



REPAIRING HOMES AND HEARTS OF SENIOR VETERANS

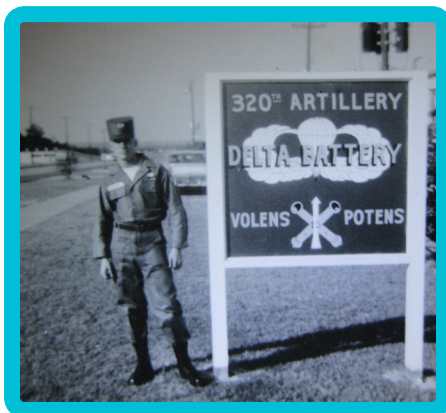
“Most of my family, my heritage, is all people that were in the military,” recounts Jack — one of 50 Home Depot Homebound Heroes we serve annually at Meals on Wheels San Francisco. Jack himself was no exception to this tradition.

“My uncle was a career officer in the military. He came out here from a farm in Oklahoma, riding on the top of a freight train. My Dad was stationed in Panama. My grandfather was a World War I veteran.”

As a young man in 1961, Jack enlisted in the 82nd Airborne Division as a paratrooper. After 3 years in the US Army and a short stint working for TWA Airlines, Jack went on to work for the Department of Defense (DOD) in Vietnam.



Jack with Meals on Wheels Director of Fleet & Facilities John Sheehan



Jack in Fort Bragg, NC, 1961

On looking back on his time in the military, Jack knew he was destined for a job outside of the confines of an office and one that fulfilled his strong belief in serving his country. He recalls the moment he knew that an office job was not for him.

“One day I was going to work at the airport with an Irish buddy of mine. His name was Hurricane, and he says, ‘Well Jack,

this is it for you. This is the rest of your life here. You like working for TWA, you get the free flying. This is what you’re going to do until you retire.’ And it kind of scared me.”

Growing up, Jack was inspired by his Uncle, a family hero he likened to Clark Gable.

“He had a big mustache, he was the picture of success, the Captain of his football team in high school. He was a hero of the family, a big good looking Dude. Even though he was this seventh weight boxing champion, he was a mild-mannered, peaceful guy.”

Like his uncle, Jack had a natural ability to remain calm during tense situations. He was assigned a position within the DOD to protect a military base in Saigon, and he was routinely sent in to de-escalate conflicts that were on the brink of violence. “The best kind of cop you can be is — you stop stuff, you don’t create stuff.”

Funded by a nationwide grant through Meals on Wheels America and the Home Depot Foundation, the Helping Homebound Heroes program assists senior Veterans with critical home repairs so they can age safely and more comfortably in their homes. Through this program, Jack received a new walk-in closet and a couch to ease his chronic back pain.

“The best kind of cop you can be is — you stop stuff, you don’t create stuff.”

“These people are so nice to me. They have my gratitude and I feel very honored to have them taking care of me.”



FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

Six years after Meals on Wheels was founded, former Vice-President Hubert Humphrey once proclaimed, “The moral test of a government is how it treats those who are at the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those who are in the shadow of life, the sick and the needy, and the handicapped.” This quote remains as true today as it was when Humphrey first said it in 1976.

As we head in to the November election, Meals on Wheels, along with 45 other agencies that serve isolated seniors and adults with disabilities, have joined together to form the Dignity Coalition. Together, we authored a charter amendment on the San Francisco ballot called Proposition I. Without adding any new taxes, **Proposition I** ensures the City’s General Fund set-aside for seniors and adults with disabilities never falls below the 2015-2016 level and increases proportional to the increase in population for the next 20 years. Since we receive 50% of our funding from the City, passing Prop I is critical to our ability to meet this growing need.

We ask that you — friends and loyal supporters of Meals on Wheels — join us to **vote YES on Proposition I**. In doing so, you will protect the right of seniors to age with dignity and independence in their own homes for generations to come.

In addition to news about the election, I want to share a few other exciting updates. You may have noticed this newsletter features a new logo and color scheme for Meals on Wheels. While we remain a proud, independently-run San Francisco charity, we have taken steps to align our external look to reflect our association with Meals on Wheels America. A large factor contributing to this decision was our role in helping Meals on Wheels America launch a national ad campaign called “America, Let’s Do Lunch.” Several of our clients have been featured in videos, on billboards, and in a full page ad in USA today as part of this campaign. So while we’re still the same Meals on Wheels San Francisco that you’ve always known, we’ve made a few changes to the way we look. We hope you like this new look as much as we do!

As you explore this issue, I invite you to read about Collin, a retired Muni bus mechanic, who is spending his retirement as a dedicated volunteer for our Client Needs Program.

