



**MEALS on WHEELS**  
ORANGE COUNTY

Quarterly Newsletter

# SERVING IT UP

NOURISHING LIVES

2020 EDITION 2



## Message from the CEO

**Holly Hagler**

Dear Friends,

Since our last newsletter, the relentless surge of COVID-19 has created an unprecedented flood of desperate requests from those in need. Thanks to our loyal and new supporters, Meals on Wheels OC has met the skyrocketing demand. Here are just some of our results:

In total, we have served more than 6,000 at-risk older adults and are providing 47,310 meals each week, an increase of over 250%!

This includes delivering 30,000 meals each week through our new Grab & Go option at local senior centers. That's 6 times the number of meals we would normally serve!

We've also increased our traditional home-delivered Meals on Wheels by 30% and now are providing 17,310 meals a week!

All of this is only possible with the support of many, and we are tremendously grateful. As local seniors continue to reach out to us in record numbers, they will need all of us to continue working together to erase hunger - today, tomorrow, and in the uncertain days to come.

No matter the challenges we may face, one thing is certain: Meals on Wheels OC is committed to helping our elderly neighbors through - and beyond - this crisis. **We are all in this together.**

With appreciation,

Holly Hagler  
President & CEO

*P.S. As this goes to print, we have announced our Great Plates Delivered program—find out more on our website or through social media!*

## Grab & Go Meals



**Norma More, 94, and Barbara Radovan, 92, from left, are sisters and neighbors (Photo by Paul Bersebach, OCRegister/SCNG)**

Sisters Norma, 94, and Barbara, 92, miss the pre-pandemic “good ol’ days.” They would hop on a bus destined for a local senior center and enjoy a hot meal at our Lunch Café, the popular Meals on Wheels OC lunch program enjoyed by thousands each year at 23 partnering senior centers. Sadly, the COVID-19 quarantine necessitated the suspension of these special gatherings.

Instead, Meals on Wheels OC worked diligently to convert this program to a Grab & Go frozen meal service that offers curbside pick-up or delivery of a week's worth of meals. Surrogates - such as family or friends - may pick up meals for an older

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## In Memory of Board Member Don Lewis

Meals on Wheels Orange County honors the memory of Don Lewis, devoted volunteer board member and generous supporter, who lost his battle with cancer in April. After serving for ten years on the Board of Directors, including as board chair, he returned for a second term beginning in 2016. Most recently, Don led our Finance and Audit Committees utilizing his professional experience to provide financial monitoring and oversight.

As CEO, Holly Hagler, noted, “Not only was Don a valued board member, he was respected for his natural honesty, unmatched diligence, and knowledge.” He was also a genuine, kindhearted friend. Fellow board member and friend Earle Zucht said, “Don touched many lives and we are better because we knew him.” Don’s legacy is that of a champion for older adults in need, and he will be greatly missed.



**Don Lewis, center, with Holly Hagler, CEO, right, and Darla Olson. Senior Care Hero Awards, 2018.**

If you would like to join us in honoring Don, please consider making a gift to the Meals on Wheels Orange County Don Lewis Memorial Fund by visiting <http://weblink.donorperfect.com/DonLewisMemorialFund>

### Grab & Go Meals (continued from page 1)

adult. For those who are unable to get to their closest participating location and do not have someone who can do so for them, meals may be delivered, similar to our traditional home-delivered Meals on Wheels. To keep everyone as safe as possible, social distancing and other precautions are observed at all locations.

Now, many folks like Norma and Barbara have access to nutritious food while they limit exposure to this life-threatening virus. And like Norma & Barbara, we’re all anxious to return to the “good ol’ days” of meeting together to share laughs and connect over a delicious meal. In the meantime, we’re making sure older adults are as safe and healthy as they can be!



## Save the Date

The decision to postpone our 10th anniversary celebration of the Senior Care Hero Awards until 2021 wasn't easy, but we do feel there is still plenty to celebrate.

Mark your calendars for a virtual event on **Sunday, September 27, 2020**, and follow us on social media to learn more in the coming weeks!

## Volunteer Note



Tracy Hall,  
Director of  
Volunteer Services

We cannot express the depth of gratitude we feel at your outpouring of support. Most of our regular volunteers, many of whom are seniors themselves, *continue* to deliver their routes. They have embraced social distancing and other safety regulations to ensure both their own personal health and that of those to whom they deliver meals.

We are also grateful for the hundreds of concerned community members who have registered to volunteer. Over 1,000 people have expressed interest in helping since the Safe at Home order began in mid-March, and that number continues to rise.

We usually have about 600 potential volunteers reach out *per year*, so it is especially gratifying to see how this crisis has brought people together. We have been able to place several dozen new/temporary volunteers and will reach out as positions open.

On behalf of the older adults we serve, thank you for your heart to make a difference in this time of need! **If you are interested in volunteering, please visit our website at [MealsOnWheelsOC.org](http://MealsOnWheelsOC.org).**

*Let's Connect!*

Follow us online for up-to-the-minute news!



@mealsonwheelsoc



## Leadership Profile: Board Member

### DR. CHALATH RAJARAM, MD FACP FAAHPM CMD HMDC

Meals on Wheels Orange County is thrilled that Dr. Chalath Rajaram, *Senior Medical Director, VITAS Healthcare* recently joined our Board of Directors. Dr. Rajaram has a compassionate heart for older adults and has served the Orange County medical community for over 30 years. He trained in orthopedics and general surgery, and is board certified in internal medicine.

Dr. Rajaram has earned numerous additional certifications and honors, and was named as Physician of the Year at the 2018 Senior Care Hero Awards.

We asked Dr. Rajaram to share his insights on the emotional effect of COVID-19 on the aging community. He said, "The knowledge that the mortality rate for older adults with underlying medical conditions is high has understandably resulted in feelings of fear and anxiety. The isolation caused by staying home has added to the emotional impact because seniors who used to go to a congregate meal site to have lunch and meet with friends are now experiencing depression and loneliness. It's hard when human contact, which for many was already limited, becomes relatively non-existent. No family or friends can visit and no hugs!"

Dr. Rajaram's recommendation: Continue to observe social distancing guidelines, wash your hands before and after care, call seniors many times, leave notes, have family call and send notes. Please remind seniors to take their usual medications and avoid too much media.

In closing, he let us know, "I am absolutely astounded by the rapid response that Meals on Wheels Orange County has made to impact the care for older adults during this crisis. I am very proud to be a part of this team."



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**General Information:**

714-220-0224

**Meals on Wheels &  
Lunch Café:**

714-823-3294

**Adult Day Services:**

Anaheim 714-220-2114

Santa Ana 714-558-1216

# THE CARES ACT CARES

## Charitable Deductions Extended in 2020

The recent Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also called the CARES Act, includes several tax provisions to support your charitable intentions:

- A deduction for donors who do not itemize when filing their tax returns. If you do not itemize, but make a gift to charity, you will be allowed to take a special tax deduction -- up to \$300 -- to reduce your tax liability.
- An increase in the deduction limit up to 100% of your income for cash gifts (previously capped at 60%). If you make a gift, you will be able to deduct more this year!

Contact our team to  
learn more:



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