



Dear Friends,

This year has been unlike any other, but as we move toward a time when the pandemic may be behind us, I wanted to share some things I learned in the past eight months.

From the day in March when we realized we were facing a global pandemic, the outpouring of support for our work from the community has been incredible. People signed up in record numbers to volunteer, donate items for our seniors, and to contribute financially to our mission. After an evening run to Target during the heatwave, one of our donors dropped fans off at an employee's home so we could get them to clients the next morning! Restaurants and bakeries, who were struggling themselves, brought our overworked staff lunches and cookies. Airport Home Appliance donated microwaves to clients, and Diablo Valley Signs printed signs and banners for us. Partnerships developed between us and County Connection, Mt. Diablo Unified School District, civic and church groups, and many towns and cities.

In addition to increasing our meal delivery by 40%, we also had the extra expense of purchasing PPE and hiring temporary staff to help meet the demand. None of this could have taken place without the support of our donors – their generosity had a major impact on the lives of vulnerable seniors. One donor told us that even though she is on a fixed income, she still donates because what we do is so important.

Thanks to the support we received from local foundations, we were able to develop programs that helped us meet gaps in our services, like the Breakfast Bag Program, the Grocery Bag Program, and Friendly Helpers.

I was inspired firsthand by the unwavering dedication of the MOW Diablo Region staff to go the extra mile to make sure seniors received a delivered meal, got a prescription picked up, or heard a friendly voice on the other end of the phone. All this gave me confidence that once life turns back to normal, we will continue to be a strong and supportive community that cares for our vulnerable seniors.

Many thanks to you and I wish you all a joyous holiday and a healthy and happy New Year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Caitlin Sly'.

Caitlin Sly
Executive Director

SUPPORTING SENIORS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The holidays can be hard on all of us, but they can be especially difficult for homebound seniors in the community who are isolated and lonely. We would like to say thanks to everyone who contributed to making the holidays a little brighter for vulnerable seniors in the Diablo Region!

Our volunteers are awesome! We would like to give a special shout out to Joy Walker from the City of Pittsburg who cooked 14 turkeys donated by Aegis Health that fed 40 seniors this Thanksgiving holiday. Thank you to Joy's daughter, Kim, and Bonnie Paulson for making deliveries.



SANTA'S HELPERS STUFF STOCKING FOR SENIORS

We would like to thank the Boys Charity League of Alamo and Danville, and Ashley and Brooklyn Koenig from National Charity League Inc., Diablo Valley Chapter for donating holiday stockings for our seniors!





MEALS ON WHEELS DIABLO REGION JOINS MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA AND SUBARU OF AMERICA, INC. IN SHARING THE LOVE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The 13th annual Subaru Share the Love® Event will help deliver nutritious meals and compassion to Diablo Region's seniors.

Meals on Wheels Diablo Region is proud to announce that it will be participating in the 2020 Subaru Share the Love Event as a member of Meals on Wheels America – one of four national Share the Love charitable partners supported through the campaign. From November 19, 2020, through January 4, 2021, Subaru of America will donate \$250 for every new Subaru vehicle purchased or leased to the customer's choice of participating charities.

"We are excited once again to partner with Diablo Subaru of Walnut Creek in the Subaru Share the Love campaign. We are thankful for Subaru's commitment in supporting Meals on Wheels Diablo Region," says Executive Director, Caitlin Sly.

Participating Meals on Wheels America members, like MOW Diablo Region, will receive a share of the donation raised by Subaru in their state. MOW Diablo Region has partnered with Diablo Subaru of Walnut Creek to raise awareness for the popular year-end sales and giving event. This helps drive support for MOW Diablo Region's programs – not just meal delivery but also wraparound services like Fall Prevention, Health and Wellness, Care Management, and the Friendly Visitors and Callers Programs.

"Meals on Wheels America is proud to partner with Subaru of America for the 13th consecutive year to enable more seniors to live with independence and dignity," said Ellie Hollander, President and CEO of Meals on Wheels America. "Since 2008, the Subaru Share the Love Event has helped deliver more than

2.3 million meals and friendly visits to vulnerable seniors nationwide. We're enormously grateful to Subaru and its retailers for their long-standing commitment to Meals on Wheels and the millions of seniors who depend on it for nourishment and companionship."



Over the last 12 years, Subaru of America and its participating retailers have donated more than \$176 million to its charity partners. This year's Subaru Share the Love Event is on track to bring that total to over \$200 million, proving there's no limit to the amount of love we can all share.

