



# Newsletter

SPRING 2021

Every senior who requests a meal will receive one

➤ Donate or sign up to volunteer: [mowp.org](http://mowp.org)

## Join the Sustainers Circle

### A Conversation with Janet and Carl Bean

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. An important segment of those donations comes from members of our Sustainers Circle who provide regular monthly gifts. We recently met with Janet and Carl Bean, who have been members of the Sustainers Circle since 2014, to learn why they decided to join.

"My mother delivered Meals on Wheels out of the Beaverton Center for years," Carl said. "I knew about Meals on Wheels long before I even met Janet!"

Janet, who currently serves on Meals on Wheels People's Board of

Directors, worked for the organization from 1990 to 1995. "Even though I eventually left the job, I've always had a love for the mission and vision of the organization."

Janet and Carl delivered meals out of the Hillsboro center for many years and Janet served as the Centers Council representative for Hillsboro before becoming a board member in 2015.

"Our commitment to Meals on Wheels People goes back more than 30 years," Janet said. "When our kids were grown and we were considering a nonprofit organization to support, there was no question that it would be Meals on Wheels People."

"It's really a personal connection for us," said Carl. "My mom not only delivered meals, but she received



meals near the end of her life. We've seen what a difference the program can make in both the life of a homebound senior and their family members."

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](http://mowp.org/donate) and click the "recurring gift" box.

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## Our Reimagined Stride for Seniors is Set for April 24



Our fourth annual Stride for Seniors will allow individuals and teams to safely walk at a variety of locations throughout the Portland-Vancouver metro area. We hope you will join us!

**The walk will kick off** at 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 24 when participants pick up their walker kits, walker shirts (for those who raised at least \$100), prizes or incentives won and free Cinnabons at one of four drive-through kiosks:

- Ambleside Dining Center, 600 NE 8th Street in Gresham
- Beaverton Dining Center, 5550 SW Hall Blvd. in Beaverton
- MLK Dining Center, 5325 NE MLK Blvd. in Portland
- The Diner Vancouver, 5303 E Mill Plain Blvd. in Vancouver

Drive-through locations will be open between 9 and 11 a.m. on April 24.

**Next is walking!** We've put together two dozen adventure walking trail options and they are a snap to

access. We'll provide you with a link to our routes on the All Trails app (downloadable on your phone, tablet or computer) and we'll have printed maps available at each of our drive-through kiosks. There are six options easily accessible from each of our drive-through locations and they range from half-mile strolls to six-mile hikes. Choose the trail that best fits your ability, or combine several smaller trails for an all-day adventure! Trails are set up for socially-distant walking so you can safely stroll with your team. We'll have a fun surprise at the start of each trail and the opportunity to take photos. The timing of your walk is completely up to you.



**Our closing program,** featuring the hostess with the mostess Poison Waters along with Emily Burris from KOIN's AM Extra, will be live-streamed at 3 p.m. from our Central Office. You'll be treated to a special performance by our Precision Ladle Drill Team and we'll provide a recap of our fundraising efforts, announce trophy winners and share photos of individuals and teams from the adventure trails. Details for accessing the closing program will be provided in your walk kit and posted on social media.



## From the CEO

March 13th marked the one-year anniversary since the pandemic hit and everything changed in our daily lives. Our daily operation here at Meals on Wheels People also changed drastically.

Our dining centers closed on March 16th. By March 20th we implemented no contact deliveries. A few days after that, we changed our delivery model to once a week for each of our participants in hopes that we could keep them and our volunteers safe.

Then the calls started coming in from people requesting our services. It started with a few calls a day, then 10-15, then 40-50 and soon we were up to 100 calls or more per day. Seniors had lost access to food sources and needed our help. Our meal production increased from 5,000 per day to more than 8,000 per day.

It was clear that we had to get more food to more people as quickly as

possible. We added food boxes, which contained supplemental food like loaves of bread, fresh fruit, vegetables, quarts of milk, peanut butter, hard boiled eggs, cheese and yogurt. Seniors could now have something for breakfast like a piece of toast with peanut butter or a serving of cottage cheese. We purchased deeper trays so we could increase the amount of food in our entrées and we began to deliver two additional entrées per person each week to ensure seniors wouldn't go hungry.

Hundreds of volunteers shifted from delivering meals to packing food, then shifted again to become friendly visitors — making calls to our homebound seniors; chatting, checking in to ensure they were safe and connecting them to the outside world.

Then businesses started to close, lay-offs grew, families began to struggle and again the calls started to come in. Families needed help and our Meals 4 Kids program stepped up and we delivered food to 350 families. That number continues to grow.

