

SUMMER 2020

A NEWSLETTER FOR CLIENTS OF MEALS ON WHEELS SAN FRANCISCO

## SERVING OUR COMMUNITY DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

When San Francisco went into coronavirus-induced shelter-in-place lockdown on March 17, Meals on Wheels San Francisco was at the ready to provide an emergency response.

Our goal as a safety net organization was (and remains) to produce and deliver meals to thousands of older adults who rely on us every day, and to ensure they are safe in their homes. In order to do this, we had to make sure our staff were safe, and our operations and procedures were adjusted to accommodate an insidious virus.

As many seniors stayed in their homes for their safety, requests for Meals on Wheels services increased. **Within the past few months, we've brought on more than 1,000 new senior clients in need of meals.** We continue to deliver meals daily to nearly 4,000 homebound seniors and adults with disabilities.

**Here's what we're doing during COVID-19:**



- Implemented extra protocols around washing hands, regular daily cleaning and disinfecting of work areas as well as delivery vehicles.
- Increased meal production from 8,000 meals to 10,000+ meals a day to accommodate the need.
- Increased client assessments by 200% and implemented a virtual safety check program for our most vulnerable seniors.
- Prepared 3,000 shelf-stable boxes of meals that can last one adult for a week in the event of an emergency.
- MOWSF drivers have adopted social distancing practices to include no contact deliveries.
- Redesigned our entire delivery routes system and implementation of a new menu.

Thank you for your flexibility and support as we continue to refine our operations during COVID-19 and ensure you receive the nutritious meals and check-ins you count on. Read more at: **[MOWSF.org/coronavirus](https://www.mowsf.org/coronavirus)**.

### COVID-19 Resources and Information:

- Sign up for text alerts by texting COVID19SF to phone number **888-777**.
- Visit [sf.gov/coronavirus](https://sf.gov/coronavirus) for City resources and information.
- Visit **[www.sfdph.org](https://www.sfdph.org)** for up-to-date information on the public health situation.
- Call **311** for specific questions or concerns.

## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

For the past 50 years, Meals on Wheels San Francisco has been a lifeline for thousands of homebound seniors living in San Francisco in need of meals and a friendly person to ensure they're safe in their homes. Today, seniors' risks during the coronavirus pandemic have never been higher, their need for food never greater, and their stress and isolation never more pronounced.

One thing that COVID-19 has taught me is that our staff and volunteers are resilient. Through it all, they dutifully come to work daily to make, pack, and deliver nutritious meals to thousands of homebound and housebound seniors. If we fail at this, we fail at delivering on our mission, and failure, frankly, is not an option. Another thing that COVID-19 taught me is that the virus uncovers, for all to see, the incredible disparities that have always been there for people of color, the homeless, and those who have limited finances to properly protect themselves.

The coronavirus pandemic has tested our organization in ways we could not have imagined, both operationally, financially, and emotionally. We've adjusted to the new norm — pervasive cleaning and sanitizing of every surface, masks and social distancing at all times, and creative ways of solving meal production and distribution logistics, as well as staffing shortages.

The love and support from so many people in the community who graciously volunteer their time, provide us with supplies, and donate to us generously, lifts my heart and gives me hope for the future. We can get through this together.

This Fall, we look forward to opening a brand new industrial kitchen in the Bayview — one that will allow us the ability to produce 20,000+ meals a day (currently we're producing 10,000 meals a day.) We've raised 91 percent of the funds needed to complete the project and believe me, we wish the new kitchen was open now as this pandemic has shown us exactly why it's needed.

I hope there will never be a crisis of this magnitude again in our lifetime. I hope that after the worst of the coronavirus is passed, we will have addressed food insecurity in the city permanently so that no older adult in our community ever goes hungry or is forgotten.

With gratitude,



Ashley C. McCumber  
CEO/Executive Director



### OUR MISSION:

Meals on Wheels provides a network of services that allow seniors to live in their homes with dignity and independence for as long as possible.

