

Motion

A MEALS ON WHEELS PEOPLE NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2025

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Letter FROM the CEO



← Scan the QR code to donate today.



TOGETHER, WE'RE BUILDING A RESILIENT FUTURE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

As I reflect on another impactful year at Meals on Wheels People, I'm reminded of the power of partnership. With your support during the past year, we've not only kept our promise to deliver meals and social support to older adults across the Portland-Vancouver metro area — without a waiting list — but we have scaled our efforts to meet the increasing need.

This past year, we delivered nearly 1.5 million meals to over 11,400 of our neighbors — a clear testament to what we can accomplish with your help. Donors and volunteers fueled this progress, providing essential resources to strengthen our mission. As we move into 2025, we're seeing even greater demand, with a 12.45% increase in total meals served over the past year alone. Your continuing contributions will help us meet these growing needs.

In response to our community's growing needs, MOWP took a significant step in 2021 by purchasing a building in Southeast Portland. Currently under renovation, this new facility is designed from the ground up to better serve our aging neighbors and focus on comprehensive services. Having a purpose-built space that we own allows us to respond quickly to both expected and unexpected changes, ensuring that we can meet the needs of our community, no matter what challenges arise. When complete in 2026, this new MOWP building will help us increase our meal capacity, enhance programs aimed at reducing isolation, foster stronger community partnerships, and strengthen our emergency preparedness resources.

I want to thank you for your continuing dedication. Your

support is the foundation that helps us meet immediate demands and allows us to innovate and evolve to meet whatever comes next. With your partnership, I am confident that 2025 will be our most impactful year yet. Thank you for standing with us every step of the way. Let's keep making a difference, together.

With gratitude,



Suzanne Washington
CEO, Meals on Wheels People

Knock Knock: You're Not Alone

A simple knock on the door delivers not just nutritious meals but friendship, connection, and hope for Barbara, thanks to Meals on Wheels People.

It's Thursday morning, and like clockwork, Meals on Wheels People volunteers Michele and David Lytle arrive at Barbara's door in her cozy apartment nestled within a subsidized housing complex. The hallway is quiet, save for the sound of their cheerful, familiar knock: *knock knock, knock knock knock.*

Behind the door, Barbara smiles. She responds with her own two gentle knocks — a tradition between them that's become a highlight of her week.

When Barbara opens the door, she's greeted not just by the nutritious meals Michele and David deliver but by the warmth and care they bring with every

visit. "They're family to me," Barbara says, her eyes lighting up. "I don't get a lot of visitors.

A gift of \$73.50 a month can provide a week of nutritious meals and social supports to an older adult in our community.

It can get pretty lonely. I always look forward to my visit from them. They stand at my door and we talk. I show them my projects," she adds, gesturing to the small table covered in colorful fabric scraps, spools of yarn, and half-finished projects. "They come and give me love."

A CREATIVE LIFE FILLED WITH PURPOSE

Barbara's apartment is a hive of creativity. She's preparing for the upcoming art and craft fair at her apartment building — a fair she organized herself. Quilting has become her passion, something she picked up a decade ago, and

now it fills her days with purpose. "Back then, I was working retail at Hobby Lobby. The first time I walked in, I thought I'd died and gone to heaven," she says with a laugh. Now, every day, Barbara sews, creating vibrant quilts not only for the craft fair but also for the Passage Quilt Project, which provides handmade quilts for those at the end of life.

THE CHALLENGES OF AGING

Despite her lively spirit, Barbara hasn't been immune to the challenges of aging. A few years ago, she began experiencing severe back pain, which made it difficult to stand and cook as easily as she once did. "When you can't stand for more than 2 or 3 minutes, you just can't do anything. Even boiling hard-boiled eggs is difficult," Barbara says. "If you can't fend for yourself, then you become really vulnerable."

A gift of \$10.50 a month can provide a nutritious meal and check-in to an older adult in our community.

A LIFESAVER IN MEALS AND MORE

The resident coordinator at Barbara's apartment building connected her with Meals on Wheels People, and she says it's been a lifesaver. "One of the things I really appreciate about Meals on Wheels People is how much more nutritious the food is," Barbara says. "You're not



getting all those bad nutrients from the TV dinners I used to rely on. I'm not a fussy eater, but being diabetic, I know I need to watch what I eat and make sure I'm getting enough protein." Beyond the convenience and nutrition, Meals on Wheels People also helps Barbara manage her finances. Living on a fixed income means making careful decisions, and with the rising cost of groceries, every dollar counts. "I'm very low-income," she says. "Budget-wise, it really helps out."

