



Special DELIVERY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2025

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

As spring arrives, it brings a sense of renewal and fresh beginnings for Meals on Wheels Diablo Region. This season of growth and transformation is particularly significant for us as we embark on an exciting journey. You may have heard that we are selling our longtime headquarters at 1300 Civic Drive in Walnut Creek.

This change is not just about moving to a new location. It represents a new chapter for our organization with a renewed commitment to our mission to keep our growing senior population nourished, safe, less isolated, and independent for as long as possible.

With the support of the Board, we're focused on finding a location within the county that will accommodate our evolving needs, enhance our operations, and expand our outreach. We're excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. And we know that our strong foundation will allow us to continue to foster an environment that supports our dedicated volunteers, staff, and the clients who depend on MOW Diablo Region.

In this edition of Special Delivery, you'll meet a Board member who represents the Board's dedication to our mission. You'll see how our Health & Wellness program has made a significant impact on a special group of women. You'll also learn about the support and partnerships we've built with the business community, and their commitment to improving the lives of seniors.

With the energy that springtime brings, we invite our community to join us in this transition. Your support has always been vital to our success, and we look forward to sharing updates on our search and plans. Together, we will continue to nourish and uplift our community as we embrace these new beginnings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'David Linnell'.

David Linnell
Executive Director





NEVER TOO late

It's never too late to become active or to make friends. Paula, Afifa, Mimi, Sue, and Francine can attest to that. A few years ago, they began attending Meals on Wheels Diablo Region's exercise classes. They've not only seen improvements in their health and mobility, they've also become fast friends. The women carpool to the classes in Concord, Antioch, and Pittsburg, and regularly go out to lunch. In June, they will attend the Dining to Deliver Gala together.

The physical benefits of MOW Diablo Region's exercise classes, like Walk with Ease, Bingocize™, Tai Chi, Line Dancing and Young at Heart, and the social connections they've made have given them a renewed sense of purpose.

"After multiple heart surgeries, I was negative and depressed," says Afifa. "My husband encouraged me to go to the classes. It was hard at first, but the instructor Matt was patient, and I got my strength and my hope back. I'm not ready to give up on life, and I credit Meals on Wheels Diablo Region. Now, I am the happiest person in class!"

MOW Diablo Region's CalFresh Healthy Living (SNAP-Ed.) Health and Wellness program's goals are to help older adults improve mobility, strength, cognitive function, emotional well-being, community engagement, and independence, resulting in greater life satisfaction. The team offers their variety of programs in a welcoming and supportive environment for every senior, regardless of their fitness level.

For 84-year-old Sue C., the Health & Wellness classes were the key to bouncing back after knee surgery. "I could hardly take the stairs. I struggled with my balance and worried I might fall. I don't have that problem anymore," she says. Sue's doctors are amazed by her improvement, telling her she seems closer to 70 than mid-80s.

"These classes changed my life," Sue says. "I'm stronger, more active, and happier than ever. Instead of staying home, I now have a full social life. I love the friends I've made. We're a crazy group, but we really care for each other."

Francine R. shares her friend's sentiments. When she lost her husband five years ago, she began visiting the Concord Senior Center hoping to feel part of a community again. She found so much more.

"I started attending the Walk with Ease class to manage my weight, and I found it was nice to be around smiling people. I quickly made new friends who inspire me every day. These women are so positive, and we just lift each other up," Francine shares. "It's incredible how much laughter and friendship can change your life. Laughing is a form of therapy, too."

Francine appreciates that the exercise classes are cost-free and available to all who want to join, creating a welcoming and diverse community that she's grateful to be a part of.

Matt LoPinto, MOW Diablo Region Health & Wellness Program Associate, says it's gratifying to see the improvements in the seniors who attend the classes. "I've known Afifa, Paula, Mimi, Sue, and Francine for two years. I've seen the personal improvements each has made in their physical health. Their balance has improved tenfold, and they've each added core muscle strength, bicep, triceps, as well as shoulder and back strength. What is even nicer is watching their friendship develop, going from strangers two years ago to becoming great friends."

