



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MEALS ON WHEELS SAN FRANCISCO HONORS THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT NUTRITION PROGRAM WITH THE
LAUNCH OF A VIRTUAL FITNESS CHALLENGE**

*GET FIT FOR SENIORS CAMPAIGN TURNS MILES INTO MEALS
TO SUPPORT OLDER SAN FRANCISCANS*

San Francisco, CA – In recognition of the **50th anniversary** of the **Older Americans Act Nutrition Program** and the 20th anniversary of the national annual campaign, **March for Meals, Meals on Wheels San Francisco** a nonprofit organization that prepares and delivers millions of nutritious meals to thousands of older, homebound San Franciscans yearly, has launched **Get Fit For Seniors**, a virtual fitness challenge and awareness campaign which runs through March 31. The campaign inspires people of all ages – young and old – to log 50 miles or more as part of their personal physical fitness goals, turning miles into meals for older San Franciscans. Exercises that qualify as miles earned for the challenge include walking, running, and cycling as well as other common activities such as gardening, washing the car, and housework. **Get Fit For Seniors** enthusiasts are challenged to log a total of 10 million steps (5,000 miles) together and help raise \$25,000 which equates to nearly 4,200 nutritious meals for older adults.

March for Meals is a national awareness campaign recognizing the **Older Americans Act of 1965 (OAA)** which was the first federal-level initiative aimed at providing comprehensive services for older adults. In March of 1972, President Nixon signed into law a measure that amended the Older Americans Act to also include a national nutrition program for seniors 60 years and older. The OAA created the National Aging Network which includes the Administration on Aging at the federal level, State Units on Aging at the state level, and Area Agencies on Aging at the local level.

This year, Meals on Wheels programs from across the country are joining forces for the awareness campaign to celebrate 50 years of success and garner the support needed to ensure critical senior nutrition programs can continue to address food insecurity and malnutrition, combat social isolation, enable independence, and improve health for years to come.

“Meals on Wheels San Francisco is committed to the belief that all seniors have the right to live independently with dignity and respect in their own homes for as long as it is safely possible. It is our mission to provide isolated, homebound older San Franciscans with nutritious meals, daily human contact, and supportive services,” said CEO and Executive Director of Meals on Wheels San Francisco, Ashley McCumber.

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In 2021, in partnership with the City and County of San Francisco, **Meals on Wheels San Francisco served 2.3 million meals to more than 18,300 people** of all ages, many of whom were impacted by COVID-19 and in need of home-delivered meals and groceries for themselves and their families. Of those people touched by Meals on Wheels, **5,337 were San Franciscans aged 60 and older** who were not directly impacted by COVID, but who needed home-delivered meals because of being homebound, food insecure, and struggling with many basic, activities of daily living known as ADLs. Last year, approximately 72% of older adults served by Meals on Wheels in the City, live below the federal poverty level. Additionally, another 67% of older people served by the program lived alone.

In addition to **Get Fit For Seniors**, Meals on Wheels San Francisco will celebrate **March for Meals** by meeting with district supervisors in the City and sharing valuable information and insights about senior food insecurity in San Francisco, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the needs many older adults have in order to live safely in their homes. Data provided by the San Francisco Human Services Agency shows that 27% of San Francisco residents will be age 60 and older by 2030 which points to a heightened need to ensure services and resources are in place for this growing demographic in the City. Requests for Meals on Wheels continues to grow steadily by approximately 25% each year.

“The Older Americans Act Nutrition Program is the only federally supported program designed to address both senior hunger and isolation,” said Ellie Hollander, President and CEO of Meals on Wheels America. “Despite decades of proven success and bipartisan support, however, funding for this public-private partnership has failed to keep pace with the burgeoning need for its services. With increased demand due to the pandemic atop the rapid increase in our country’s senior population, now is the time to support Meals on Wheels – through volunteering, donating, and speaking out – to ensure we can deliver for another 50 years.”

Details about Get Fit For Seniors: www.charityfootprints.com/GetFitForSeniors2022

Details about March for Meals: <https://www.mowsf.org/march-for-meals-22>

About Meals on Wheels San Francisco:

In 2022, Meals on Wheels San Francisco celebrates 52 years of providing older adults residing in the City with what they need to live independent and dignified lives. The nonprofit, in partnership with the City and County of San Francisco, operates a robust home-delivered meals program offering delivery of two meals per day to thousands of older people in need, something no other program in the City is equipped to do regularly. Meals on Wheels San Francisco also operates a home-delivered groceries program in conjunction with the SF-Marin Food Bank, as well as nutrition counseling, and social work services that help seniors be healthy and live safely in their homes while connecting them to programs that help them thrive and decrease isolation. Learn how you can get involved at www.MOWSF.org.

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