

NOURISH NEWS

NOURISHING THE WHOLE PERSON

SPRING/SUMMER 2024



MEET THE MAYOR OF POWELL STREET

In the 70s, Paul worked in security before landing a job at the San Francisco Chronicle, where he helped put together the daily newspaper. By the 80s, he made history as the first black officer in the Bay Area to become a shop steward for the news chain.

“After my newspaper days, I relied on a small pension and social security, but it just wasn’t enough,” Paul shared. “Then a security job opened up at the Powell Street building, which also included a \$350 monthly rent. I did this job for years, earning the nickname ‘the Mayor of Powell Street’ from my colleagues and neighbors.”

However, at the same time building management changed, so did Paul’s health as he faced an uphill battle with

asthma and various visits to the hospital. As 2020 rolled in, the pandemic hit, leading to lockdowns and closures. The building Paul lived in was shut down for renovations, leaving him as the sole resident.

One night in 2020, Paul suffered an accident breaking his foot while leaving his eighth-floor apartment. He went to the elevator only to discover it had stopped working. He called 911 and an emergency crew came to his rescue. Paul returned home weeks

later permanently needing the use of a cane and sometimes a wheelchair. Not only was he homebound, but he was now housebound. He was at his wit’s end.

“I had issues — like how am I going to pay my bills, how am I going to get my mail, and how am I going to get food up to my room,” Paul explained. “That’s when I called Meals on Wheels and spoke with Kristi. I told her I’m going to jump out of this window — it’s so bad.” Kristi Hirsch is the Director of Social Work at Meals on Wheels San Francisco. Working with the Department of Disability and Aging Services, Kristi, helped Paul get started receiving meals immediately.



Scan to learn how your support makes a difference.

Read the rest of Paul’s story on page 2.

MAYOR OF POWELL STREET

Continued from page 1

“Meals on Wheels saves me at least \$20 a week on food costs,” Paul says.

He receives 11 meals a week which he says helps him a lot given his fixed income and how difficult it is for him to leave his apartment to run errands.



Paul says he is grateful for the service and for the visits and check-ins.

Despite living in the heart of San Francisco’s Union Square surrounded by so many people, Paul is alone and in many ways, isolated — something that, sadly, is all too common for many seniors who have outlived family or whose friends have moved away.

MEALS ON WHEELS CHANGED LEIA'S LIFE

In a world where life dealt her a crippling hand, Leia, a former cybersecurity expert, found solace in the kindness of Meals on Wheels.

In 2019, Leia first shared her deeply moving story with us on how she came to Meals on Wheels after a fall in front of her home left her temporarily paralyzed.

After three years in a rehabilitation hospital and ongoing physical therapy for her fractured spine and neck, she was able to return to her third-floor apartment with the use of a cane and wheelchair. However, she returned to a stark reality — she could no longer work and provide for herself. Leia had a roof over her head, but little else other than a mountain of medical bills and debt, leaving her with a paltry \$100 to live on each month.

“It took me a while to figure out what services could be available for someone like me,” Leia explained back then. “I would go days without having enough food to eat, or any food in my refrigerator; I would just drink water to feel full and keep my mind off of being hungry.”

Today, Leia continues to praise Meals on Wheels for keeping her healthy and alive.

Read her story: www.mowsf.org/leia-2024



DID YOU KNOW?



38%
of seniors we serve in SF
rely on walkers/wheelchairs



65% of seniors
we serve in SF live on
LESS THAN \$1,215 A MONTH



63%
of seniors we
serve in SF
LIVE ALONE



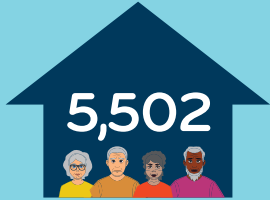
OUR MISSION: To provide isolated homebound seniors with nutritious meals, daily human contact, and supportive services that help them live with dignity and independence, safely in their homes.

Thank YOU for helping us change the lives of Bay Area seniors in 2023!

Your support of Meals on Wheels San Francisco allowed us to respond to thousands of older adults in need, making sure that those who are food insecure receive up to two nutritious meals a day.

