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*Nourishing the Whole Person*  
**www.mowsf.org**



photo credit: Lee Flynn

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Editor: Karen Gordon

Design: Kari Stevens Design



# NOURISH

Celebrating 40 Years of Service

Spring 2011

## One Senior's Amazing Power of Attitude

**Y**vonne is a petite woman at 4'11" and 96 lbs, but her personality and enthusiasm are anything but small. Her upbringing and positive attitude have helped her lead an exciting life despite her physical limitations and multitude of health challenges. "I was born with perseverance," she exclaims.

Growing up in a small town in Arkansas, Yvonne was very fortunate to have a supportive family and a good education. She learned to appreciate the small things in life. After taking some business classes, she decided to move to San Francisco to live with her father. Following several temporary jobs, she found a "home" with the federal government. Her first department was Veterans Affairs, followed by an eight year position with the Navy in Norfolk, Virginia, and then back to San Francisco to work for the IRS.

### "I was born with perseverance!"

After retirement, Yvonne kept busy with various volunteer jobs. As part of the Network for Elders, an organization providing support and care for seniors, she wrote a column for seniors in the Bayview neighborhood newspaper. She also participated in a mission at a neighborhood church to teach women how to be more effective with their partners and in life in general. Yvonne continues to be as active as possible with her high school alumni group. They work to give back to the teens in their hometown by organizing fundraisers for college tuition.



As she ages, Yvonne suffers from more than her fair share of health conditions and physical disabilities. She was born with a deformity in both arms, has had multiple replacement surgeries (hip, feet, ankle, and left shoulder), arthritis, a history of breast cancer, cataracts, and high blood pressure. She uses a cane now and has a harder time doing

things for herself. Getting around can be really difficult, but with a smile she says, "Sure, I am in pain sometimes, but if I can get dressed in the morning, I'm ready to go!" It was during this period she realized she needed help with simple tasks like shopping and cooking. Meals On Wheels was there for her.

Last April, Yvonne experienced a bad fall on the way to church and injured her head and neck. With extensive injuries, she needed to have neck and spine surgery immediately,

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**In the past five years, the need for our services has grown by 30% as more baby boomers are reaching retirement. We must ensure that no senior in San Francisco goes hungry.**

# Nutrition Notes

## Good Nutrition = Good Health

Good nutrition is one of the key ingredients of good health. All of our clients are physically challenged due to a variety of conditions including kidney disease, heart disease, cancer, vision loss and diabetes. It is our mission to provide two nutritious meals every day of the week, 365 days a year, that meet the diabetic, low-sodium, and mechanically softened needs of our diverse clients. Our Nutrition Department monitors the kitchen and oversees menu planning. We strive to provide meals that reflect the health, medical conditions and cultural diversity of our clients. For example, we serve chicken chow mein, beef enchiladas, and Korean BBQ chicken. Recently we increased fresh fruits and vegetables and non-processed meat and moved away from breaded and starchy foods. All our food is either steamed or baked. Soon, we will be rolling out a new seasonal menu that focuses on more local, sustainable food.



*Client Bernice enjoying her meal.*

## Nutrition Tip: Focus on Variety



Eat a variety of foods from all the food groups to get the nutrients your body needs. Include more dark green vegetables such as leafy greens and broccoli, and orange vegetables like carrots and sweet potatoes. Vary your protein choices with more fish, beans and peas. And, eat at least 3 ounces of whole grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice or pasta every day. One ounce is approximately 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of breakfast cereal or 1/2 cup cooked rice, cereal or pasta.

**March is National  
Nutrition Month**

## Did You Know?

- More than 85% of older adults have one or more chronic conditions that could be improved by good nutrition.
- Malnutrition in older adults can lead to slower healing rates, increased risk for medical and surgical complications, delayed recovery from traumas, increased length of hospital stays and increased re-admission rates.
- The cost of providing MOWSF home-delivered meals for one year is equal to the cost of a one-day stay in the hospital.



### Meet Larry

Larry was living on a \$845 a month – that's just \$28 per day for food, household expenses and his increasing medical needs. Unable to make ends meet, Larry ate popcorn three or more times per day – and became very weak and depressed. He desperately needed the nutritious food and special friendship that comes from Meals On Wheels – and we are happy to extend a helping hand. Because of your support, MOWSF is able to care for 1,783 homebound seniors like Larry every day.

## End Notes

We receive many thank you notes from our seniors throughout the year. Although they are mailed to us, they are really meant for you.