Thank you for everything you do as a faithful supporter of Meals on Wheels. We couldn’t do this work without you!

Sincerely,

Ashley C. McCumber
CEO/Executive Director



HOLIDAY HELP WANTED

For many of us, the holidays are a time for family and feasts; for seniors living alone, they can be a time of loneliness and wanting. There are so many ways to spread love around San Francisco this holiday season, but here are few that would make a world of difference to Meals On Wheels’ seniors:

- Volunteer on Thanksgiving Day: Our drivers have the day off, but we need to get those turkey dinners to our clients, today of all days. Sign up to volunteer with Emilie Bromet-Bauer at ebrometbauer@mowsf.org. You will be finished by 2:00pm. This is a fantastic opportunity for families.
- Make a gift using the envelope in this newsletter. A gift of \$60 provides 10 nutritious meals; \$90 provides 15 home-delivered meals; and \$120 provides a homebound senior with 20 meals.
- Donate socks to keep our seniors’ toes warm this winter. Ribbed, knee-high, tie-dye, or polka dot — holiday socks are the perfect pick-me-up and protector against cold floors.

Together we can ensure that San Francisco’s seniors enjoy a happy, healthy, and warm holiday season.



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Nourish is the official newsletter of Meals On Wheels of San Francisco.

Meals On Wheels Core Services

- Delivery of 14 Meals Per Week
- Safety Checks by Delivery Drivers
- Nutrition Education and Counseling
- Social Work and Case Management
- Support for Client Household Needs
- Volunteers to Assist Clients

A VERY FULL LIFE

Three years ago, Collin Lee retired from Muni, where he worked as a bus mechanic for thirty years. “I feel very fortunate. I get all this time, and I don’t have to work,” he tells me. “I feel I have to pay back my community. And I enjoy doing it.”

Two years ago, Collin was reading the newspaper and came across an ad seeking volunteer assistance on Thanksgiving Day. The ad was placed by Meals on Wheels. Collin thought, “That’s a nice thing to do. I can do that.” And he did.

After delivering turkey dinners that Thanksgiving, Collin asked how else he could help. He learned that through our Client Needs Program, he could deliver household essentials like Ensure and microwaves, and he could do it on his own schedule. He liked that idea, and signed up immediately.

It’s been two years now, and Collin has been a steadfast volunteer. Each week, he drops by Meals On Wheels in the car he shares with his wife to pick up enough Ensure for his clients. But, appropriately enough for a former Muni bus mechanic, he makes his client visits via bus. Collin is a huge proponent of public transportation, preferring not “to use fossil fuels.” “I used to bike everywhere, but I can’t bike with the Ensure,” he explains. “When I go to see clients in the Tenderloin, I take the street car. I like it.”

It’s not all Ensure deliveries for Collin, however. He tells me about a particular visit that has stuck with him. Collin arrived at this particular gentleman’s house one day, and the gentleman’s request was that Collin fix his broken



Collin at Meals on Wheels headquarters

screen door. Collin fixed the screen door in five minutes, and then sat down on the couch with the man to chat. He learned that a few weeks earlier, the man’s wife had had a heart attack, and when emergency services arrived, they broke the screen door. The screen door survived, thanks to Collin, but the man’s wife did not. In the weeks since her passing, he’d been grieving, suffering from severe loneliness. He had visitors scheduled regularly for every day of the week except for Sunday — the day Collin arrived. What Collin provided for this man was more than a new door — it was a reprieve from the isolation he felt after the passing of his wife, after the living of a very full life.

Collin, a man who emigrated from poor circumstances in Hong Kong to the promise of San Francisco at the age

of 13, has spent his life returning the favors he feels he’s been given. “I feel grateful to have been helped by people when I came here [to San Francisco.] Volunteering gives me meaning in life; it keeps me in contact with the community. It makes me see that the problems I have are nothing compared to those less fortunate.” When I ask Collin how else he spends his time, he tells me that he also volunteers for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Project Open Hand. I laugh, but he stops me with a smile. “I also travel and exercise. I still do what I want to do. Relatively, it’s a small amount of time I give to others.”

Even through all his modesty, one can sense an urgency to his demeanor and a seriousness about the work that needs to be done in our community. “Once I read that you can judge a community based on how they care for their vulnerable.” With Collin on our side, I predict we’ll make pretty good progress.

Kate Cody, Digital Marketing Manager at Meals On Wheels, interviewed Collin Lee for this article.

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- Inside this issue of *Nourish*
- 1 Jack, a Homebound Hero
 - 2 Letter from our Executive Director
 - 2 From Muni to Meals on Wheels
 - 4 Vote YES on Prop I

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Yes ON **I**

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