### Contact Meals on Wheels San Francisco:

**Office Phone:**  
(415) 920-1111

**Fax:**  
(415) 920-2718

**Web Site:**  
[www.mowsf.org](http://www.mowsf.org)

**Email:**  
[info@mowsf.org](mailto:info@mowsf.org)



Meals on Wheels delivers meals to seniors during COVID-19.

## IONA'S STORY

## IONA SHARES HER STORY

**Many of us don't like to cook, but for Iona, cooking is especially difficult, even hazardous.**

"You're standing over the stove and sometimes things just pop at you," Iona explains, not mentioning — perhaps purposefully — the eye disease that has dogged her since childhood.

Iona was declared "legally blind" at 21. Ultimately, she was diagnosed with macular degeneration, though one gets the sense that she has fought hard throughout her life to see her limited vision as only a restriction, not a barrier.

At 80-years old, Iona is an avid reader, and has been since she was a child "Braille took me a year to learn!," she explains.

She was once part of a group of women who practiced synchronized swimming — "we swam to Moon Over Miami," she remembers with a laugh. When asked if she still swims she says, "It's been awhile," and anyone listening carefully can hear the regret in her voice. Her days consist mostly of reading, typing (she was once a transcriber for the Social Security Administration) and exercise.

Iona doesn't elaborate about a life curtailed by limited eyesight, as well as by the color of her skin. The



hospital where she worked tried to fire her when they realized how little vision she had; they failed, but did manage to forbid her to interact with patients.

"I have seen so many people who shouldn't be working around patients!" she says now. "But because they had 20/20 vision they had no problem keeping their jobs." At one point she recounts a story of police arresting her without cause, but lets it trail off. "There is so much racism in this country, we don't know the half of it," she says, before switching topics.

Iona moved to San Francisco in 1964, eventually enrolling in City College, which, she says, "had the most wonderful teachers, who helped me to have

confidence." She continued her education at SF State. "It took me 8 years to get my degree!"

Meals on Wheels has been a "godsend," Iona says.

"The roof over my head costs more than my Social Security benefits!"

She enjoys many of the meals and breakfasts, particularly the sausages and pancakes. She has a special love for the soup and the enchiladas as well. But Meals on Wheels offers her more than just food. Iona shared that she received a refrigerator from Meals on Wheels after hers stopped working, and the volunteers sometimes help her with shopping and errands. "They're wonderful people," she says.



## VITAMIN C AND THE CORONAVIRUS

## VITAMIN C: WILL INCREASING MY INTAKE PREVENT OR TREAT THE CORONAVIRUS?

*By Carolyn Kamian, RDN*

With a wide variety of Coronavirus (COVID-19) news circulating, a topic that has frequently come up is the potential role of vitamin C in the prevention or treatment of the virus. Often times when you are sick with a cold, a friend or loved one may encourage you to take a vitamin C supplement due to its role in immune system health. Vitamin C is an antioxidant and is known to support the immune system by regulating inflammation, assisting in forming protective barriers on cells and skin, and promoting generation of cells involved in immune health (and much more!).<sup>1</sup>

After hearing these benefits, one might think that increasing intake could potentially have enough power to prevent or cure a major disruption to the immune system, such as COVID-19. However, that is not necessarily the case. Vitamin C acts as a “water-soluble” vitamin, which means that if you take in more than can be processed at one time, the excess will be lost through urination and is therefore unutilized. Or, in other words, “use it or lose it!”

With that being said, nutrition is an ever-changing field of science with new research and evidence constantly

emerging. We may begin to see nutrition interventions such as oral supplementation or intravenous (IV) vitamin C tested in the clinical setting, but at this time the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics reports that “the role of vitamin C in the treatment of COVID-19 has not been well studied and there is currently no published research looking at the effect of supplementation of vitamin C on the prevention or treatment of COVID-19.”<sup>2</sup> Without research we cannot safely make recommendations to drastically increase vitamin C intake.