By purchasing or leasing a new Subaru during the Subaru Share the Love Event and selecting Meals on Wheels Diablo Region as your charity of choice, you can help deliver nutritious meals and other important services to seniors right here in our community.

For more information, click the button below.

[SHARE THE LOVE](#)

HOW OUR HEALTH AND WELLNESS DEPARTMENT IS ADAPTING DURING THE PANDEMIC

The Health and Wellness Department at Meals on Wheels Diablo Region continues to develop inventive ways to keep our clients active and safe during the pandemic. Our clients now participate in programs like Bingocize® or Tai Chi, either outdoors and socially distanced or remotely through Zoom classes.

Our Bingocize® program, is designed to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behavior. Bingocize is an evidence-based program that combines a bingo-like game with exercise and health education. The program has been shown to increase older adults' functional fitness, health knowledge, and social engagement in a variety of settings.

"It's more important than ever that we stay connected with our clients, to help improve well-being and sustain their independence," says Meals on Wheels Diablo Region's Health and Wellness Manager, Cynthia Black.

Additionally, MOW Diablo Region coordinates Tuesday/Thursday 10:00am outdoor Tai Chi movement classes in Brentwood that improves flexibility and balance. We will also be offering outdoor Walk with Ease in Concord starting Tuesday, January 12, 2021.



\$40,000 FROM TRAVIS CREDIT UNION HELPS DELIVER MEALS AND SERVICES TO MEALS ON WHEELS DIABLO REGION'S CLIENTS



Meals on Wheels Diablo Region is grateful to our generous donors who helped us raise \$20,000 as a matching donation from Travis Credit Union, through the Travis Credit Union Foundation's Covid-19 Relief Initiative.

The \$40,000 we received because of the match from the Travis Credit Union Foundation will help Meals on Wheels Diablo Region meet the 40 percent increase for home delivered meals we have seen since the beginning of the pandemic. These funds will go toward meal delivery as well as services like Fall Prevention, Health and Wellness, Care Management, and our Friendly Visitors and Callers Programs.

"We are extremely grateful for the support from Travis Credit Union Foundation from its Covid-19 Relief Initiative. Their generous match will benefit isolated and food insecure seniors in the community," said Meals on Wheels Diablo Region's Executive Director, Caitlin Sly.

For more than 50 years, Meals on Wheels Diablo Region has improved the lives of vulnerable seniors living in Contra Costa County by delivering nutritious meals and wraparound services that allow seniors to remain in their homes, safely and with dignity. As a full-service organization, we are dedicated to addressing all the needs of the seniors we serve. In addition to meal delivery, we provide exercise and fall prevention classes, home safety modifications, elder abuse prevention, and much more.

"The Travis Credit Union Foundation gives 100% of donations back to our local communities, and we are proud of the recent fundraising collaboration with Meals on Wheels Diablo Region because of the immediate relief that will be provided to our friends and neighbors through their vital service," said Travis Credit Union's Director of Corporate Relations, Damion Alarcon-Young.

Meals on Wheels Diablo Region is the only Meals on Wheels that delivers both meals and services to seniors in Contra Costa County. Thousands of people every year reach out to us for help. Whether it's a meal delivery or support service, Meals on Wheels Diablo Region Delivers Reliably! To learn more visit www.mowdiabloregion.org

About Travis Credit Union Foundation

Travis Credit Union Foundation supports financial education, literacy and wellness initiatives and is the philanthropic arm of Travis Credit Union. The Foundation's mission is to build financially empowered communities and its vision is to create philanthropic solutions for building sustainable financial wellness in communities for generations to come. 100% of funds raised go back to the community. For more information about the Travis Credit Union Foundation and its COVID-19 Relief efforts go to www.TCUFUND.org

IMPACT DIABLO VALLEY FUND AT THE EAST BAY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AWARDS MEALS ON WHEELS DIABLO REGION A GRANT TO LAUNCH SENIOR BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Impact Diablo Valley Fund at the East Bay Community Foundation has awarded an \$80,000 grant to Meals on Wheels Diablo Region. These funds will allow MOW Diablo Region to expand its Breakfast Bag Program to Bethel Island and Bay Point.

"Our mission is to reduce food insecurity for low-income and homebound seniors," says Meals on Wheels Diablo Region Executive Director, Caitlin Sly. "We are grateful for the support from Impact Diablo Valley Fund and for their commitment to improving lives in the senior community."