Dear Meals on Wheels,  
 you are right, I do enjoy the smile  
 and cheerfulness of your Drivers.  
 The "Meals on Wheels" food always puts a  
 smile on my face.  
 your operation is well managed and consistently  
 as I receive the delivery at almost the same  
 time each day.  
 Thanks to every member of "Meals on Wheels".  
 Sincerely,  
 Mary E. ...

The MOWSF 2010 Annual Report is now available on our website,  
[www.mowsf.org](http://www.mowsf.org).



**With your help, we've accomplished the following:**

- Delivered over 922,530 meals in San Francisco in 2010. On average, this is 1,700 clients a day and over 2,400 unduplicated clients annually.
- Exceeded our fundraising goals and raised over \$6.1 million, with more than half (57%) coming from private individuals, foundations, and corporations.
- Increased the amount per dollar that goes directly to meal delivery and services for clients to 84¢.

**Thank you for your generous support!**



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 415-920-1111

Nourish is the official newsletter of Meals On Wheels of San Francisco. Our mission is to provide isolated, homebound seniors in San Francisco with nutritious meals, daily human contact and supportive services.

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# Events and Happenings

## THE GALA OF THE YEAR

**Sunday, May 15**

Start shopping for your dress and get out your tuxedo because the 24th Annual Star Chefs & Vintners Gala is less than two months away – Sunday, May 15th from 5 – 11pm at the Festival Pavilion at Fort Mason. For the eighth year, Chef Nancy Oakes of Boulevard will lead the most illustrious line-up of culinary talent in Northern California, in addition to some of the finest wineries this area has to offer. It's an epicurean extravaganza with amazing auction items you will not want to miss! Support from last year's event raised over \$1.24 million, enough funding to provide 300,000 home-delivered meals to frail, isolated seniors in San Francisco.



### Event Highlights

- ★ Chefs from over 90 of the best restaurants in Northern California come together to create an evening of epicurean excellence.
- ★ 70 local wineries showcase their best and brightest wines and bubbly, and star bartenders create delicious cocktails too.
- ★ Hors d'oeuvres & Wine Reception
- ★ Live & Silent Auctions
- ★ Three-Course Dinner
- ★ Decadent Dessert Reception
- ★ Music & Dancing

Gala tickets, patron packages, and sponsorships are now available and may be purchased at [www.mowsf.org](http://www.mowsf.org) or by calling 415-920-1111.



**Save the Date!**

**SF CHEFS 2011**

**August 1 – 7, 2011**

Sample signature tastes from some of SF's best chefs. Proceeds from the silent auction benefit MOWSF.



# Staff Spotlight

## Our Social Workers Go Above and Beyond

Lara Medvedeva, is an integral part of the MOWSF staff since she started in 2007. In honor of National Social Work Month, she answers questions about her role as a social worker, especially working with seniors.

### How would you describe your job in three words?

Compassionate, respectful, and helpful.

### What is a typical day for you?

Every day is different. I routinely check emails and messages throughout the day, making notes, updating the client database, and working closely with other San Francisco agencies. I visit on average 12 seniors a week and each visit ranges from 30 minutes to one hour depending on their needs. In addition, I schedule visits for new clients and follow-up with current clients.

### What is the best part of your job?

Seeing many people from different cultures. I like that I can use all my skills. Visiting clients—helping them and being there to listen. They also help me by sharing their experiences.

### What are some of your challenges?

It's hard to "turn-off" your feelings once the day is done. I want to be able to help all my clients. I focus on what I can do and not what I cannot.

### Is there a senior who made a lasting impression on you?

Mr. S is an 84 year old, retired professor from City College who has Parkinson's disease and diabetes. He loves to travel and just last year, he took a cruise to South Africa with friends. Even with his limited ability to care for himself, he is an inspiration to me to live life to the fullest. I also like hearing about his incredible journeys.



*Lara Medvedeva in the office.*

**Our social workers  
made over 2,200  
home visits last year.**



*Senior social worker Kristi Hirsch is conducting a home visit with Kee, a client for six years.*



*Robin Meese-Cruz (right), Director of Social Work, poses with one of her clients, Iona.*

# Volunteer News

## Sometimes Volunteers Save Lives

Meals On Wheels of San Francisco client John speaks highly of his volunteer match, Mary. Mary has been a Volunteer Grocery Shopper for John for over a year and a half and John couldn't be more pleased. "She is just an extraordinary person, and so considerate. She is extremely reliable and always on time. She makes sure that I get everything I want or need. And if there is something that I don't remember that I need, she remembers." Last month, Victor, a MOWSF social worker, received a call from Mary, asking him to check in on John. She had just spoken with John on the phone and he mentioned that he had fallen, but that

he was okay now. Mary felt compelled to call MOWSF because "he just didn't sound right." After speaking with John, Victor couldn't hear anything wrong, but at Mary's insistence he called John's daughter to let her know what happened. The daughter called her father and agreed that "something seemed wrong." She stopped by her father's house and took him to the hospital immediately. It was discovered that he had suffered a minor stroke. John is now home again and doing very well. The MOWSF staff definitely agrees with John's claim that "if everybody was as sweet and thoughtful as Mary, the world would be a much better place."