In addition, because of you, we delivered on our more than a meal mission by providing wraparound services that, in conjunction with the meals, helped seniors live safely in their homes, countered loneliness and isolation, and improved their health nutrition literacy and medical outcomes.

WHO WE SERVE



*Number of older adults served in SF & SMC in 2023



295,724

Wellness visits made by our drivers in 2023

SAFETY & WELL BEING



3,394 seniors in SF and SMC assessed by our Social Work team

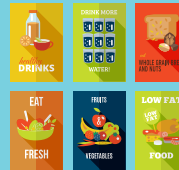


136,184 intake and safety board calls

HEALTH & NUTRITION



1,598 seniors received nutrition counseling in 2023



Distributed 15,204 nutrition education handouts

COUNTERING LONELINESS & ISOLATION



Connected 751 seniors in SF to services decreasing isolation

41 seniors in Friendly Caller volunteer program



Volunteers crafted 19,000 cards for seniors

KITCHEN CAPACITY

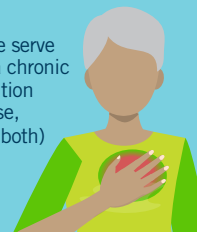
The capacity of our industrial kitchen and food distribution center in Bayview is an incredible asset in delivering on the need for meals throughout the Bay Area.



2.5 million meals prepared in our kitchen in 2023

29%

of seniors we serve in SF have a chronic health condition (heart disease, diabetes, or both)



HEALTHY MEALS, HEALTHY LIVES



125 unique menu items

1.6 million meals delivered to seniors in SF and SMC



10,000+ meals prepared in our kitchen daily

COMMUNITY PARTNER MEALS

The entrepreneurial nature of our kitchen allowed us to prepare additional meals to be distributed by community partners with similar missions of feeding people in need.



918,513 Community Partner Meals

VOLUNTEERS ARE OUR SECRET SAUCE

Volunteers dedicated their time to deliver groceries, provide companionship to isolated seniors, and bring joy to older individuals through acts of kindness.



590 volunteers helped decrease loneliness and isolation



14 volunteers 500 shopping trips



Volunteers gave **27,718 hours** of their time valued at **\$890,000**

AROUND MEALS ON WHEELS SAN FRANCISCO

LONELINESS DECLARED A HEALTH EMERGENCY IN SAN MATEO COUNTY

In February of this year, San Mateo County became the first county in the country to pass a resolution declaring loneliness a public health crisis. This will pave the way for much-needed funding for programs that reduce loneliness which impacts people of all ages, including those aged 60 and older.

More than 600 seniors in Northern San Mateo County rely on Meals on Wheels San Francisco for meals and services and of those, 46% live alone.

Read more: brnw.ch/lonelinesshealth



HERE'S WHAT SENIORS HAVE TO SAY



Ilene, Age 72

"I'm grateful for Meals on Wheels. A lot of the time, I get tired, so popping meals in the microwave is very helpful. Also, I save probably about \$20-\$50 a week in food costs."



Jerry, Age 69

"They [Meals on Wheels] care about me. They take the time to acknowledge me as a person, not just with their food, but with their attitude when they greet me each week. I look forward to them coming every week. It's a wonderful organization, and I highly recommend it."

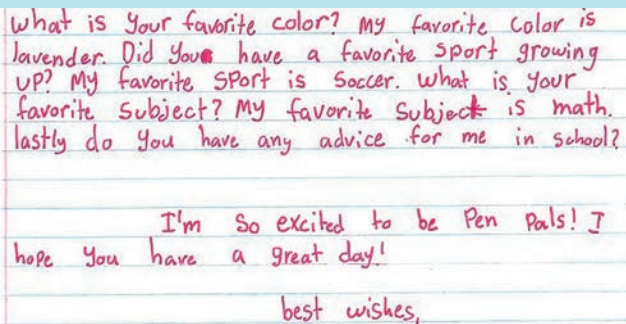


Roslyn, Age 71

"It's a wonderful program, a wonderful staff. I love the enchiladas; I like the fish, I like the steak and potatoes and the meatloaf — delicious! They [Meals on Wheels] include you just like a family member."