THE POWER OF CONNECTION

But for Barbara, it's the human connections that mean the most. While the nutritious meals and financial relief are a tremendous help, it's the people behind Meals on Wheels People that make the biggest difference in her life. "Not only do you have someone coming and delivering your food every week, but the folks at Meals on Wheels People will just call you out of the blue and see how you're doing," she says. "It makes you feel valued."

For Barbara, Meals on Wheels People offers three lifelines: nutritious food, financial relief, and the companionship of two extraordinary people who brighten her Thursdays. It's not just about meals — it's about connection, care, and the power of a knock that echoes far beyond the door.

Scan the QR code to watch the heartwarming story of Barbara and see the power of a knock firsthand.



Your contributions make stories like Barbara's possible. With your support, we can continue delivering not just nutritious meals but the human connection and care that mean so much to people in our community. Please consider donating today to ensure these moments of connection continue, one knock at a time.

Making Every Dollar Count Twice

By taking advantage of employer matching, the Fleischers have made every dollar count more for Meals on Wheels People.

Julie and Jeremy Fleischers' journey with Meals on Wheels People began simply — a quick donation during a Thanksgiving shopping trip at Jim's Thriftway during the 2009 Donate Dinner fundraising campaign. What started as a one-time contribution has blossomed into a long-term commitment to support older adults in our community.

THOUGHTFUL PHILANTHROPY

The Fleischers' support for MOWP is rooted in their belief in our mission. What drew them in was not just the meal deliveries but the social connection MOWP provides to older adults who might otherwise feel isolated. As second vice president and actuary at The Standard, Jeremy sees the bigger picture. "In my job, I look at trends in the nation," he says. "There are more and more people who are reaching older ages, so you have to have a support system in order to not just survive but to live and thrive."

Both Jeremy and Julie value thoughtful, local philanthropy. "Meals on Wheels People impacts the community directly and immediately," Jeremy says. Adds Julie: "Before we donate



anywhere, we research where is the money going. Is it going to be given to the people who need it? Meals on Wheels People is an organization that very much checks out. It is very local. We like to donate to local places where you can feel it in your community.”

LEVERAGING EMPLOYER MATCHING

One of the most impactful ways the Fleischers have increased their giving is through employer matching programs. Both The Standard and Julie’s former employer, Intel, offer generous matching programs that double — and in some cases, even triple — their contributions. This has significantly increased their donations to Meals on Wheels People over the years, allowing them to make a much larger impact.

Double or triple your impact through employer matching — check with your HR department to see if your donation to Meals on Wheels People can go even further.

At The Standard, Jeremy explains: “We have a pretty robust employee giving campaign, and we can have it pull monthly from our paychecks. So the process is really easy, and you can really extend your donations.”

A COMMITMENT THAT GROWS

What began as a one-time donation gradually grew into

Jeremy and Julie enjoying game day with their children, Kira and Andrew.



regular monthly contributions as members of MOWP’s Sustainers Circle. In 2024, Jeremy joined the MOWP board of directors, gaining deeper insight into the organization’s wide-ranging programs. From meal deliveries to Friendly Chats and a new Pet Program, MOWP consistently finds innovative ways to support seniors, he says.

Jeremy is also excited about the new MOWP building on 82nd Avenue, designed to serve as a hub for the community. When completed in 2026, the new building will foster collaboration with local organizations and help MOWP reach a broader population while also serving as a resiliency center during emergencies.

INSPIRING OTHERS TO ACT

The Fleischers’ journey shows how thoughtful philanthropy and

leveraging employer matching can multiply the impact of giving. Employer matching programs make it easy for anyone to give

Scan the QR code to see if your company will match your gift or provide money for volunteer hours.



more than they thought possible, multiplying their impact with minimal effort. It’s one of the simplest ways to increase your support for Meals on Wheels People or other causes you care about. Check with your human resources department to see if this option is available to you. Every dollar matched means more meals, more connections, and more independence for older adults.

Bite-Sized News

DONATE DINNER SUCCESS: YOUR COMPASSION FUNDS OVER 20,000 MEALS

Thank you for your incredible support during our annual Donate Dinner campaign. Together, we raised over \$200,000 — and counting! Your generosity will help fund at least 20,000 nutritious meals and moments of connection for older adults in our community.



