



Dear Friends,

Most of us are happy that 2020 is in the rearview mirror, but there are some important lessons MOW Diablo Region learned from the past year. First, we

live in a community where individuals truly care about their neighbors. They are concerned about the safety and nutrition of our vulnerable seniors, and are incredibly supportive of the work we do at MOW Diablo Region.

Some striking realities also came into focus this year that will guide our work in the future. Food insecurity for seniors is much worse than we thought. One small change in a senior's life — a trusted friend who no longer is available to drive to the supermarket, a family member who is facing financial crisis and can't help out anymore, or a worsening medical condition that makes it harder for a senior to prepare a simple meal — can quickly plunge seniors into food insecurity, worsening isolation, and compromised safety.

Just because the date on the calendar has changed, the needs of seniors won't. As the largest growing segment of the population, the issues seniors face of food insecurity, isolation, depression, and injuries due to falls will grow as well. But the challenges of this past year have proven to us that MOW Diablo Region has a talented group of staff and volunteers with the dedication, the flexibility, and the community support to meet any obstacle and to meet the complex needs of the vulnerable seniors we serve. Someday you or someone you love may need Meals on Wheels Diablo Region, and with the help of our community we will be there for you.

Sincerely,

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

Caitlin Sly
Executive Director

MANGIA!

You can enjoy a fabulous Italian meal and support both Meals on Wheels Diablo Region and a local restaurant on January 20th! Tips for Change is a generous program offered by Gianni's Italian Bistro in San Ramon to help support local nonprofits.

Here's how it works: MOW Diablo Region will receive all tips and 10% of sales on take-out orders, but meals must be preordered. Place your order early — starting today! All orders must be in by Tuesday, January 19th by 6:00 PM. To place an order, go to www.giannissanramon.com or call 925-820-6969. For online orders, click the "order online" button, then click on deliver or pick-up (delivery may be limited). Be sure to choose the date — Wednesday, June 20th — then choose your menu items (wine and cocktails are also available for take-out) and your desired time for pick-up at Gianni's Italian Bistro on 2065 San Ramon Valley Boulevard, San Ramon.

Participating in Tips for Change is a win-win-win. It helps support a local restaurant, helps support Meals on Wheels Diablo Region, and funds raised positively impact the lives of vulnerable seniors.

Please place your order by Tuesday, January 19th for pick-up on Wednesday!

A promotional graphic for the event. It features a collage of images: a plate of grilled chicken, a bowl of pasta, and a photo of a smiling man holding a bag of food. The text 'Gianni's ITALIAN BISTRO' is at the top. Below the images, it says 'WEDNESDAY JAN 20 2021' and 'PICKUP/DELIVERY 4:30PM-8PM'. At the bottom, the logos for 'Tips FOR Change BENEFITING' and 'MEALS ON WHEELS DIABLO REGION' are displayed.

MEALS ON WHEELS DIABLO REGION CHOSEN TO RECEIVE MAJOR GIFT

Meals on Wheels Diablo Region is proud to announce that we have been chosen as one of 384 non-profits to share over \$4 billion donated by writer and philanthropist, MacKenzie Scott.

Last July, Scott asked a team of advisors to help accelerate her 2020 giving through immediate support to people suffering the economic effects of the Covid-19 crisis. They took a data-driven approach to identifying organizations with strong leadership teams and significant results. The advisors paid special attention to organizations operating in communities with high food insecurity, issues of racial inequity, local poverty rates, and low access to philanthropic capital. The advisors considered 6,490 non-profits from across all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington D.C. before narrowing it down to the 384 recipients.

“Learning about the rigorous process used to identify the beneficiaries makes us even more honored to have been chosen as one of the recipients of this very generous donation,” said Caitlin Sly, MOW Diablo Region Executive Director. “The problems of food insecurity, isolation, depression, and accidents resulting from falls will continue as the elderly continue to age at a greater rate than the rest of the population. This donation will have a real

impact on the lives of vulnerable seniors who depend on MOW Diablo Region. It will allow us to continue to fulfill our mission of combating hunger and providing life-improving services to seniors so they can remain in their homes with dignity.” MOW Diablo Region was only one of three Meals on Wheels in California to receive this donation.

Scott posted a list of the hundreds of organizations that received funds in her Medium blog post. The services provided by these groups include food banks, emergency relief funds, debt relief, employment training, credit and financial services for under-resourced communities, education for historically marginalized and underserved people, civil rights advocacy, and legal defense funds that take on institutional discrimination.

