MEALS on WHEELS
DIABLO REGION

Special DELIVERY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2024



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

In the few short months since I joined Meals on Wheels Diablo Region, I've had a chance to meet many of our nonprofit partners, elected officials, and community leaders. They have reinforced what I already knew about the organization – that we are highly regarded in the county and a lifeline for not only our seniors, but also for their adult children who worry about aging parents.

I've also had the opportunity to meet our volunteers and donors. Their help and support allow us to keep up with the growing demand for our free meals and supportive services. This is particularly crucial as needs continue to increase while funding decreases. Working closely with the Board and our amazing staff to address these challenges, I am humbled to be in the company of such excellent and dedicated individuals.

The people who have touched me the most are the seniors I've met whose lives we impact every day. They value their independence, and many have told me how much they appreciate remaining in their homes, surrounded by their cherished possessions and happy memories, thanks to Meals on Wheels Diablo Region.

In this edition of Special Delivery, you will meet one such client who, because of the work we do, is able to age at home with dignity. You will see how we celebrate our fantastic volunteers, who are sometimes the only people our seniors interact with all day. And you'll meet our new Nutrition Manager and learn why she is just as proud as I am to work at MOW Diablo Region.

Thank you to everyone for welcoming me into this community and making me feel at home.

From my home to yours, I wish you all a Happy New Year!

David Linnell
Executive Director



AN ATTITUDE OF gratitude

Janis F's life has always been about caring for others. For 30 years she loved being a vocational nurse while balancing the demands of raising two children as a single mother. "I still think of my patients and their families," she shares. "I really cared for them."

Frightened when the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake rocked the Bay Area, Janis moved her family from Pleasant Hill to the Sacramento area. There, she found a community and a home she cherished for three decades. But a few years ago, a cancer diagnosis brought her back to Contra Costa County. Adjusting to her small apartment in Danville wasn't easy and battling stage IV cancer made it harder for 82-year-old Janis to maintain her independence. Because she no longer drives, getting food became a daily struggle.

That's when Meals on Wheels Diablo Region stepped in. For the past few months, Janis has relied on our home-delivered meals, which she says have been life-changing. She appreciates the variety of food, like salads, fruit, bread, and milk, and makes a point of not letting anything go to waste. With so much going on in her life, Janis finds comfort in knowing she's getting balanced meals delivered right to her door. She no longer worries about preparing food when she lacks the time or energy.

"I keep a gratitude list, and Meals on Wheels Diablo Region is right at the top," Janis shares. "I don't know what I'd do without them."

Despite her health challenges, Janis has formed strong bonds with her neighbors and is grateful to have her family and a supportive cancer care team nearby. Through it all, her "attitude of gratitude" remains her guiding principle. "I try to go outside, look at the blue sky, and truly appreciate how blue it is. It sounds cliché, but I really do stop and smell the roses because I'm grateful to see them."

Meals on Wheels Diablo Region has become an essential part of Janis' life, helping her maintain her strength. Every friendly knock at the door delivers the nutrition she needs to keep her going.

A NEW FACE IN nutrition

Fernanda (Fern) Fonseca recently joined MOW Diablo Region as Nutrition Division Manager. She comes to the organization with extensive managerial, fiscal, and logistics experience. Fern's leadership skills were developed during her 30-year career at Costco, where she gained diverse experience in almost every department.

In her new role, Fern will manage all Nutrition programs and staff, including home delivered meals, cultural cuisine, breakfast bags, grocery bags, and cafés. "MOW Diablo Region's mission is truly inspiring, and I consider it a privilege to use my experience to help ensure vulnerable seniors remain nourished and independent."



VOLUNTEER appreciation

The famous American anthropologist, Margaret Mead wrote: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

At Meals on Wheels Diablo Region more than 500 volunteers are changing the world by making a difference in the lives of vulnerable seniors. Without these thoughtful and committed individuals, we could not do our important work of ensuring that our older neighbors remain nourished, safe, less isolated, and independent for as long as possible.

We honored our volunteers in September at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. The volunteer time commitment can be as little as two hours a week, but the rewards are huge. To learn more about becoming a MOW Diablo Region volunteer contact volunteer@mowdr.org or call Nick Chang at 925-954-8736.















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1300 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

VIRTUE & VICE = successful fundraiser

Meals on Wheels Diablo Region was pleased to partner with Virtue & Vice in Danville for their Dine for a Cause Fundraiser on October 16th. Our staff and loyal volunteers waited tables and, for their efforts, Virtue & Vice donated 10% of the bill and 100% of the tips. Additionally, an anonymous donor offered a $3,000 match! Thank you to everyone who supported us by dining out that night. And thank you to Virtue & Vice for being wonderful to work with and providing an incredible dining experience. It was truly a yummy way to help our seniors!



Scan the QR code to donate.