



2023 was quite a year! The need for Meals on Wheels of Ocean County has continued to grow (we served nearly 250,000 meals!) and we are seeing that more and more seniors who are facing food insecurity are turning to us to help fill the large nutrition and ongoing social isolation gap that our homebound older adults are experiencing. We have continued to expand the number of meals delivered and served as well as adding new programs to cement our standing as being "**More Than Meals.**"

Since 1973, Meals on Wheels of Ocean County has fed the social, nutritional, spiritual, and general well-being of older adults in Ocean County. Our mission is to ensure that older Americans can age with dignity, have choices in managing their own lives, and remain active and independent within their communities and most importantly, be where they are most comfortable – their own Home.

Meals on Wheels of Ocean County is **not** an entitlement program and **not** part of a government entity. We are a nonprofit organization and a member of Meals on Wheels of America national organization. Our funding comes from grants and donations from our friends and neighbors and if our funding runs out, Meals on Wheels goes away.

#### ***It's that simple.***

All we ask is for meal recipients to consider giving a small donation of \$2 per meal to help defray the cost and only 65% of our seniors can afford the nominal meal donation. To continue providing these meals, we established our **Pick Up the Tab** (PUTT) program for those who cannot afford the suggested donation.

nutritional risk and 100% are frail and vulnerable. The program fills a large gap in service by addressing not only senior nutritional needs but also those of the disabled that would otherwise fall to the State, County, or Municipal Governments at a cost to Ocean County's taxpayers.

In 2023 the Community Café had over 200 senior participants of socialization, education, recreation, and physical activities in a safe and healthy setting. With nearly 182,000 Ocean County adults over the age of 60, social services remain nonstop and this last year our outreach workers helped more than 900 older adults with information and assistance.

Meals on Wheels of Ocean County also provides "blizzard bags" in cases of inclement weather should meal delivery be interrupted. Also, during the summer months fresh fruit and vegetable vouchers are available and distributed for those who are most in need. We are always thankful for our local community groups, such as the Girl Scouts or Seaport Stitchers Guild or Stiches by Debbie, who provide cards, placemats, and knitting items to gift to our participants.

Today, Meals on Wheels of Ocean County provides **More Than Meals** with our Home Delivered Meals, Community Café and Social Services to the senior residents who are 60 and older. Our drivers become a familiar friendly face to our older residents, and they not only deliver the meal and a smile but the important daily safety and wellness check that our seniors and their loved ones depend on.

At Meals on Wheels of Ocean County we strive to continue our