Costs continued rising. Our projection indicated that food costs alone were going to exceed our budget by more than \$1 million during the first six months of the pandemic. We were faced with questions like, "How long could we keep this up?" and "How were we going to pay for it?"

It did not take long to answer these questions. The community rallied around us. Donations started coming in — a few dollars one day, hundreds of dollars the next, then thousands and thousands. Our partners donated food — mangos and eggs, bread and



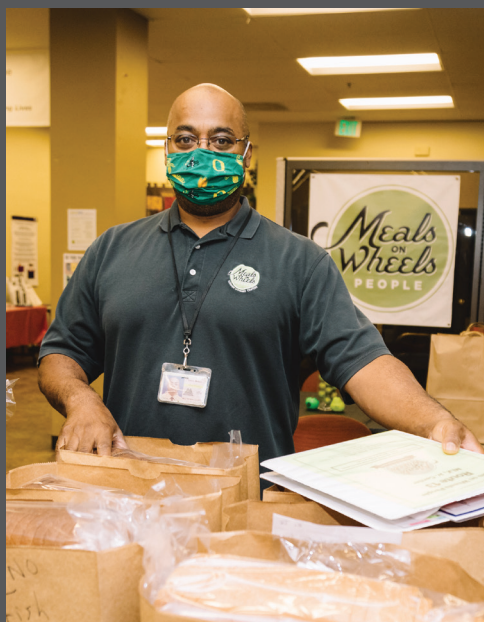
yogurt, pork and beef, potatoes and onions. People volunteered in new and different ways — calling, packing, sanitizing. Even our media partners stepped up and help us get the word out that we were in need of donations and volunteers.

And then we were able to breathe a sigh of relief. The generosity of our community amazed us. The understanding of the vulnerability of seniors surprised us. The willingness to help gave us hope. The determined spirit of everyone moved us.

On many occasions, it moved us to tears. It inspired us to be creative and to find new ways to meet the growing need. It motivated us to keep our heads up, to plow through, to stay healthy and to get the job done.

Today, that determined spirit encourages us to keep meeting the need, to innovate, to better connect those who are alone, to leverage technology and to get better, stronger, faster! And of course, to be prepared for the next emergency!

Thank you to all who have donated your time, your product, your money. Our staff and those we serve are extremely grateful for your support.



*With support from volunteers and donors, we were able to keep up with the increased demand brought on by the pandemic.*





**Enough eggs to fill the  
Moda Center 17 times.**  
(based on seating capacity)



**Enough  
snack  
packs to  
fill Mills  
End Park  
16,250  
times.**



**Enough vegetables to fill  
40 Tyrannosaurus Rex.**



**Enough  
cookies  
to stack  
up to Paul  
Bunyan  
194 times.**



**Enough milk to fill the  
Peninsula Park Fountain.**



**Enough fruit to wrap around  
Mount Tabor 22 times.**







Enough food boxes to  
number twice the trees in  
Hoyt Arboretum.



Enough See's Candies to stretch  
across Fremont Bridge 7 times.



Enough  
bread to  
stack up to  
US Bank  
Tower 119  
times.



Enough  
potatoes  
to cover  
Portland  
City Hall  
18 times.



How much  
food does our  
program use?



Enough meat to fill  
two blue whales.





## Peer Groups Connect Isolated Homebound

Weekly chats bring seniors together through the Peer-to-Peer Connect Program

For the seven seniors in Southeast Portland who are members of the Belmont Tea Time Club, Tuesdays are extra special. They know a volunteer will arrive at noon with a gift bag containing special tea and a delectable treat baked by Belmont Site Coordinator Helen Wragg. Once the tea is brewed and the treat is on a plate, participants call in for their weekly tea time chat. It's all part of our expanded Peer-to-Peer Connect program.

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**Since launching last summer, the Peer-to-Peer Connect program has created a Russian conversation group, a "Where Were You When" discussion group, a "gratitude" group, a book club, a story telling group and a current events group as well as the Belmont Tea Time Club.**

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"Half of our mission is to eliminate social isolation, and when we reduced delivery days to our homebound seniors, we wanted to ensure they were still connected with others and remind them that they are valued," said Operations and Service Manager Maggie Thurman. "We surveyed all of our participants and asked what sort of group they might like to join. Then we put together groups of five to eight seniors with a common theme. One of our client services staff facilitates each group, connects them all by conference call, and leads them through a chat or discussion each week for eight weeks. At the end of the eight



*Volunteer Jack Fleming made a weekly delivery of tea and treats to Bill Muldoon, one of the Belmont Tea Time Group participants.*

weeks, groups often choose to continue to connect on their own."

