



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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***** PRESS RELEASE*****

MEALS ON WHEELS SAN FRANCISCO HONORS MARCH FOR MEALS WITH ONE YEAR LOOK BACK AT THE PANDEMIC

One year and 2.4 million meals, Meals on Wheels San Francisco reports serving nearly three times the number of people in need of meals and groceries in 2020.

San Francisco, CA – Meals on Wheels San Francisco (MOWSF) a nonprofit organization that produces and delivers millions of meals to the doorsteps of the homes of thousands of older San Franciscans, will move its annual participation of March for Meals with city leaders to a virtual event during the month of March, sharing with them valuable information and insights about senior food insecurity in San Francisco, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. March for Meals is a national awareness campaign recognizing the amended Older Americans Act of 1965 which paved the way for funding for national nutrition programs for seniors 60 years and older.

“The San Franciscans we serve are older adults who are disproportionately poor and isolated, and in many cases, are getting by on less than \$1,000 a month,” said Ashley McCumber, executive director and CEO of Meals on Wheels San Francisco. “Senior poverty and hunger had been deeply troubling community issues in the City before COVID; now with the pandemic, these inequities in access to resources and services, particularly for the black and brown communities we serve, are emerging crises.”

In 2020, Meals on Wheels San Francisco provided home-delivered meals and groceries to nearly three times the number of people as a result of the pandemic. During the year, following strict COVID safety protocols, staff and volunteers delivered 2.4 million meals and groceries to a total of 16,462 people including those impacted directly by COVID-19. Of the 16,462 San Franciscans in need of meals, 5,226 were aged 60 and older. For comparison, in 2019, the organization served a total of 4,300 homebound seniors and adults with disabilities.

As part of San Francisco’s COVID-19 response, in June, MOWSF partnered with the City’s COVID Command Center to manage the Isolation and Quarantine (IQ) Food Helpline. This program reduces the spread of COVID-19 by providing an IQ Helpline for all San Francisco residents who are food

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insecure and require food assistance to help them remain in isolation or quarantine. The program includes the provision of nutritious meals and groceries and case management services. Thru this program, Meals on Wheels San Francisco produced and delivered more than 63,000 meals during the pandemic to 11,236 individuals of all ages (children and adults.) Additionally, staff delivered nearly 20,000 bags of groceries provided by the SF-Marin Food Bank.

Pre-pandemic, March for Meals activities in San Francisco included in-person visits and meal deliveries between elected officials and homebound seniors, building awareness around senior nutrition inequities and helping to decrease isolation that many older adults experience. While COVID vaccinations are rolling out for older San Franciscans, and virus case counts are dropping, safety remains the number one priority and as such for a second year, MOWSF will forgo in-person visits and activities for this event until next year.

Since 2002, community-based Meals on Wheels programs from across the country have joined forces for the annual March for Meals awareness campaign to celebrate this successful public-private partnership and garner the support needed to fill the gap between the seniors served and those still in need.

A summary of Meals on Wheels San Francisco's continued COVID-19 response can be found at: <https://www.mowsf.org/coronavirus>

About Meals on Wheels San Francisco:

In 2020, Meals on Wheels San Francisco (MOWSF) celebrated 50 years of providing older adults residing in the City with what they need to live independent and dignified lives in their homes. The nonprofit, in partnership with the City and County of San Francisco, operates a robust daily home-delivered meals program for thousands of older adults, generally aged 60 and older, who are homebound and food insecure. Yearly, MOWSF produces and delivers more than 2 million medically tailored meals and is the only organization in San Francisco that can offer two or more delivered meals daily to those in need. MOWSF also provides nutrition counseling and social work services and operates a weekly, home-delivered groceries program, in conjunction with the SF-Marin Food Bank, for approximately 500 seniors. In 2020, the organization opened a new industrial kitchen and food distribution center that will have the capability of producing 30,000 meals daily – three times the number of meals it was able to produce in its previous kitchen. Learn how you can get involved at www.MOWSF.org.

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