SENIOR PEN PALS PROGRAM

We partnered with a local elementary school to launch a Pen Pals program. Twenty-two students were paired with 12 Meals on Wheels recipients and the first letters have been exchanged. The responses have been heartwarming and one senior Pen Pal named Dorae, has already written a second letter to another student!



My favorite subject in school was recess!!! My 5th grade teacher, Sister Monica, taught us classical music, arts, and regular subjects too. She was the best teacher I ever had. My advice to you is to enjoy what you are learning even though I know some subjects are boring. Are you on a soccer team? What is your favorite game to play?

**Stay out of trouble,
Dorae**

ELECTED SF LEADERS DELIVER MEALS TO SENIORS



In March, we organized March for Meals, during which elected leaders in San Francisco delivered meals and made visits to the homes of seniors. Supervisor Matt Dorsey from District 6 and Supervisor Shamann Walton from District 10 both participated in this event. March for Meals commemorates the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, which provides vital funding for numerous senior nutrition programs.

Read more: www.mowsf.org/march-for-meals

MEALS ON WHEELS KEEPS BILL HEALTHY AND SAFE

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Bill, a stroke survivor who is 75 and lives in Daly City, has fallen out of his wheelchair at home before. Once, he called for help by using Siri on his cell phone to dial 911. The paramedics arrived quickly. On another morning in 2023, Bill fell again, but he remained calm because he knew his Meals on Wheels driver would be there soon.

Many older adults with disabilities, like Bill, face the challenge of navigating their homes and finding ways to complete everyday tasks. Cooking safely in the kitchen can be especially difficult.

“After the stroke, when I tried to cook things for myself, it was sort of dangerous,” Bill tells us. “I’m inclined to drop things; I can make some mistakes with hot frying pans.”

Bill says Meals on Wheels is helpful to him because he doesn’t have to risk cooking all of the time, and he knows someone is going to check in on him.

“Even the Meals on Wheels guy smiling in the morning [and asking me] Hi; how are you doing? I feel better for hours after that,” Bill explains.

Bill says the nutritious meals and the frequent check-ins helps him maintain his health and independence. He admits he’d slip into all of his old, unhealthy eating habits in a matter of days if it weren’t for Meals on Wheels helping him keep on track with his nutrition needs.

“I can’t imagine life without Meals on Wheels,” Bill explains. “I’m introduced to other foods I wouldn’t normally have eaten, that I now like.”

Read the rest of Bill’s story:
www.mowfs.org/san-mateo-bill

DID YOU KNOW?



24%
of seniors served in SMC
have poor mobility or are bedbound



28%
of seniors we serve in SMC
rely on walkers/wheelchairs

IN THE COMMUNITY

A DAY IN A LIFE OF A VOLUNTEER



Meals on Wheels San Francisco volunteer, Michael Bereskin, knows how to deliver more than groceries to seniors in need in the Tenderloin. For the past seven years, the 80-year-old San Francisco resident has taken pride in making his grocery deliveries on time, all while getting to know the people on his food delivery route.

Michael is a Home-Delivered Groceries volunteer with us and has logged more than 1,400 hours of his time, according to our records. He specifically delivers groceries to seniors in need living in the Tenderloin. He says he loves what he does!

“Volunteering at Meals on Wheels San Francisco gives me a purpose in life. Otherwise, I wouldn’t even get out of the house.”

We tagged along with Michael and watched in amazement how easy he makes the job of hauling and delivering groceries in the neighborhood. Inside one building, he knocks on the door of his client — “Meals on Wheels” he exclaims. No answer. After several attempts, he pulls out his phone and calls the Meals on Wheels safety board — a unit designed to help problem solve should a senior not answer their door during their dedicated delivery timeframe. Getting eyes on a senior is just as important, if not more, than the meal delivery.

After a little bit, another neighbor across the hall pokes her head out of her apartment hearing all of the knocking. She tells us her neighbor is home — we just need to knock harder. That seems to do the trick; the grocery delivery and check-in are made.

“It’s the people — I know I’m making a difference,” he says. “I enjoy seeing them and I think they enjoy seeing me. We have this kind of relationship — it’s like a friend who does this every week. The groceries are incidental; it’s the visit that’s the important part.”