Bill Muldoon, 91, was a participant in the Belmont Tea Time Group. "I'm originally from England and love a good cup of tea," Bill said. "When I was invited to join the tea group, I felt right at home. I really enjoyed the weekly delivery of tea and treats and enjoyed chatting with the other members. When you live alone, it is nice to have something like this to look forward to."

Since launching last summer, the Peer-to-Peer Connect program has created a Russian conversation

group, a "Where Were You When" discussion group, a "gratitude" group, a book club, a story telling group and a current events group as well as the Belmont Tea Time Group.

In addition to the weekly groups, specialty experiences have also been created. In December, seniors were able to view a holiday lights program through a special online link and four separate groups were formed to discuss holiday traditions. More than 350 seniors logged on to view the light show and 40 participated in the holiday traditions discussion. And the first 100 who registered received a





*Helen Wragg, Belmont Site Coordinator, creates a special baked treat each week for participants of the Belmont Tea Time Group.*

gift bag of holiday goodies donated by the Vital Life Foundation.

“Once the groups were established and connected, we realized the topic for discussion really didn’t matter,” Maggie said. “People were just happy to talk about almost anything! No one knew each other at the beginning, but groups quickly bonded and participants have loved the ability to make new friends and simply chat each week.”

As we move into the next phase of the Peer-to-Peer Connect program, Maggie will be recruiting volunteers to facilitate the weekly chats. Visit [mowp.org/volunteer](http://mowp.org/volunteer) in the coming months for postings.



## The Diner Vancouver Offers New Spring Menu

Spring is here and we’ve got a whole new menu for our Family Meals!

### **Chicken Fried Chicken**

with asparagus, mashed potatoes and country gravy along with a crisp green salad.

### **Pesto, Spinach and Basil Flat Bread**

with mozzarella cheese, Beyond burger and Kalamata olives, served with Greek dinner salad.

### **Crab and Shrimp Quiche**

with bacon, asparagus, onion, served with fresh fruit and crisp green salad.

### **Stuffed Peppers**

with ground beef, ground pork, rice, yellow zucchini, stewed tomatoes, topped with mozzarella cheese along with a crisp green salad.



Each meal serves four people and is \$39.99

**Order at [thediner.org](http://thediner.org) or call 360.859.3338**

Open Wednesday - Sunday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

5303 E Mill Plain Blvd. in Vancouver

*Dear Meals on Wheels People...*

Thank you for for this recent note and photo from a donor.

*You are never alone, brighter days are ahead, the storm is passing. The photo is of my dog Betty. She is the “Speed Queen” on the playground swing.*







## Central Kitchen Doubles Output, Gains Efficiencies

We are entering the second year of the global pandemic and, as has nearly everything, our Central Kitchen has had to change and adapt to meet changing needs. What is really astonishing is how quickly the staff was able to change production methods, incorporate mass quantities of new food items and continue to produce enough meals to ensure that no senior was turned away.

Prior to the pandemic, volunteers delivered meals Monday through Friday, which included a daily fresh salad, wheat roll and half-pint of milk. As social distancing protocols were put in place, we began to deliver seven meals once a week to every homebound participant. Rather than seven salads, volunteers now bring bags of whole fruit, loaves of bread and quarts of milk. And production jumped from 5,000 meals daily to more than 8,000 meals daily.



“When daily production of salads stopped, we were able to reallocate that staff to produce additional entrées,” said Food Service Director Tom Maier. “We not only had to increase daily production of meals, we also began producing frozen meals. We had no idea in the early days of the pandemic if we would be shut down or if volunteers would no longer be able to deliver. So we produced more than 60,000 frozen meals to be safe. We wanted to ensure our homebound seniors would have meals, even if we were unable to produce them for a few days or, as was the case this winter, when we lost power for four days.”

At the same time, we invested in an automated sealer. This 20-foot long machine, staffed by five to seven

employees, can output 28 meals per minute, or 9,043 meals in a single eight-hour shift. “The automated sealer was a key component to our ability to produce additional meals,” Tom said. “It not only places a cellophane seal on each entrée, but a thermal laser imprints the type of meal, the date it was produced, cooking instructions and our logo.” Despite doubling production, Tom has had to add only two additional staff.

Plans are now underway to add additional machinery this summer, which will enhance portion control and have the capability of dispensing sauces and gravies, which are currently added to each entrée by hand. Efficiencies in operation will allow our Central Kitchen to continue to meet the growing demand for senior meals, and expand our Meals 4 Kids production as well.



### Follow us!



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mealsonwheelspeople

Donate a meal:  
**mowp.org**