To learn more about MOW Diablo Region's Health & Wellness classes and how you can become part of a group of smiling faces, motivated to challenge yourself while laughing with friends, visit our website at mowdiabloregion.org/exercise-class-schedule.



A PARTNERSHIP TO help seniors

Meals on Wheels Diablo Region is committed to helping our seniors remain independent for as long as possible. In addition to keeping them nourished, we match seniors with community services and resources that will enable them to stay in their homes.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) is collaborating with MOW Diablo Region in 2025 to better serve seniors. As one of eleven community organizations, MOW Diablo Region will support a new PG&E funded Senior Advocate Outreach Program that empowers community-based organizations to spread awareness of energy assistance program and solutions. We encourage you to check if you are eligible for any of these helpful programs offered through PG&E.



Assistance and support options include:

- CARE (www.pge.com/care)
- FERA (www.pge.com/fera)
- The Energy Savings Assistance (www.pge.com/esa)
- Medical Baseline (www.pge.com/medicalbaseline)
- Budget Billing (www.pge.com/budgetbilling)

A MANTRA THAT drives him

Many years ago, Jim Donnelly heard the Dalai Lama impart his wisdom on finding happiness. “If you want to be happy, help someone.” That became the mantra that drives Jim every day.

When Jim retired in 2007, he wanted to help by addressing the needs of seniors. He became involved in Meals on Wheels Diablo Region, which has given him the opportunity to give back in many ways. Jim serves on the Board of Directors, volunteers as a Friendly Helper and a coach for our Fall Prevention Matter of Balance class, and he’s a donor.

“The people I meet, some over 100-years-old, are fascinating,” says Jim. “I get joy from listening to their stories, and they get joy from having someone listen to them.”

Jim’s military background also influenced his decision to offer his time to MOW Diablo Region. “I was proud of serving my country. Then I went to college and bought a house, thanks to the G.I. Bill,” he explains. “I want to contribute in a positive way to society, especially because I received so much.”

As a Board member, Jim helps the organization fulfill its mission, and he finds it a win-win. “Being on the Board is mentally



stimulating,” he says. “You need to make decisions and have a vision for a future that impacts the lives of seniors. I’d recommend joining the Board to anyone who wants an interesting way to make a difference.”

As a donor, Jim’s monthly contributions ensure that MOW Diablo Region can continue to deliver nutritious meals and supportive services to the growing number of seniors within the county. With the increased cost of food and other necessities, more and more seniors are struggling, and Jim’s support makes a significant impact on their lives.

“I believe in the work of MOW Diablo Region,” says Jim. “Volunteering, serving on the Board, and being a donor is so important. It makes me happy to help someone, just like the Dalai Lama said!”



MEALS on WHEELS
DIABLO REGION

1300 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

HAVING FUN FOR a great cause

This year's Annual Dining to Deliver Gala will be held on Saturday, June 14th from 5:30 PM-10:30 PM at the Blackhawk Museum in Danville. We are often told: "It's a great event and by far the best gala!" We like to think so, too, but what's truly great is the support we receive from our community.

In addition to helping us celebrate, our sponsors, donors, and guests also help Meals on Wheels Diablo Region provide free meals and supportive services to the hidden hungry – vulnerable seniors. Last year, the funds we raised from the Gala provided 35,000 meals!

We're excited to share that The Singing Auctioneer, Ellen Toscano, will bring her stunning vocals and incredible energy to the event. Ellen has performed across the Bay Area, including 10 years as a lead in Beach Blanket Babylon, and she was recently named the #1 Auctioneer in the United States. She'll be joined again this year by our Master of Ceremonies Jeff Ranieri, Chief Meteorologist at NBC Bay Area News.

"The Gala is a fun event and a wonderful way to give back to the seniors who gave so much to our communities," says Sherry Nadworny, Director of Development & Community Relations.

For information about becoming a sponsor, donating an item for the silent auction, or purchasing tickets, visit our website at mowdiableregion.org/upcoming-events, or contact Sherry at snadworny@mowdr.org.

