

# Motion

A MEALS ON WHEELS PEOPLE NEWSLETTER



FALL 2024

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## EVERY MEAL MATTERS

This is the simple yet powerful truth at the core of our mission at Meals on Wheels People. It makes me think of Tim, whose life has been deeply touched by your generous support.

A 63-year-old from Vancouver, Washington, Tim has faced numerous health challenges throughout his life. Diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at just 14 months old, he has undergone major eye surgeries, leaving him with limited vision and without the ability to drive. Being without a license made it difficult for him to get groceries. Things got even tougher when he found out his kidneys were failing. The prospect of dialysis was daunting, and he knew he needed to be extremely careful about what he ate.

In the midst of these challenges, Tim found support in our meal-delivery program. Since

he started receiving meals specifically designed for renal disease, Tim's health has seen remarkable improvements. His kidney function went from 23% to 61%, keeping him off dialysis. This truly shows the life-changing impact of our services. "I'm really glad for the Meals on Wheels People," he says.

Stories like Tim's highlight the profound difference we can make together. Our meals not only nourish but also promote better health outcomes for seniors, allowing them to maintain independence and avoid costly medical interventions. Every meal we deliver is a lifeline for individuals like Tim, providing crucial nutrition and support. And as the need for our services continues to grow — with an 8% increase in meals served to older adults over the past year alone — we are reminded that every

meal matters. While 1 in 3 Meals on Wheels programs nationwide have waiting lists, your support ensures that we will never have to make anyone wait for a meal.

Together, we are making a significant impact on the health and well-being of those we serve. Thank you for being a crucial part of our mission.

With gratitude,



*Suzanne Washington*  
CEO, Meals on Wheels People

# A Day in the Life of a Meal

*How your support nourishes our community*

At Meals on Wheels People, our dedicated staff and volunteers ensure that every older adult in our community receives the nutrition and care they need. Here's a glimpse into a typical day, highlighting the joy and impact your contributions make possible with every meal we deliver.

## 5:30 A.M. Preparing with Love

The Central Kitchen in Multnomah Village starts to bustle with activity. Our kitchen staff arrive early, ready to transform fresh ingredients into nutritious meals. The Central Kitchen is divided into four general areas: the hot line, where proteins, sauces, starches, and vegetables are produced; the bakery, where all the quick breads, cakes, and desserts are made; the assembly line, which produces an average of 6,400 meals every day; and the warehouse, which serves as the hub for receiving, storing, and organizing all the ingredients and supplies needed for meal preparation.

On the hot line, you'll find volunteer and donor Richard Plotzker, a 73-year-old retired microsurgeon who dedicates his time weekly. Richard works alongside Ted Tran, a Meals on Wheels People veteran with 24 years of service. On the assembly line, you'll find Hahn Neuman, a deeply valued team

member who has been with the organization for more than 30 years.

## 6:30 A.M. Supplies Arrive

Food suppliers and other product vendors begin to arrive, and the warehouse staff check the orders as they come in. A typical delivery might include 1,200 to 3,000 pounds of beef, pork, chicken, or turkey; 800 pounds of pollock; 300 pounds of diced onions; 150 cases of blueberries; 150 pounds of diced celery; and 80 cases of avocados.

## 7 A.M. Morning Delivery

Truck drivers load giant rolling carts stacked with crates of frozen meals and supplemental

fresh ingredients like milk, bread, and produce to prepare for delivery to MOWP centers across Multnomah, Washington, and Clark counties. In addition to running delivery routes to homebound seniors, 17 of the 22 MOWP locations also serve lunch at least one day a week.

## 8:30 A.M. At a Meals on Wheels People Center

Center staff meet the truck from Central Kitchen. Racks are unloaded and stored in the center's refrigerators and freezers. Staff begin cooking the main entrée and vegetables for lunch. Meanwhile, volunteers are trading stories over cups of coffee as they pack route bags, prepare water and coffee carafes, and set the tables for those dining at the center.



MOWP staff Hahn Neuman, left, and Ted Tran, right, work in the kitchen with volunteer Richard Plotzker, center, on a Monday morning.

## 9 A.M. A Call for Help

Our client services team responds to a constant flow of meal requests and referrals, phone calls, and emails. They speak multiple languages, ensuring we can serve our diverse community, and they work to ensure new participants can start receiving meals as soon as possible, often the very next day. Many people seek our services after being discharged from the hospital and express relief and gratitude at how quickly their first meal arrives. Thanks to our generous supporters, we've never had a waiting list for meals.

## 9:30 A.M. Packing with Purpose

Volunteers like John Murphy arrive at a local MOWP center with a bright smile, ready to collect their assigned meals for home delivery participants and head out on their delivery routes. John started volunteering with MOWP because his mom, then in her early 80s, wanted to help pack meals at the center close to their home. When his mom passed away three years ago, John continued their tradition. He now drives two delivery routes every Thursday, a day he always has off from his job making computer chips at Intel. His dedication stems from the impact he sees firsthand. "Some of these folks are pretty close to complete shut-ins," John says. "You might be the only contact they have for that day." The connections he's made and the

joy of seeing familiar faces each week keep him coming back. "When I switched days, people cried. I never expected that." Born and raised in Portland, John, 61, continues to volunteer, hoping that one day, when he's older, someone will be there to care for him, too.

