

Motion

A MEALS ON WHEELS PEOPLE NEWSLETTER



FALL 2025

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Letter FROM THE CEO

THE HOLIDAYS SHOULD BE WARM. FOR EVERYONE.

Because of you, thousands of older adults won't be alone or hungry this holiday season. Your support is helping us bring not just meals but also connection, care, and joy to our neighbors when they need it most.

This Thanksgiving, we'll be making hundreds of Friendly Chats calls to participants, ensuring that even those spending the day at home have someone to celebrate with. And while these connections feel especially meaningful during holidays, feeling seen and cared for is important every day. I want to share just one of those connections.

Hazel has been receiving Friendly Chats calls from Tammy, one of our dedicated volunteers, since 2022. Hazel calls Tammy "heaven sent":

"I can talk about whatever's going on, and she listens. She's an absolute sweetheart. She gets into your heart and makes you feel like she's your best friend."

For Tammy, volunteering is personal. Her grandparents used to receive meals from Meals on Wheels People, and she remembers how much it meant

to have someone checking in. "Some of the folks I talk to, I might be their only connection besides their driver," Tammy shared. "You really get to know them. Some of them have health issues, so I can zone in and make sure they're OK."

Connections like the one Hazel and Tammy share illustrate why your support matters. We see it not only through Friendly Chats but also through the relationships that form on meal routes. As one of our volunteers, Beverly, shares later on in these pages:

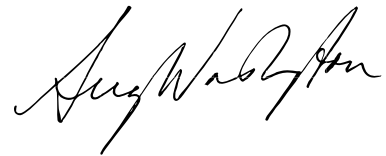
"Being a Meals on Wheels People volunteer means getting much more than you give. It also means meeting people with whom you may not have much in common at first, but you find out — week after week — the thing you share is your humanity and living in this beautiful place we all call home."

This holiday season, you can help provide even more care for seniors in our community who need our help. Our annual Donate Dinner campaign makes it possible for thousands of older adults to receive both nutritious meals and the personal

connections that last far beyond a single delivery. When you give, volunteers like Tammy and Beverly are able to keep showing up and neighbors like Hazel are reminded that they are not alone. Every call, every meal, every moment of care is something we create together.

Thank you for helping us make this season brighter, warmer, and more connected for everyone we serve.

With gratitude,



Suzanne Washington
CEO, Meals on
Wheels People



Meal recipient
Debbie &
volunteer
Beverly

Scan to give the gift of
meals & connection today.





Donate DINNER

Season of Giving, Season of Need

TO A HOMEBOUND SENIOR

This year, our goal is even bigger: \$300,000. Together,

we can make sure older adults in our community aren't left waiting for meals or for someone to care this holiday season and beyond.

Be part of Donate Dinner this November and help make the holidays warmer for our aging neighbors.

The holidays are a time for gathering. For sharing meals, laughter, and connection. But for thousands of older adults in our community, the season can feel cold — without family nearby, without a hot meal, without the comfort of companionship. That's why every November, our community comes together for Donate Dinner to turn a season of need into a season of giving.

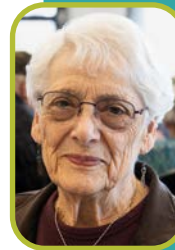
Since 2003, Donate Dinner has invited people across the region to join in a simple but powerful act: Donate the cost of a meal or more at the grocery checkout, at a local restaurant, or online. What began as a grassroots effort raising just \$2,200 has grown into a movement that brought in over \$200,000 in 2024, enough for more than 20,000 meals and moments of connection.

A Community Tradition

From its earliest days, Donate Dinner has been about neighbors helping neighbors — and New Seasons has been at the heart of it. Meals on Wheels People board member Claudia Knotek, who joined New Seasons in 2002 and retired 20 years later as community relations manager, remembers how the store's leadership made Meals on Wheels People (then Loaves & Fishes) a priority from Day One.

