharing your thoughts by scanning the QR code below, which will navigate to a quick online survey.



July is here, and though we continue to be busy serving those in need, we are taking time to embrace the present, breathe in the summer air, listen to those around us, and plan for a brighter future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Suzanne Washington".

Suzanne Washington
CEO

We Need You

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.

Get involved by visiting: mowp.org/volunteer, or reach our volunteer coordinator at volunteer.coordinator@mowp.org



Safe Homes for Seniors

For our older neighbors, remaining in the comfort of their own homes provides a sense of dignity and independence that significantly benefits their overall mental and emotional well-being. As we get older, we often experience physical limitations before any signs of cognitive decline.



We may maintain a strong understanding of ourselves and the world around us, but, when our bodies hold us back, it's challenging to stay mentally stimulated and connected to our communities in the same ways we once did.

That's why our mission at Meals on Wheels People is to enrich the lives of our aging neighbors—wherever they are. Our programs work to eliminate social isolation while helping homebound older adults age with dignity in the comfort of their homes. To successfully deliver on this mission, our new Safe Homes for Seniors program matches skilled volunteers with at-home maintenance

opportunities to assist older adults who are homebound, disabled, or facing other physical limitations. Handy volunteers like the father-son duo, Don and Dylan, make home visits to complete a range of repair and maintenance projects—anything from tightening the clamps on a bathtub safety mount to removing yard debris from outside walkways.

“During our two years of delivering meals as volunteers, we saw many opportunities to improve the quality of life for our older neighbors,” said Don. “People were in need of support with housing safety, general maintenance, and yard clean-up tasks—all projects that we knew we were capable of completing and that would allow seniors to live independently for longer.”



Don and Dylan became Safe Homes for Seniors volunteers as soon as the program launched, often using their own truck and tools to complete projects at the beginning. As of late

this spring, we're excited to announce an expansion of the program. Thanks to the support of our generous board members, Safe Homes for Seniors officially has a designated trailer to assist with larger maintenance and safety projects in and around the homes of our older neighbors.



We are proud of the expansion of this program as we know how crucial it is for older individuals to feel empowered to live independently, without carrying the stress of strenuous home maintenance and repair tasks on their shoulders. We take special care in identifying the highest-risk seniors for this service, with a particular focus on those in rural areas who are farthest removed from outside interaction. If you would like more information about becoming a Safe Homes for Seniors volunteer, please visit mowp.org/volunteer.

If you know someone who could benefit from the service, please call 503-953-8111 for more information.



Give Now:
mowp.org



The Cycle of Giving

After experiencing a bad fall that left her physically limited, Nancy signed up to receive meals from our delivery program. Shortly after she began receiving meals, Nancy heard about our Friendly Chats program and became intrigued. As a Reiki Master specializing in distance healing, she thought that calling and connecting with homebound people in need of socialization would fit her skill set and personality perfectly. Nancy decided to sign up immediately, not as a client but as a volunteer.

“Once I began making weekly calls to other older adults, I realized the incredible mutual benefit. Being a source of connection and helping others fills my cup, and the individuals I call get to benefit from our chats, too. It’s a wonderful cycle that’s been present my entire life—receiving by giving. It makes being a meal recipient and a Friendly Chats volunteer very poetic and meaningful.”

Much like practicing Reiki, offering your time and positive energy to others through volunteerism yields its own, personal rewards. Nancy believes that she gets out of her volunteerism what she puts into it, and appreciates that she is able to volunteer for an organization that serves her, as well.

“You meet the dearest people as both a meal recipient and a Friendly Chats volunteer, and you know the people you interact with in either case get something out of it, too,” said Nancy. “It’s a win-win experience that I highly recommend to others. Making a difference is so very rewarding.”

Join Nancy, and many others like her, in the cycle of giving by signing up to volunteer at mowp.org/volunteer. With a variety of ways to give back to older, homebound adults in our community, there is a fit for everyone—whether you give your time as a volunteer, or accept assistance from others, everybody wins.

“I referred my mom to Meals on Wheels People years ago, so after my fall, I felt fortunate to know that the meal service existed,” said Nancy. “What I didn’t know about was the Friendly Chats program”.



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STRIDE[®] for SENIORS 5 YEARS

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We are moved by the generosity and turnout at this year's Stride for Seniors at the Portland International Raceway. Thank you to all who joined us in person—after two pandemic-disrupted years—and helped us surpass our goal of raising more than \$450,000 for homebound older adults served through our programs.

We are so grateful for the support of all of our incredible partners and fundraisers, and special recognition goes to our MLK Center. In honor of Worth Caldwell, Jr., a champion of our organization who has left a lasting legacy of giving back, the MLK Center raised the most funds among all teams.

Your passion made Stride for Seniors a big success, and we're already counting down the days until next year.



WATERFRONT BLUES FESTIVAL

A big round of applause to all who joined us at the Waterfront Blues Festival and the talented musicians and artists who made it all possible.

We love being a part of the Blues Fest Cares program and are so thankful for their commitment to supporting our community, all the while hosting the best live-music event of the year.

Thank you to all who showed up to dance, sing, and support us at the Sail on Sister cruise. We hope you had as much fun as we did!



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A Sustained Commitment to Going Green

Sustainability efforts are necessary to ensure the longevity and success of any organization. Our team takes pride in prioritizing our commitment to sustainability—both fiscally and environmentally. To help reduce the environmental impacts of our activities and responsibly steward our resources, the Green Project Committee, made up of several members of the Board of Directors, is dedicated to promoting a number of sustainability initiatives, including clean energy, waste reduction, sustainable operations, and much more.

Over the past few years, our organization has made significant progress toward adopting sustainable practices in each facet of our

operations. From purchasing electric delivery vehicles with support from the PGE Drive Change Fund to receiving the Certified GOLD award from the City of Portland's Sustainability at Work program for the past four years and counting, we are proud of our sustainable accomplishments and grateful for the financial support that has made them possible.

As one of the Best 100 Green Workplaces in Oregon, we are continuing our sustainability efforts and will be installing solar power to our westside hub this fall. With support from the Neil Kelly Company, Energy Trust of Oregon, State of Oregon Solar Rebate Program, Halbert Construction, and others, are ready to get started.

Thank you to our supporters and partners for trusting us to be responsible stewards of your donations and the resources they allow us to utilize. We will continue to make good on our evergreen commitment to increasing and improving sustainability in every aspect of the organization and look forward to celebrating more sustainable success together.

To learn more about our goals and achievements in sustainability and innovation, visit mowp.org/our-story/sustainability.

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