In a statement, Scott said, “These 384 carefully selected teams have dedicated their lives to helping others, working and volunteering and serving real people face-to-face at bedsides and tables, in prisons and courtrooms and classrooms, on streets and hospital wards and hotlines and frontlines of all types and sizes, day after day after day.”

MEALS ON WHEELS DIABLO REGION AWARDED FOOD INSECURITY GRANT FROM PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY

Meals on Wheels Diablo Region is pleased to announce that Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) has awarded the organization a grant that will help combat food insecurity impacting vulnerable seniors. Seniors are the fastest growing segment of the population in the country and the county, and while food insecurity has been an ongoing problem, it has become more pronounced since the pandemic.

“Since March, we have been delivering meals to 40% more seniors,” said MOW Diablo Region’s Executive Director, Caitlin Sly. “The problem of food insecurity will continue into the future, but with the help of PG&E we can continue to deliver more meals to more seniors. That will help them continue to remain at home with dignity.”



The awarding of this grant was made possible with the help of PG&E’s Tom Guarino, who recently passed away. He was a strong advocate for nonprofits and his work on their behalf has had a profound impact on the lives of so many individuals.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS

Age doesn’t matter when it comes to making a difference, and 9-year-old Ovid of Walnut Creek is proof. For the second year in a row, Ovid has donated his own money to Meals on Wheels Diablo Region so that homebound seniors in his neighborhood don’t go hungry. This year, Ovid surprised our staff by dropping off \$400 that he received as Christmas gifts. “I have an elderly neighbor across the street who lives alone. Seniors need our help, too,” said Ovid.

Ovid also says his parents have instilled in him the value of giving back. “My parents come from a less fortunate country with less fortunate people. Even though we live in a more fortunate country there are still people who need help.”

Ovid’s generous donation will not only go to meal delivery services, but also to life-improving wraparound services that MOW Diablo Region provides. To learn more about what we do, visit www.mowdiabloregion.org.



*Ovid presents his gift to MOW Diablo Region’s
Nancy Sorensen*

COPING WITH THE CHALLENGES OF AN AGING PARENT

Woldemarian was doing fine living alone at 83. But in December 2019, when his daughter Seble and his other children were visiting, Woldemarian fainted and fell to the ground. “We were all so scared so we called 911 immediately,” recalled Seble. The ambulance rushed him to John Muir Walnut Creek Medical Center where he was admitted with a fractured hip and collarbone. When he was released from the hospital, Seble and her siblings asked the question so many adult children face: can our parent safely live alone?

Instead of waiting for another health issue, Seble decided to have her father move in with her. “It’s a huge responsibility and one I wasn’t expecting at this time in my life, but I’m thankful I am able to care for my Dad,” said Seble. At first it was a difficult transition, but then Seble received a phone call from Meals on Wheels Diablo Region that made life for both her and her father a little bit easier.

“When they called I told them he didn’t need delivered meals, but then they explained that there were other services available, like Fall Prevention,” said Seble. As part of its Fall Prevention Program, MOW Diablo Region sends an Occupational Therapist to assess the risk factors in the home. The OT looks for signs that can contribute to a fall, like a towel rack loose from the wall, which indicates the person is having a hard time getting up out of the bathtub. They also check the entrances and exits of the home to see if any special equipment may be needed.

“The therapist immediately recognized that my dad was struggling to step inside his doorway,” said Seble. The OT also noticed a railing in the bathtub that was suctioned to the wall that wasn’t secure enough to prevent Woldemarian from falling in the tub.

After the Fall Prevention assessment, MOW Diablo Region installed two grab bars, a shower chair with a back and two safety railings. “I had no idea that Meals on Wheels Diablo Region offered these crucial services,” adds Seble. “I’m so grateful for this organization and the support they provide!”



Have you seen our display at the downtown Walnut Creek Starbucks? We are excited to be featured in the window display at the Starbucks on Locust St. in Walnut Creek. Learn about what MOW Diablo Region is doing in the community while you grab a cup of your favorite coffee!



The holidays may be over, but we are still grateful for all the generous donations that were delivered to isolated and vulnerable seniors in the community. Shout out to F&M Bank and Loftin Dental for these stockings filled with all kinds of goodies for our clients!