We're deeply grateful to our community partners who made this possible: New Seasons, Market of Choice, Jim's Thriftway, Burgerville, Dandelion Teahouse & Apothecary, and Cambia Health Foundation. Thanks to the compassion and dedication of supporters like you, we can continue ensuring older adults have the nourishment and social connection they need. Thank you for making a difference!



WE MADE THE LIST!

We're thrilled to share that we've been named one of *Oregon Business*' 100 Best Nonprofits to

Work for in Oregon in 2024! This recognition is based on surveys sent to employees, and we've proudly made the list since 2018. One employee shared: "We care about helping others. There is no internal competition; it is just about a common goal. You are not treated as just a replaceable employee; you are treated as an important part of the overall company." We couldn't be prouder of our team!

CELEBRATIONS AT OUR CENTERS

Festivities are in full swing at our centers across the Portland-Vancouver metro area! From Martin Luther King Jr. Day to Lunar New Year, we're honoring community, culture, and togetherness. These celebrations reflect our commitment to making sure everyone feels welcome and included. This year, we're celebrating Lunar New Year with a special meal prepared for all home delivery participants, and there will be cultural performances and events at each center. By fostering a sense of belonging, we're creating spaces where



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NEWSLETTER FALL 2022

people can connect, share traditions, and celebrate the richness of our diverse community.

NEW YEAR, NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Start the year by making a difference! Whether it's Friendly Chats calls, meal delivery, or other ways to lend a hand, we have opportunities for everyone. We need 330 volunteers each day to make our services possible. Last year, over 2,000 amazing individuals donated a total of 89,147 hours — a value of over \$3.1 million! Every hour makes a difference, and there are plenty of ways you can get involved and help support your



A Cinco de Mayo celebration at the Ambleside Center

community in 2025. Visit mowp.org/volunteer to learn more about our current volunteer opportunities.

WELCOME NATHAN ROE TO THE BOARD

We're excited to welcome Nathan Roe, director of customer marketing and analytics at Reser's Fine Foods, to our board of directors! Nathan brings nearly 25 years of marketing leadership, having worked with brands across various sectors. His connection to Meals on Wheels began in seventh grade, when he helped his mother deliver meals in Norman, Oklahoma. After joining Reser's in 2015, he began volunteering with Meals on Wheels People. Fun fact: He appeared on the cover of our Fall 2022 newsletter! We're thrilled to have him bring his passion for service and leadership to the board.

INTRODUCING FRIENDLY CHATS TRIVIA AND BOOK CLUB

We've launched two exciting new programs to help combat social isolation: Friendly Chats Trivia and Book Club! Our first biweekly trivia hour took place in October, and the first book club meeting followed in December. These programs offer a great way for participants and volunteers to connect, engage, and enjoy shared activities, fostering a sense of community and reducing isolation. We're thrilled to see how these new opportunities are bringing people together!

Quarterly IMPACT STATS



7,383

individuals served



373,057

meals served



5,785

Friendly Chats calls made

*Sept. 1, 2024 - Nov. 30, 2024



Meals on Wheels People participant Terry, a Navy veteran, recently received an unexpected call from Peg Fuka, MOWP home delivery manager at the Beaverton Center, letting him know he was chosen for a special Operation Surprise project in partnership with Home Depot. "It's so hard for me to accept help," Terry admits, "but I decided: Terry, just step back and let it happen. I have just been blown away by everybody's generosity."

Become a Monthly Donor

Join the Sustainers Circle Today

Our older neighbors count on us every day of every month.

When you join the Sustainers Circle, you provide the reliable, steady support that Meals on Wheels People needs to plan, prepare, and serve. Your monthly gift powers daily meals and meaningful connections for isolated older adults, ensuring they receive vital nourishment and companionship all year long.

Choose a monthly gift amount that works for you: \$10, \$50, \$100, or beyond. Every dollar makes a lasting difference.

Convenient Payment Options:

- Checking Account
- Credit Card
- Donor Advised Fund

Together, we are changing lives, one meal at a time.

Scan the QR code or visit mowp.org/sustainers to set up your monthly gift today.



Bob, a Meals on Wheels People participant, strikes a pose at the Senior Fashion Show, sponsored by the Urban League of Portland, at MOWP's MLK Center.

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



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Donate a meal:
mowp.org