The inspiration came from a deeply personal story: The store's first president, Brian Rohter, had aging parents facing challenges far from home, and strangers stepped in to help. "For him, it made the point that these people had been kind enough to help his parents and how could he give

We're Donating Dinner To...



Donna

"I love this," Donna says of her time at her local MOWP dining center. "It's nice to come here and talk to people."



Robert

"I simply want to thank every one of you for caring about people like me. We thank you for everything."



Wally

As an Army veteran, Wally depends on MOWP for food and friendship. Donate Dinner helps keep meals on his table.



Maria

"I don't know what I'd do without you all. The sweethearts that deliver my meals make my day. Thank you!"

back to help someone else's parents?" she says.



When New Seasons opened its first store in Raleigh Hills in 2000, it hosted a fundraiser for Meals on Wheels People. "From the very beginning, we felt Meals on Wheels People matched our mission in so many ways," Claudia says. "We're a grocery store. We're about good food. If we can help provide food for others, that's incredible."

Two decades later, New Seasons has become our largest corporate donor, raising millions over the years and leading the charge each Thanksgiving week as shoppers add donations for homebound seniors to their grocery bills.

"Being part of New Seasons means being part of something bigger," says New Seasons' com-

munity impact manager Karen Katigbak. "We care deeply about the neighborhoods we serve. The Donate Dinner campaign embodies this spirit, and I'm proud to carry forward a 25-year tradition of supporting Meals on Wheels People and addressing food insecurity in our community. By doing this work together, we can ensure

that older adults in our community not only receive nourishing meals but also the care and connection that we all need right now."

Market of Choice, Jim's Thriftway, Shake Shack, Oakshire Brewing, and other local businesses also join in, transforming their checkouts, tables, and taps into places of compassion. They're joined by Cambia Health Foundation, Jamba Juice, Baker Tilly, and Killian Pacific, whose matching support helps amplify acts of generosity.

Why It Matters

Donate Dinner isn't just about the dollars. It's about dignity. It's about making sure Donna

doesn't eat alone day after day, that veterans like Wally know their community hasn't forgotten them, that Maria has meals that meet her medical needs, and that Robert knows that someone cares.

When you give through Donate Dinner, you're not just filling a plate — you're filling lives with connection, care, and comfort.

How You Can Be Part of It

Donate Dinner is more than a fundraiser. It's a movement that grows stronger with each person who says, "Yes, I want to help." Whether you're volunteering at your neighborhood grocery store, making a gift at checkout or online, or telling friends and family about the campaign, you are part of a movement that keeps our aging neighbors nourished and connected.

Together, we can set a table big enough for everyone. Will you join us this November? Visit donatedinner.org to learn more, sign up to volunteer, or donate dinner today.

Scan here to learn more, volunteer, or donate today.



How to Be Part of -Donate- DINNER

It's simple to join this community tradition. Every action — big or small — helps ensure seniors in our community don't spend the holidays hungry or alone.

- Give at checkout at **New Seasons**, **Market of Choice**, and **Jim's Thriftway** Nov. 19-26 or online anytime in November.
- Dine out for good! **Shake Shack** — West End, Cedar Hills, **Reed's Crossing** on Nov. 19; **Bridgeport Village** on Nov. 20 — and **Oakshire Brewing** Nov. 25. A portion of sales supports Meals on Wheels People.
- **Volunteer** during Thanksgiving week to encourage donations at your neighborhood grocery store.
- **Spread the word** with friends, family, co-workers, or on social media. Invite others to donate dinner.

You Never Know When You Might Be the One in Need

From childhood volunteering to Donate Dinner, Rebecca Ho finds joy in giving back with her family by her side.



By Rebecca Ho

I began volunteering as a kid, when my grandma was president of the American Legion Post 1. I'd pour juice at the brunches, help set up for bingo nights, decorate floats for the Portland Rose Festival parade in the spring, and make food boxes for families in need during the holidays.

