



MORE THAN MEALS

- Home Delivered Meals
- Wellness & Safety Checks
- Community Café
- Outreach Services & More...

Our Mission

We are driven by a passionate belief that senior citizens deserve to lead happy, healthy and above all, meaningful lives. From nearly 50 years of experience, we know the best way to accomplish this: By doing everything we can to keep them in the environment where they're most comfortable—at home.

SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER

Community Café
Events

Board
Corner

Voice Behind
The Meals

Meals on Wheels of Ocean County is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

All programs are partially funded under Title III of the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, and the Ocean County Board of Commissioners.

Donations to support our programs and services are tax deductible.



More Than Meals...

Community Café Re-Opens

With the ceremonial red ribbon and scissors in hand, members of the Ocean County Board of Commissioners, Community Services Inc., Meals on Wheels of Ocean County and a host of others recently joined to celebrate the reopening of the Ocean County Senior Nutrition Site at the Ocean County Southern Service Center, 179 South Main Street, here.

“The Community Café not only serves hot and nutritious meals five days a week, but it also serves as a place to spend time with friends and family,” said James G. Sigurdson, Executive Director of Meals on Wheels of Ocean County. “We are grateful for the ongoing and generous support of the County Commissioners, the Office of Senior Services, our many community partners, and dedicated staff who contribute to our success.”

Called the Community Café, senior citizens can come to share a meal, participate in on-site activities, and socialize once again, following a two-year closure during the Coronavirus pandemic.

“When we opened this Senior Nutrition Site in 2019, nobody imagined having to shut it down a year later due a global pandemic,” said Ocean County Commissioner Joseph H. Vicari, who serves as Chairman of Ocean County Senior Services. “It’s important that our seniors can once again travel and socialize, and we are happy to provide a location for them to do so.”

The Community Café is available to Ocean County residents who are 60 years of age or older, can provide transportation to and from the site, and can take care of themselves while at the site. No payment is required but each participant is asked to make a \$2 donation towards the cost of the meal. To reserve a spot, seniors can call 609-978-6866.



Voice Behind the Meals

“Good morning. Thank you for calling Meals on Wheels of Ocean County. This is Patty, how may I help you?”

For the last 8 years, this has become the way I start my day and I am truly blessed to be a part of this wonderful organization. From the first day in April of 2014 to now, I can honestly say that I have never been happier in my life. I have met so many wonderful seniors since then and I am grateful for every moment, every call, every connection.

The minute I start my day, I am in constant contact with drivers, clients, and family members. We, myself and my partner, Austin, answer approximately 75 phone calls daily. Whether it’s a question of qualification or a call to say someone won’t be home, we talk to a variety of people. We work closely with our drivers when a crisis arrives or if they have a client who just didn’t answer the door. We do our best to keep the lines of communication open and get people started on the program as soon as possible.



More Than Meals...

Voice con't.

I have met so many wonderful people throughout the years. One of my most memorable clients is a woman who was the 1st female car saleswoman in the State of New Jersey. Our conversations started on a question of other programs and grew to weekly calls about nothing and everything all at once. She had an opinion on everything, and I loved our debates.

I am a huge believer of the statement that we are **More Than a Meal**. A driver and I saved a clients' life a few years ago. He was a new client that I had grown fond of and spoke with on a weekly basis as he used to be a musician and we both loved music. He had a history of falling, but on this day, the driver was really concerned about him and called 911. When EMS arrived, they had informed the driver he had been minutes away from dying as his kidneys were only functioning at 5% and were shutting down. I called his brother to alert him of what had happened. His brother came to the office the following week to thank me and the driver for saving his brothers' life. He felt if we hadn't taken the moment to see a difference in his brother's behavior and had not reached out to him to apprise him of the situation, his brother may not be here today. On a side note, the client is now in a long-term care facility, we speak a couple of times a month, and he is thriving.