Bethel Island and Bay Point are two of the most needy communities Meals on Wheels Diablo Region serves. The grant makes it possible for MOW Diablo Region's Breakfast Bag Program to deliver a second meal of the day to an additional 40 vulnerable seniors, providing a total of 10,400 breakfast bags to clients who are facing hunger. The bags include nutritious food such as fresh fruits, yogurt, cereal, oatmeal, string cheese, hard boiled eggs, coffee, and tea.

MOW Diablo Region's mission is to improve the overall health of isolated seniors. We help seniors remain independent and live with dignity as long as possible. "The Breakfast Bag Program has been a real lifeline for me. It was the answer to getting the food I need and it lets me know that I am not alone in the world," says Linda, an MOW Diablo Region Breakfast Bag client.

Meals on Wheels Diablo Region appreciates the support of Impact Diablo Valley Fund at the East Bay Community Foundation helping us feed vulnerable seniors and helping people understand the hunger that exists in our community.



Our No-Show Gala is still going on and we encourage you to "attend" from the comfort of your own home! Join our sponsor First Republic Bank and donate to a worthy cause that is helping vulnerable seniors in your community age with dignity and respect in their homes. Just head over to our website to "attend!"

DON'T REGISTER, BUT PLEASE DONATE

AGE IS JUST A NUMBER

Irish poet Oscar Wilde said, “Ultimately the bond of all companionship... is conversation.” If you ask 103-year-old U.S. Army veteran Leo, he would agree. Leo loves to talk! It’s one of the many things that Meals on Wheels Diablo Region volunteer, Jeff Hall appreciates about him — and boy, does Leo have some good stories to tell! “Leo is one of the most interesting people I have ever met,” says Jeff. “He served in the army during World War II, he’s traveled the world, and when he was able, he enjoyed dancing. He continues to surprise me every day!”

Leo and Jeff’s friendship started in 2018 when Jeff reached out to Meals on Wheels Diablo Region about their Friendly Visitors Program. “I was looking to get involved and find a sense of purpose in the community. That’s when they set me up with Leo,” says Jeff.

Leo was also looking for something to fill his days. MOW Diablo Region matched them up right away. The two discovered early on that they have a lot in common! “He served in the army and I’ve served in the navy,” says Jeff. “We enjoy trading stories about our time in the service.”

The two got to know each other over the phone, then decided to turn their conversations into an in-person friendship. “Leo said

he wanted to go out for a burger and a beer,” says Jeff. That first meal together became a weekly “dudes’ day” tradition.

Jeff would take Leo out to see live music in Danville, and occasionally host a dinner with some of his buddies so they could meet Leo. “Everyone agreed Leo had the best stories and sometimes we had to remind him to take a break from talking and eat some food. He really thrives in the presence of others.”

Since the pandemic, Jeff and Leo have had to postpone their weekly burgers and beers. However, Jeff is committed to keeping Leo connected and engaged. “Fridays are hard on Leo; he feels like he’s missing out on fun Friday night events.”

Jeff also says, “although many of our visits are limited to me being on the other side of his screen door, at least it gives him some sort of outside connection. I can’t imagine what it’s like for people living totally alone.”

Leo has adapted relatively well since Covid-19. Maybe it’s because he’s seen so much change in his very long life or maybe it’s the connection he still has with Jeff.



When you make a gift to Meals on Wheels Diablo Region online this month, your support will be doubled thanks to a \$6,000 match offered by an anonymous donor. Your gift will have twice the impact on seniors who depend on us for meals and wraparound services every day. You will ensure that MOW Diablo Region can continue to offer our Fall Prevention, Care Management, Friendly Visitors, and Friendly Visitors and Callers Programs to isolated seniors.

We know the meals we deliver are often the only meal a senior will eat all day, but it is also the human connection and support services we provide that help so much. Your support makes a huge difference and allows Meals on Wheels Diablo Region to keep seniors at home, nourished, safe and living with dignity. Please help us meet this match with your gift today.

[DONATE TODAY](#)



CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS VIRTUALLY

This year has been challenging for everyone, including Meals on Wheels Diablo Region. We have seen a 40% increase in the number of clients needing meal delivery, and we had to find ways to keep our isolated seniors connected. Our volunteers truly are the backbone of Meals on Wheels Diablo Region, and everything we do for the seniors we serve is because of their dedication and compassion. In early December, our volunteers joined us on Zoom for a virtual town hall to talk about all the changes we have navigated during the pandemic. Sponsored by Pacific Service Credit Union, this virtual town hall discussed new programs, and how we’ve changed our procedures and delivery models to meet the increase in demand for food and services in our community. Our town hall became a celebration of the important work we do!

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