**The Main Takeaway**

The best recommendation we can make at this time is to follow the recommended daily allowance (RDA) which is currently set for adults at 75 mg/day (women) and 90 mg/day (men). If you currently smoke, add an additional 35 mg per day. Supplementation is generally not necessary if you include vitamin C-rich fruits and vegetables in your diet. For example, here are some common foods with a high vitamin C content: 1 cup oranges (51 mg), 1 cup broccoli (80 mg), 1 cup strawberries (85 mg). While somewhat difficult to “overdose” on vitamin C from diet alone, note that an intake of greater than 2000 mg/day

may cause gastrointestinal symptoms such as diarrhea, cramping, and nausea.<sup>2</sup>

**What Other Nutrients Support my Immune Health?**

Vitamin C is not the only nutrient necessary to support your immune system. Review the following list of nutrients and consider if you can regularly incorporate these foods into your diet. The good news is, Meals on Wheels offers several of these foods daily on our menu!

- **Vitamin D:** eggs, cheese, fortified milk or juice, tofu, mushrooms, fatty fish (salmon, sardines, tuna)
- **Zinc:** beans, animal protein (meat, poultry, seafood), nuts, fortified grains
- **Protein:** milk, animal protein (meat, poultry, seafood), beans, yogurt, cottage cheese, nuts
- **Water:** tap or bottled water, unsweetened beverages. Also found in fruits and vegetables, which can be up to 90% water

**References:**

1. Vitamin C and Immune Function. [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5707683/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5707683/)
2. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Professional Resource Hub. [www.eatrightpro.org/coronavirus-resources](http://www.eatrightpro.org/coronavirus-resources)

## AROUND MEALS ON WHEELS SF



### SCOTT WIENER VOLUNTEERS WITH MOWSF

In April, despite mask-induced fogging of his glasses, Senator Scott Wiener stopped by to help bag thousands of pounds of groceries for our Home-Delivered Groceries program which serves nearly 500 seniors weekly.



### SIMPLE ACTS OF KINDNESS

MOWSF driver, Jim, sports a new mask made by Tricia, an 84-year-old meals recipient who was concerned for his safety during the pandemic. MOWSF is grateful for the more than 6,000 donated masks, gloves and other PPE from the public and from city partners including the Department of Disability and Aging Services.



### ADIOS ROBIN!

MOWSF social worker, Robin Meese-Cruz, knows what it takes to make sure seniors get the right services they need. This month, after nearly 24 years of dedicated service to our organization and to seniors in our community, Robin will retire and focus her attention on being a full-time Grandmother. Read her story at: [MOWSF.org/robin](https://MOWSF.org/robin)



### SENIOR NUTRITION PROGRAMS SAVED FROM STATE BUDGET CUTS

In response to a looming \$54.3 billion state budget deficit as a result of COVID-19, Meals on Wheels CA (of which MOWSF is a member) advocated to ensure that the senior nutrition program budget did not end up on the chopping block. As more seniors seek meal programs, funding for these programs becomes even more important.

**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!****YOUR VOICE COUNTS!**

This year, all of us have an opportunity to have our voices heard. Two ways you can have YOUR voice heard and support the senior community is to participate in the 2020 census and to vote in the upcoming presidential election. Here are some details to help you get started.

**Respond to the 2020 Census by October 25, 2020**

Every ten years, the United States counts everyone who lives in the country, from newborn babies to the oldest among us. The data collected informs the allocation of more than \$675 billion in federal funds for states and communities.

**Why is this so important to older adults?**

The 2020 Census data is pivotal to **Meals on Wheels** programs. In 2019, California Meals on Wheels organizations received more than \$28 million for Home-Delivered Meals program funding through the **Older Americans Act** which helped those organizations provide more than 11 million meals to older adults in need. Your participation and voice will influence community funding and congressional representation for the next decade!

Here's how you can learn more about the census:

- **Online:** <https://my2020census.gov/>
- **Phone:** (844) 330-2020
- **TTY:** (844) 467-2020
- **By mail:** Mail back the paper questionnaire sent to your home.

The **Census Bureau** is required by law to **protect** any personal information collected and keep it strictly confidential. The **Census Bureau** can only use your answers to produce statistics.

**Register to Vote by October 19, 2020!**

If you haven't done so already, now is the perfect time to register to vote in the upcoming November 3 election and make your voice heard! Due to Covid-19, all voters will receive ballots in the mail prior to November 3, but the only way you'll receive that ballot is if your registered.