I am lucky enough to work in a site that also has the Community Café right next door. Every day, I get to sit and see a group of seniors who truly touch my heart. We laugh, joke around, and share stories as I spend a moment with them, before heading back to my office. I get to see their joy when they complete a project and hear the laughter when they play chair volleyball, which I am always invited to join in. The camaraderie that they share with me always brightens my day.



Patty with Community Café participant Felix

I could go on for hours and share hundreds of special moments or lifesaving stories. Alas, my phone is always ringing, and I get to meet someone new or share a moment with someone I've already met. To me, every day that I wake up and take a breath, is a day to be grateful for another chance to make someone smile or laugh. I look forward to many years of answering phones and helping people start our program.

Senior Prom

On June 22nd, the Community Café hosted the First Annual Senior Prom. The theme was red-carpet, and all our participants dressed in their best and ate and danced the day away. Prom attendees had lunch provided by Jersey Mike's of Manahawkin courtesy of Complete Care Holiday City and were serenaded by Andrew who performs frequently for our Café members. They were even surprised when State Farm presented a check for \$25,000 from the Neighborhood Assistance Program.

Many men of the Cafe were excited to have this opportunity because when they were growing up, they had to drop out of school and go to work to help their families, so they did not have a prom. "This meant so much to me, the best part was being crowned King" said Café attendee Max.

"Events like the Senior Prom make our jobs worth it just to see the smiles on everyone's faces," said Lorraine who co-manages the Community Café. Ginny, one of the ladies attending said, "The Senior Prom brought back fond memories, I enjoyed every minute of it."





More Than Meals...

State Farm Awards \$25,000 Grant

Meals on Wheels of Ocean County proudly accepted a grant for the "Pick Up The Tab" program from State Farm Neighborhood Assist Program which awarded 100 non-profits across the country with \$25,000. In just 10 days this spring, 88,000 people cast more than 2 million votes in support of their favorite causes. State Farm Neighborhood Assist is a crowd-sourced philanthropic program. It empowers communities to identify issues in their neighborhoods.

Board of Directors Chair, Wyatt Earp expressed his appreciation of this award, "Meals on Wheels of Ocean County serves nearly 1,000 meals a day to 1,500 Ocean County Seniors. This \$25,000 for "Pick Up the Tab" covers the \$2 donation we ask from our seniors for 12,500 meals."

"State Farm is happy to celebrate its 100th anniversary by providing these 100 causes with grant money to help them address the needs in their communities," said Rasheed Merritt, Assistant Vice President at State Farm. "We look forward to seeing the impact these \$25,000 grants will have."

Four Thousand cause submissions were accepted in February and the State Farm Review Committee selected the top 200 finalists and public voting determined the 100 grant winners. In the 11 years of the program, nearly 500 causes have received a total of \$12.5 million to enact change in their communities.



Board Corner

Message from Board Member Pauline Wallace

Just before the COVID pandemic began, I was visiting a lady friend from church. We sat at her kitchen table, sharing a pot of tea while she worked on her knitting, and I worked on my counted cross stitch project. We chatted and stitched for a bit and then her doorbell rang. She told me it was her Meals on Wheels driver delivering her meal. I sat in the kitchen while she answered the door, and I must admit I wanted to hear their conversation.

He asked her how she was feeling, what was she doing, and how did she plan to spend the rest of her day. They spoke for about 5 minutes or so and then the driver needed to leave for his next recipient.

Here was my cue! I went to the door and introduced myself to the driver as a Meals on Wheels Board Member. He seemed a bit taken aback, and I told him that on behalf of the Board, I appreciated all that he was doing as a part of our program. I told him that I considered him one of our "unsung heroes". For some of our Seniors, that driver may be the only human contact of the day. That driver made sure he not only delivered the meal, but he showed his care and concern for my church friend.

John Wesley once wrote:
"Dear God,
Guide me to do all the good I can,
By all the means I can,
In all ways I can,
In all places I can
At all times I can,
To all people I can,
As long as I can."

And that, my friends, is all we can ask of ourselves and for others.



Board Member Pauline Wallace second from the left, bottom row.