

PRESS RELEASE

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MOW Diablo Region and Mt. Diablo Unified Form Culinary Partnership

Contra Costa County, September 12, 2022 - Meals on Wheels (MOW) Diablo Region and the Mt. Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD) are working together to provide Latin American-inspired home delivered meals to meet the needs of the growing Latino population served by MOW Diablo Region. The nonprofit has long understood the importance of providing culturally relevant services to the seniors it serves. Starting in August, it began the Cultural Cuisine pilot program serving 10,000 meals to vulnerable seniors in Concord and Bay Point.

MOW Diablo Region reached out to the Mt. Diablo Unified School District to prepare the meals because of their extensive experience providing meals featuring Latin cuisine. MDUSD uses authentic Latin American food preparation techniques to bring out traditional flavors, drawing on the Latin American cuisine expertise of the District's Culinary Technical Advisor, chef Joshua Gjersand, who has worked in Michelin star restaurants. These include shredding chicken for Mexican Pollo Tinga with corn tortillas, brown rice, refried beans, carrot sauté and papaya; hand rolling cheese or chicken enchiladas; and roasting peppers and peeling their skins for a Chiles Rellenos casserole served with brown rice, roasted cauliflower, and fresh mango. MOW Diablo Region works with a registered dietician to develop the menu in collaboration with MDUSD to ensure that all meals meet national dietary standards.

Meals on Wheels Diablo Region is an independent non-profit and the only meals on wheels in the county to deliver both meals and life-improving services that include, Fall Prevention, Care Management, Health & Wellness, Friendly Visitors, and Friendly Callers.



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This is not the first time the two agencies have partnered to help serve the community. When schools were closed due to COVID-19, MDUSD provided meals for Concord senior citizens sponsored by the City of Concord in partnership with the Meals on Wheels Diablo Region, which delivered them.

“We worked with MDUSD during the height of the pandemic,” explains Caitlin Sly, Executive Director of MOW Diablo Region. “We knew that they shared our high standards and were great to work with. It was the best choice to partner with them for the Cultural Cuisine pilot program.”

MOW Diablo Region’s Cultural Cuisine pilot program builds on the agency’s 54 years of providing home delivered meals to homebound seniors. Fourteen per cent of MOW Diablo Region clients overall identify as Latino, but in the Concord and Bay Point areas of the region, 33% of older adults identify as Latino. “We have many Spanish-speaking seniors in our community who prefer meals that reflect their ethnic background,” explains Sly. “We recognize the same food does not work for everyone. The people we serve have varying tastes, just like the rest of us. It is our goal not only to provide enough food, but also the type of food that our elders want to eat.”

MOW Diablo Region hopes to eventually expand the Cultural Cuisine pilot program to other communities and looks forward to its continued partnership with MDUSD, which recognizes the benefits of the program.

"The Meals on Wheels, Diablo Region Latino Senior Project is helping the Food Nutrition Service Department grow and develop recipes that will be served to our high school students," said Dominic Machi, the District's Food and Nutrition Services Director. "The program pushes our creativity developing recipes and allows us to seek out the highest quality ingredients."

To learn more about the Cultural Cuisine pilot program, call MOW Diablo Region at 925-937-8311 or visit <https://www.mowdiabloregion.org/programs>.



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About Meals on Wheels Diablo Region: *Helping over 6,700 seniors each year, our mission is to enhance the lives of older adults in Contra Costa County by providing coordinated care that enables them to live independently and with dignity. Our dedicated staff of experts connects seniors with essential services in Contra Costa County. We work to keep our elderly neighbors nourished, healthy, safe, and independent because we provide more than a meal. As our list of seniors in need grows, so does our need for more volunteers. Help us support more seniors in the county! If you would like to get involved, [please visit our website](#). We have several open positions for employment, [click here to join the team](#). Stay in the loop with our updates and announcements, [“LIKE” and connect with us on Facebook!](#)*