Read more: www.mowsf.org/michael-bereskin

In 2023, Home-Delivered Groceries volunteers like Michael gave generously of their time



26,632
bags of groceries
delivered through HDG



374,104
pounds
of food
bagged by
volunteers



582 adults
in SF age 60+ received
Home-Delivered Groceries weekly



Nourish and Connect Volunteers from Delta Dental

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUR GROUP!

Our Nourish and Connect Group Volunteer program is a wonderful team-building event that brings you and your co-workers together to do good at Meals on Wheels! From crafting cards, making phone calls to isolated seniors, and packing meals, your group of five or more will finish the day knowing they’ve done something special for hundreds of seniors. Sign up today and be a part of something truly rewarding.

Learn more: www.mowsf.org/nourish_connect

PLANNED GIVING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

JOAN REMEMBERS HER FRIEND'S GENEROSITY

LeeAnna cared deeply about helping people in the community.



Left-to-right: LeeAnna Norris Friedman and Joan Grant

Joan Grant and LeeAnna Norris Friedman first met back in their college days at SF State. They were in their 20s and immediately clicked, sharing passions for food, cooking, and Shakespeare. LeeAnna earned her BA and MA degrees in English Literature and would lead a colorful, fulfilling life — teaching literature part time at SF State and Golden Gate University, serving as a docent at the SF Botanical Garden, and even as a pastry chef.

Their friendship deepened well after college and Joan and LeeAnna's circle of friends formed a cooking group — sharing recipes, good wine, and emotional support for one another.

When LeeAnna passed away in 2022, Joan and her friends were heartbroken.



“She was a good friend to me and to a lot of people,” Joan said recently during a visit to The Sangiacomo Flynn Building, home to our industrial kitchen and food distribution center in Bayview. “She was just a warm, loving, caring person. I still just want to be able to call her.”

Joan says that LeeAnna chose to include Meals on Wheels of San Francisco in her planned giving, believing that her friend was motivated to support our organization due to her own encounters with loneliness following the passing of her husband of nearly five decades.

“She was a good friend to me and to a lot of people,” Joan said recently during a visit to The Sangiacomo Flynn Building, home to

our industrial kitchen and food distribution center in Bayview. “She was just a warm, loving, caring person. I still just want to be able to call her.” She says LeAnna found comfort in Meals on Wheels as a way to help others who may be in similar situations of aging alone. After having toured our kitchen where thousands of meals are made each day, Joan agreed.

“LeeAnna would be so impressed by the friendly ambiance and the care with which meals are made here.”

Joan says LeeAnna understood the importance of providing seniors with dignity and a nutritious meal as she cared deeply about helping people in the community.

“LeeAnna would say that any amount donated is worthwhile, as it contributes to a thriving organization with good values.”

Learn more:
www.mowfs.org/legacy-giving



Your planned gift to Meals on Wheels of San Francisco is an investment in the continued care and nourishment of vulnerable homebound seniors and helps to ensure we will always be here to help those in need.

Contact Colette Burkett at 707-694-8185 or cburkett@mowfs.org for more information.

If you have already left Meals on Wheels San Francisco in your will or trust, please accept our gratitude, and let us know (if you haven't already) so we may recognize you.



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NOURISHING THE WHOLE PERSON
mowsf.org

DOING GOOD FOR SENIORS STARTS IN OUR KITCHEN



I've had the honor of serving the Bay Area's underserved communities for the past decade. It continues to be an important highlight of my career at Meals on Wheels working with a team responsible for feeding thousands of people each day in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties.

We do the best we can do every single day for seniors because they are deserving of our full and present attention. That starts every morning in our kitchen where we all put our hearts into creating meals that are healthy and delicious.

We hope that what we do we'll brighten someone's day because food is a large part of one's self-care and well-balanced nutrition means living life to the fullest as a happy, healthy human.

— Char Marsden,
Food Safety and Compliance Manager, Meal on Wheels San Francisco



**A kind word,
A friendly smile,
A hearty meal.**

**Serving homebound seniors
in need since 1970.**