Then, in high school, life changed. My family temporarily moved into a women's shelter — and we became the family receiving those food boxes. The most impactful moment for me was when a family “adopted” us for Christmas. They brought dinner, the gifts my little sisters had written to Santa for, and even a TV! I still hope to someday be in a position to do something that big and generous for another family.

As a single working mom with limited time and funds, I leaned into paid volunteer days through my employers. Knowing I could give back to the community without missing a payday made it easier — and even better when I could bring family along. We've filled food bags at the Oregon Food Bank, delivered tulips for the Easter Seals, helped with parades, donated to the Raphael House, worked at Habitat for

Humanity, and served monthly dinners at the Portland Mission.

When my daughter, Ashtyn, got older, my husband, Ian, encouraged her to volunteer at the Wichita Community Center one summer to get work experience. She also volunteered as a golf coach for children, which eventually became a paid job.

The pandemic made in-person volunteering hard. Ian began collecting nonperishable food from neighbors and dropping it off at the community center, where staff were working harder than ever without their usual volunteers. He also cleaned up our local park after some protesters came through and wrote on the tables and equipment. Now, he spends every Saturday at Providence Hospital, helping patients find their way to appointments.

The pandemic is what led us to Meals on Wheels People. We started by calling dozens of seniors by phone to check in on them — safe for everyone but still meaningful. This put us on the mailing list for Meals on Wheels People and that's how we learned about Donate Dinner. Of all the volunteering we've done, this is by far the most fun. My sister, Laura, and I can be a little competitive, seeing who convinces the most shoppers to take a Donate Dinner card. We make it a family affair — me greeting customers, Ian handing out cards, my mom wishing peo-

ple happy holidays as they leave. We celebrate every person who tells us they donated at check-out. Acknowledging people's efforts really motivates them to get involved.



Rebecca Ho (right) and her husband, Ian, and mother, Dolly Thomas, volunteering together for Donate Dinner at New Seasons in 2024.

For years, we volunteered quietly. We thought talking about it might look like bragging. But we've changed our thinking — showing how much fun volunteering can be inspires others to get out there and do their part. And you never know when you might be the one on the receiving end, like we once were.

Ready to Make a Difference?

Join Rebecca and thousands of others who bring care and connection to older adults in our community. Sign up to volunteer with Meals on Wheels People today. Visit mowp.org/volunteer.

ALL IN A DAY'S

Delivery

When you deliver meals with Meals on Wheels People, the impact goes far beyond food. For Beverly Rose, who started volunteering in 2020, it's about the connections she makes with the participants — listening to their stories, sharing in their joys and challenges, and forming friendships. Here's a glimpse into a delivery day through her eyes.

By Beverly Rose

One of the things I love most about being a Meals on Wheels People volunteer is that each week I get to connect with my “clients,” who have become my friends. They share how they're feeling, what's going on with their family and friends, and we talk about gardens, news of the day, pets, weather, and life. All the things you talk about with friends.

One week this August was especially memorable. My third delivery of the morning, a lovely woman who has had severe, ongoing health struggles met me at her door with a colorful bouquet.

“You are always so nice,” she said. “I saw these and knew who I wanted to give them to.”

I've met and chatted with her two sons, who stay with her during college breaks, and I know one is studying business technology and the other marine biology. She's unable to drive

due to seizures, so I bring her books and magazines I think she might like. It was touching that she gave me one of my favorite things: flowers.

The next stop was a 63-year-old man with end-stage renal disease, diabetes, and heart problems. He and I talk about books and authors, and I give him writing prompts that he's asked for to spur on his own creativity. He's developed dozens of stories about the early

days of aviation and is also working on an autobiography. For the past three years, I've been editing his work with the goal of getting some of his short stories and essays published. As I was leaving, he asked me, “Do you really think I'm a good writer?”

I didn't have to think or stretch the truth. “Yes,” I said. “You have a gift for language, especially metaphor. And your humor shines on the page. You are a very good writer. You are going to be published.”



He smiled and told me how much I had helped him. I didn't know it would be the last time I'd ever see him. He died in the hospital the day before my next visit. I am helping his sister go through his manuscripts to see if one or two can be submitted for print. It was his last wish.