## 10:30 A.M. A Meals on Wheels Route

Most routes are right in the volunteer's backyard, allowing them to serve five to 10 participants in their own neighborhood. Today, John delivers to 84-year-old Sue. After a series of health challenges, including significant weight loss and hospital stays, Sue struggled with her appetite and energy. Her daughter-in-law contacted Meals on Wheels People, which became a vital support system for her. Receiving meals has not only helped Sue regain her weight

and health but also provided her with much-needed nutrition. "Before I got Meals on Wheels, I ate way too many peanut butter sandwiches," Sue says. "I just couldn't do the cooking. Now that I get these meals, I'm a new person! They help me get my energy back. This has been a real blessing." Sue values the companionship she finds through the program, too. John always brings a smile to her face. "I love when you come!" she exclaims as she opens the door to greet him.

After finishing their deliveries, volunteer drivers return the reusable bags and route book to the centers and report any concerns to the center managers. Center staff might help participants find transportation to medical appointments, obtain fans during hot weather and blankets during cold weather, and connect with other needed services and resources.



**MOWP volunteer John Murphy delivers two routes a week. He says he hopes someone will be there to care for him, too, when he's older.**



MOWP participant Sue looks forward to deliveries and visits from volunteer John each week.

### 11:15 A.M. Lunch at a Center

The center staff and volunteers turn their attention to completing preparations for the meal that will be served to participants in the dining room. The center manager oversees programming and activities to include nutrition education, fitness, recreation, and cultural celebrations. By 11:55 a.m., diners are in place and waiting to be served. At some centers, volunteers serve each meal restaurant style. Other centers serve meals cafeteria style.

### 12 P.M. Lunchtime at the Central Kitchen

At noon, lunch is served at the Central Office. Our staff prepares the meals, often offering the same nutritious meals we serve to our

participants. Our cooks also experiment with different recipes, allowing various staff members to try their hand at creating new dishes. These staff lunches foster a sense of community and shared purpose and inform enhancements to our recipes.

### 1 P.M. Reloading and Saving

The delivery trucks have returned from the morning run, and the drivers begin loading more meals to be transported to cold storage at our new facility on 82nd Avenue. This facility has been a game-changer for Meals on Wheels People. Previously, we rented a warehouse to store emergency backup meals. Now, with our own storage space, we are saving money each month — funds that can be redirected to further support our mission and serve more seniors in need.

### 1:30 P.M. Preparing for Tomorrow

The crew has finished the food preparation and has loaded the meals for the following day into standing racks, which will be stored in walk-in freezers overnight.

### 3 P.M. Wrapping Up the Day

After a full day of preparing, cooking, and packing thousands of meals, the kitchen staff finally wrap up their day. Center staff follow up on any participant concerns, confirm volunteers for the next day, and create routes for the next day's deliveries.

## EVERY MEAL MATTERS

Your support makes this all possible. Each step of this journey, from the kitchen to the doorstep, is fueled by the generosity of donors like you. Each day, we produce 6,400 meals, ensuring that older adults in our community receive the nourishment and connection they need to thrive. Your contributions make it possible for us to continue this vital work. Please consider making a donation today. Every meal matters, and with your help, we can continue to bring human connection and nutrition to those who need it most.

### Help feed seniors in need!



[mowp.org](http://mowp.org)



## Bite-Sized News

### SAFETY CALLS DURING HEAT WAVE

During the heat wave in early July, our team took proactive measures to ensure the well-being of our community members. Amidst soaring temperatures, our staff and volunteers successfully made safety calls to 585 individuals, providing much-needed reassurance and support. In addition to calls, we distributed fans to those in need, helping to ensure that our community members stayed cool and safe during the extreme heat.

### DINERS CLUB VISITS MISS DELTA

Our Diners Club participants had a fantastic time visiting Portland restaurant Miss Delta for lunch, thanks to our partnership with the Urban League of Portland! Meals on Wheels People participant Diane says she was “so pleased” to get to dine out with friends. “This program provides our older adults the opportunity to try different things — especially those on a limited income,” says Urban League Senior Services Activities Coordinator Kashea Kilson-Anderson.

### PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE THIS WEEK

National Estate Planning Awareness Week is Oct. 21-27, and we want to help you make the most of it! It’s a powerful way to protect your loved

MOWP participant Diane enjoys a meal at Miss Delta through the Diners Club.

# Quarterly IMPACT STATS

ones and support the causes that have been close to your heart. By including Meals on Wheels People in estate plans or making a deferred gift, you leave a legacy that will nourish your older neighbors for years to come. The Jean Wade Legacy Society is a group of dedicated supporters who have generously chosen to sustain Meals on Wheels People's work into the future. To learn more about the Jean Wade Legacy Society or discuss planned giving options, contact Major Gifts Manager Margaret Clement at [margaret.clement@mowp.org](mailto:margaret.clement@mowp.org) or (503) 953-8174.

## GET INVOLVED IN DONATE DINNER

This November, you can make a significant impact on the lives of isolated older adults in our community. Donate Dinner, our annual fundraising effort, brings together businesses, volunteers, and community members to fight food insecurity. You can get involved by adding a donation at checkout at one of our grocery stores or retail partners, giving online, or volunteering as an in-store greeter. Visit [donatedinner.org](https://donatedinner.org) to learn more and get involved today!



[donatedinner.org](https://donatedinner.org)



**6,911**  
individuals served



**256,125**  
meals served



**4,364**  
Friendly Chats calls made

July 1, 2024 - Aug. 31, 2024

# -Donate- DINNER

TO A HOMEBOUND SENIOR

Too many older adults are left behind, alone, and hungry, struggling to stay independent and healthy. Meals on Wheels People delivers the support that keeps seniors in their own homes, where they want to be.

Give the gift of meals this holiday season, and you'll deliver more than just a meal to a homebound senior.

[DonateDinner.org](https://DonateDinner.org)



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



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Donate a meal:  
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