- **Register by Mail:** To request a paper voter registration application be mailed to you, please call (800) 345-8683
- **Register Online or check your voter status:** <https://registertovote.ca.gov/>

You may also contact the Department of Elections if you have any questions about voting and the process.

- **Phone:** (415) 554-4375
- **TTY:** (415) 554-4386
- **Email:** [SFVote@sfgov.org](mailto:SFVote@sfgov.org)



## COVID-19 SCAMS

## COVID-19 RELATED SCAMS

## BEWARE OF SCAMMERS

Scammers are exploiting the fear and isolation people are feeling during the COVID-19 shelter-in-place. Beware of scammers posing as government officials, bank employees, or health professionals. They want your money and sensitive personal information, including Social Security number, Medicare number, credit card information, and bank account information.

## HOW SCAMMERS CAN REACH YOU



PHONE



SOCIAL MEDIA



EMAIL



IN PERSON



WEBSITES

## COMMON SCAMS

- Sell you fake respiratory masks, COVID-19 testing or vaccine kits, or COVID-19 cures.
- Ask for charity donations. You can look up charities at [give.org](https://give.org) or [charitynavigator.org](https://charitynavigator.org).
- Promise direct deposit of your stimulus check.
- Tell you your Social Security check has been cancelled due to COVID-19 and try to get your personal information to verify.
- Offer “relief money” to those affected by COVID-19.
- Say a loved one has contracted COVID-19 and needs money wired for their treatment.
- Contact you pretending to be from the WHO, CDC, or a volunteer agency. Ask you to download a mobile app that tracks and sends you COVID-19 updates.

## RED FLAGS

- A sense of urgency. Scammers will use the words “urgent”, “act now”, “important”, and “official” to pressure you into acting quickly.
- Asking for payment via wire transfer or gift cards.
- Requesting your Social Security number, Medicare number, credit card information, or bank account information.
- Links from unknown or unverified sources.
- Purported government agencies contacting you by phone, email, or social media.
- Emails from personal accounts — beware of emails from Yahoo, Hotmail, Gmail, AOL addresses, etc.
- Websites that look like important COVID-19 news and information

sources. These sites could install malware on your computer that damage your computer or gain unauthorized access to your information. Unverified apps. These apps can lock your phone and steal data from your device. Only download apps with a verified publisher from Google Play or Apple Store.

**If you or someone you know may be a victim of elder abuse, call the San Francisco Adult Protective Services 24-hour/7-days-a-week hotline at 415-355-6700.**

## LEGAL REFERRALS

- Open Door Legal — [opendoorlegal.org/](https://opendoorlegal.org/) (415) 735-4124
- Bay Area Legal Aid — [baylegal.org/](https://baylegal.org/) (415) 982-1300
- Legal Assistance for the Elderly — [laesf.org/](https://laesf.org/) (415) 538-3333



1375 FAIRFAX AVE.  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94124

NON PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
PERMIT NO. 719

### Planned Giving

Remember Meals on Wheels in your legacy planning through:

- A will or trust
- Retirement plans, insurance policies, and bank investment accounts
- Charitable gift annuities & charitable remainder trusts

To make a legacy gift, call (415) 343-1267

### NOURISHING THE WHOLE PERSON

[mowsf.org](http://mowsf.org)

## NEW MEALS ON WHEELS KITCHEN ALMOST COMPLETED!

Soon, **Meals on Wheels San Francisco** will move into a brand new industrial **kitchen and food production facility** in the Bayview — a fitting milestone in our 50th year of operations.

We've raised 91% of the \$41 million needed. The new kitchen will give us the capacity to increase our meal production from 8,000 to 20,000+ meals per day, provide flexibility in meal menu options, and be scalable to provide meals for seniors in need for many decades to come.

Read more about our soon-be-opened kitchen at: [MOWSF.org/kitchen](http://MOWSF.org/kitchen)



Sign up for our e-newsletters | [mowsf.org](http://mowsf.org)

Follow us