## Help us Meet our Clients' *Other* Needs



*Volunteer Stephen picking up a microwave for delivery.*

Meals On Wheels delivers to over 1,700 homebound seniors around the city, 70% of whom live alone and rarely see anyone other than our drivers and volunteers. Beyond isolation, many of our clients face extreme poverty and have many unmet needs. MOWSF helps out by providing basic necessities and safety items. Last month alone, we furnished 17 clients with microwaves, 5 clients with mini-refrigerators and many more with various household items. We need volunteers to help with the leg-work, who can pick up items from our office and deliver them to our various clients all over the city. If you have a car and can come to our office during business hours (8:30-4:30) Monday through Friday to pick up items for delivery, this is a wonderful way to make a big impact! This is a flexible opportunity where you arrange a time that works best for you and the client for delivery and installation. For more information, contact Danie Belfield, Volunteer Associate at 415-343-1311 or [dbelfield@mowsf.org](mailto:dbelfield@mowsf.org).

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with several months of follow-up physical therapy. Unfortunately the cost was out of her fixed budget and with no easy way to get to therapy on a daily basis, her recovery was slow and painful.

As time went by, Yvonne wasn't feeling like her jovial self. Thankfully, her MOWSF driver noticed these changes in Yvonne and contacted Lara, her MOWSF social worker. With Lara's help, Yvonne received the medical attention she desperately needed, regained weight, and felt like the black cloud had lifted.

Because of MOWSF, Yvonne not only receives nutritious meals, but also daily safety checks from our professional and caring drivers. In addition, through our volunteer services Yvonne was matched with a friendly visitor and a grocery shopper, who she sees once a week. "I'm so glad you're (MOWSF) out there. I've learned that it's not just meals—you go way beyond that!"

Now at 70, Yvonne is enjoying life as a senior. She's happy, thankful, and looks back on the past events with a good sense of humor. "Laughter really is the best medicine!"

**A recent study on aging found that optimism and the positive impact it has on brain health is much more important in aging successfully than any other factors, including the presence of physical disability or disease.**

# Ways to Give and Give Back

## Join the Supper Club



Join the Meals On Wheels Supper Club, our monthly giving program to provide nutritious meals and supportive services for homebound seniors year-round. Your ongoing contribution will go further by creating a reliable source of support. Knowing we can count on your contribution each month helps us budget for the programs that are vital to our overall goal of making sure no senior goes hungry. This program also reduces the need for mail or paper, ultimately saving trees. We'll take you off our mailing list for funding requests and send you a tax receipt letter totaling your contributions at the end of the year. For more information or to sign-up, contact Karen Gordon, Manager of Annual Fund and Communications at 415-343-1279 or [kgordon@mowsf.org](mailto:kgordon@mowsf.org).

## Involve Your Company

**Designate MOWSF as your charity of choice through your workplace giving program or through portals such as [justgive.org](http://justgive.org) and United Way of the Bay Area. Most of these programs match contributions dollar for dollar, and some will even double or triple the amount of your gift.**

## Fund the future of MOWSF through the Legacy Society.

- Name Meals On Wheels of San Francisco in your will, living trust, or life insurance policy. You can designate a specific amount, real estate, or a percentage of your assets.
  - Designate a gift that gives you income for life including charitable gifts annuities, charitable remainder trusts, or pooled income funds,
  - Create a legacy by naming MOWSF as a beneficiary of an IRA, 401K, or other retirement plan. When a retirement account is left to a charity, the organization does not pay the income tax otherwise due if left to a friend or family member.
- To learn more about the MOWSF Legacy Society, contact Jessica Sweedler, Senior Director of Development at 415-343-1283 or [jsweedler@mowsf.org](mailto:jsweedler@mowsf.org).

## Befriend a Senior

**Volunteers are at the heart of our mission. Our seniors greatly benefit from the one-on-one companionship and service assistance that only committed volunteers can provide. For more information about our various volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups, please visit [www.mowsf.org/volunteer](http://www.mowsf.org/volunteer) or call Leslie Nipps, Director of Volunteer Services at 415-343-1325 or [lnipps@mowsf.org](mailto:lnipps@mowsf.org).**

Attend our Upcoming Events (see next page)