



Dear Friends,

July 1st is the beginning of our fiscal year, a year that will bring increased challenges. The cost of food continues to rise, and more of our older neighbors on a fixed income will undoubtedly reach out to us as they become food insecure. These higher costs not only affect our seniors, but they also have an impact on the price of each meal we deliver.

Escalating prices also come at a time of great uncertainty in funding. Meals on Wheels organizations around the country may face deep cuts from the federal government.

We want to assure the community that Meals on Wheels Diablo Region will be here for our seniors. We have been good stewards of our finances and our donations. And we are confident that our donors will continue to demonstrate the generous support they provided during the pandemic and after the fire at our headquarters.

But there will be consequences from these cuts. Seniors may be on long waiting lists for meals and services, which sadly means more days of experiencing hunger. MOW Diablo Region is an essential part of our community's safety net and, now more than ever, it's important to ensure we will be here for our seniors.

In this edition of Special Delivery, you'll learn about the anniversary of the Breakfast Bag Program, one of our most successful and needed programs in the fight against extreme food insecurity. You'll also read about the anniversary of Impactful Tennis, an ambitious peer-to-peer fundraiser started by incredible high schoolers.

Additionally, you'll find out how you can make a lasting impact on seniors well into the future, and I hope you'll enjoy some highlights from our Dining to Deliver Gala. It was great fun, but more importantly, the funds raised will help us deliver over 30,000 meals and services!

Thank you for all you do for MOW Diablo Region and the seniors who depend on us to live at home, with dignity.

David Linnell
Executive Director

BREAKFAST BAG PROGRAM celebrates 5 years!

When Covid shut down the world in 2020, some Meals on Wheels organizations around the country ceased operations. But not MOW Diablo Region. We are proud that no client missed a home-delivered meal, and that we even added programs – like our Breakfast Bag Program – to keep up with the demand and increased food insecurity.

Celebrating its fifth year, the Breakfast Bag Program has proven to be a resounding success, expanding from a pilot program to delivering more than 118,645 bags to over 800 food insecure seniors in 2024.

The Breakfast Bag Program delivers a week's worth of healthy food. Originally, the bags contained hardboiled eggs, string cheese, yogurt, fresh fruit, oatmeal and a healthy grain. Now they also include snackable vegetables, salads and small sandwiches. Clients report that they feel healthier and hunger-free because they have food they can eat throughout the day.

In February, individual donors joined our Feed the Soul sponsors NBC Bay Area News, Telemundo 48, and Pacific Service Credit Union to help raise \$28,000 in 28 days to support the Breakfast Bag Program. Additional funding comes through the Older American's Act, as well as grants from foundations and corporate partners, including Martinez Refining Company and Marathon Petroleum. But due to cuts from the government, the program is in need of urgent support in order to continue to serve the growing number of very food insecure seniors.

"There is an increased need for Breakfast Bags," says Sherry Nadworny, Director of Development & Community Relations. "The support of the community and our partners has helped the program grow, but now more than ever, our older neighbors shouldn't have to ration food or be left to experience hunger."

"I used to worry about not having enough food to get through the week, but now I have peace of mind."



WITH HELP FROM our friends

It was the summer of 2020. We were all sheltering-in-place, and the demand for home-delivered meals skyrocketed. While our older neighbors were especially vulnerable during the pandemic, children were impacted, too, as summer activities quickly shut down.

When everything seemed the worst for old and young alike, we received a phone call from Jake Hammerman. Jake was a student at Campolindo High School and a member of the school's tennis team. He and his teammates formed a group called Impactful Tennis to give tennis lessons to keep kids outdoors and engaged. Instead of charging for the lessons, Impactful Tennis asked the parents to donate to MOW Diablo Region. The goal was to raise \$10,000.

We were thrilled, although a little skeptical that Jake could meet his ambitious target. As it turned out, Impactful Tennis lived up to its name and its goal that summer, raising over \$11,000, garnering national media attention, and earning Jake a Youth Hall of Fame Volunteerism Award from Contra Costa County.

Peer-to-Peer Fundraising

With Impactful Tennis, Jake created a wonderful example of peer-to-peer fundraising. The team effort not only positively impacted children, it grew into something even more meaningful by raising vital funds to help seniors who relied on MOW Diablo Region.

Peer-to-peer fundraising can be a fun, rewarding way to give back to MOW Diablo Region and introduce friends and family to our mission. And it can be easy, too. Some of our donors have asked their social networks to donate to us in lieu of birthday presents. Others have created fundraisers around marathons, bike races, and personal challenges. Joubin Pakpour motivated his friends to donate by giving them the opportunity to choose his next hairstyle (it turned out to be a pink mohawk) and raised over \$8,000!

Making a Difference

For Jake, fundraising was a way to make a difference in his community. He chose MOW Diablo Region because of his close relationship with his grandparents and his understanding of the challenges seniors face, especially with food insecurity. "Impactful Tennis addressed two pressing needs during a time of increased social isolation: providing kids with an engaging outdoor activity, and supporting homebound, vulnerable seniors," says Jake. "I am proud that what began as a small idea has grown into something lasting and deeply meaningful."

The Impactful Tennis program enters its 6th season and has raised close to \$50,000 for MOW Diablo Region since the program began. Visit Impactful Tennis at impactfultennis.org/ to learn more about the organization. To find out how MOW Diablo Region can help you create your own peer-to-peer fundraiser, contact visit mowdiableregion.org/peer-to-peer or contact the Development Team at development@mowdr.org

A PARTNERSHIP TO help seniors

Dining, dancing, laughter, and generous bidding were on full display at the 4th Annual Dining to Deliver Gala & Auction. But even with the merriment, guests understood the increased challenges seniors currently face. In response to the uncertainty around programs that allow our older neighbors to live independently with dignity, Gala attendees truly delivered! The event was the most successful in Meals on Wheels Diablo Region's history.

In addition to our guests, MOW Diablo Region received overwhelming support from the business community, who donated auction items and sponsored the event.

Over the years, PG&E has been a great supporter of MOW Diablo Region, and this year they stepped up again by becoming the Diamond Sponsor.

"As a Board member, I see the incredible services MOW Diablo Region provides," says Sarah Yoell, Local Government Affairs Manager for Pacific Gas & Electricity. "PG&E has a commitment to helping seniors, and we are pleased that our support of the Dining to Deliver Gala will have a positive impact on our older neighbors."





MEALS on WHEELS
DIABLO REGION

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A LASTING impact

In these times of uncertainty, many people have reached out to MOW Diablo Region to ask what they can do. We are grateful that the community understands the importance of our work and has generously donated throughout the years, especially in the most difficult times.

In addition to a cash donation, giving a non-cash asset, such as a gift of stock, a gift from an IRA, or a grant from a Donor-Advised Fund provides immediate support to MOW Diablo Region's vital programs and services.

Also, August is Make-a-Will Month. MOW Diablo Region has partnered with the cost-free estate planning tool FreeWill to assist those who want to create a legacy that will have an impact well into the future. By going to FreeWill.com, you can make a will, name a beneficiary of your life insurance, make gifts of retirement funds, or create a living trust in as little as 20 minutes.

Every donation to MOW Diablo Region is an investment in our future ability to keep seniors nourished, safe, engaged, and independent with dignity. Thank you for sharing our commitment to be here for our seniors today, tomorrow, and in the years to come!