My final delivery is to a veteran, an amputee in a wheelchair who always smiles and waves at me as I give the meal, milk, fruit, and snacks to his caregiver. He tells me I'm the bright spot of his week. His dog has finally stopped barking at me; we both take that as a good sign.

Being a Meals on Wheels People volunteer means getting much more than you give. It also means meeting people with whom you may not have much in common at first, but you find out — week after week — the thing you share is your humanity and living in this beautiful place we all call home.

Quarterly IMPACT STATS



6,370
individuals
served



126,294
meals
served



1,770
Friendly Chats &
safety calls made

BITE-SIZED NEWS

SNAP Changes Put Seniors at Risk

As of Oct. 1, new SNAP work rules in Multnomah and Washington counties require adults 55–65 without children to log 80 hours of work, volunteering, or training monthly to keep benefits. As part of the Oregon Hunger Task Force and Save Our SNAP Coalition, Meals on Wheels People is fighting to protect seniors' access to nutrition.

Celebrating Culture and Building Community

Meals on Wheels People is committed to serving seniors from all cultural backgrounds with meals and programs that reflect their traditions. Earlier in October, we hosted National Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations, and we have Thanksgiving, Winter Solstice, and Lunar New Year events ahead. Through partnerships with groups like the Oregon Chinese Coalition, Korean Society of Oregon, the Karen community, we're expanding access and connection. Thanks to staff, volunteers, and your support, older adults feel nourished and celebrated.

UPCOMING WAYS TO GIVE BACK

There are so many ways to make an impact this season! Join us for **Donate Dinner** this November, give through the **Willamette Week's Give!Guide**, or double your generosity on **Giving Tuesday (Dec. 2)** with a special match from a generous donor. Every gift you make before year-end helps ensure no senior is left hungry or alone.

One of Oregon's Best — Again!

Meals on Wheels People was once again named one of Oregon Business magazine's 100 Best Nonprofits to Work for in Oregon, ranking No. 9



this year. Rankings are based on employee feedback about satisfaction, benefits, management, trust, and growth. We've earned this honor every year since 2018 — proof our team supports one

another as much as we support older adults in the community.

Double Your Impact with Matching Gifts

Did you know many employers will match your donation — or even your volunteer hours — to Meals on Wheels People? It's a simple way to make your gift go twice (or three times!) as far. Scan the QR code to see if your company will match your gift or provide money for your volunteer hours.



Thanksgiving AT MOWP

One holiday effort.
Thousands of meals.
Countless moments
of connection on the
way. This Thanksgiving,
together we'll provide:

5,400+ MEALS

4,850+ PIES

1,600 lbs OF TURKEY

1,500+ lbs OF YAMS

1,400 lbs OF POTATOES

1,400+ lbs OF PEAS

200+ FRIENDLY
CHATS CALLS



HONOR SOMEONE

Special

WITH A TRIBUTE GIFT

A gift to Meals on Wheels People is a meaningful way to celebrate a loved one's life, mark a special occasion, or honor someone who has touched your heart.

Your tribute or memorial gift will help provide meals and companionship for older adults in our community — creating a lasting legacy of care and connection.






When you make a gift, we'll send a personalized card to the honoree or their family to let them know of your thoughtful gesture.

**Give in tribute.
Give in memory.
Give with love.**

mowp.org/tribute



Follow us to stay up to date with events, volunteer opportunities, and more.

-  [mealsonwheelspeople](https://www.facebook.com/mealsonwheelspeople)
-  [mealsonwheelspeople](https://www.tiktok.com/@mealsonwheelspeople)
-  [mealswheelsppi](https://www.instagram.com/mealswheelsppi)
-  [mealsonwheelspeople](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmealswheelspeople)
-  [mealsonwheelspeople](https://www.linkedin.com/company/mealsonwheelspeople)



Donate a meal:
mowp.org



Questions? Call
503-953-8131