



Message from the CEO

Holly Hagler

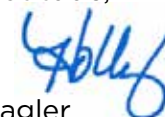
Dear Friends,

Reflecting on the past several months, I am overwhelmed with gratitude. Throughout the enormous challenges brought on by COVID-19, the Orange County community has provided a unified response more powerful than I could have ever imagined. In September alone, we served nearly 200,000 meals - *the same amount typically served in seven months!* Not only have you helped us meet an unprecedented surge in need, you are also providing comfort, hope and kindness to our aging neighbors as they remain in the safety of their homes.

The holidays bring more opportunities to tell our aging friends we care. While many people are looking forward to seeing loved ones, more older adults than ever will be alone. Our annual Holiday Gift Program, featured on page 3, has never been more critical, as this special delivery reminds our seniors that although they may be isolated, they are not forgotten.

We look forward to continuing to serve with you through the holiday season and beyond!

With gratitude,



Holly Hagler
President and CEO

P.S. We recently premiered *Step Up To The Plate: Our Community In Action*, an uplifting documentary that celebrates how Orange County continues to support vulnerable older adults through the pandemic. Hundreds of viewers joined us for the virtual event, donating over \$82,000 towards our \$100,000 goal! If you missed it, I invite you to watch online or make a donation at: MealsOnWheelsOC.org.

From Our Kitchen to Yours

Traditional holiday food is delicious but often laden with fat and high in sodium. Meals on Wheels OC's resident dietician, Anna Hamada, developed this tasty *light* Thanksgiving-inspired meal you can enjoy anytime!

Turkey Apple Cranberry Pita Sandwich (makes 4 servings)

- 6 oz turkey breast, roasted, chopped
- 1 Tbsp finely diced red onion
- 4 oz apple, chopped
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1 Tbsp chopped pecans
- 1/4 cup diced celery
- 1/8 tsp poppy seeds
- 2 tsp honey
- 1/2 cup nonfat plain yogurt
- 2 cups baby spinach
- 2 whole wheat pitas

Preparation:

1. Cut pitas in half to make 4 pockets. Put pita slices and baby spinach to the side
2. In a bowl, combine remaining ingredients
3. Put 1/2 cup spinach leaves in each pocket followed by 4 oz of turkey mixture

Enjoy!

Irma & Ezequiel's Story



Since 83-year-old Irma suffered a stroke last year, her husband Ezequiel has been her loving caregiver. Ezequiel considers himself an "excellent dishwasher," but much less competent preparing meals when it comes to time in the kitchen. Since the threat of COVID-19, the couple stays home, restricting their outings to doctor appointments. "It is limiting," said Ezequiel, "but no one is exempt from this virus." When trips to the grocery store were no longer safe for the couple, their niece suggested they contact us. Since joining the program six months ago, Irma and Ezequiel are no longer concerned about getting the nutrition they need. Without Meals on Wheels, Ezequiel knows they would be struggling to meet their dietary needs. "We would be eating badly," he said.

The pandemic has resulted in isolation and loneliness for many older adults. Knowing someone will arrive at the door with meals is a comfort. Irma and Ezequiel look forward to receiving socially-distant check-ins from their Meals on Wheels driver. Irma said, "It's so nice to have someone come over and say hello."

Leading by Example

Meals on Wheels OC volunteer driver Reza Mir is passionate about helping seniors. Not only does he work with older adults professionally as a certified Senior Care Advisor, he also spends his free time delivering meals twice a week in Fullerton, Seal Beach, and Brea. "I love it!" said Reza. "Helping seniors is a passion and what I want to do to help the community."

While always practicing safe meal delivery protocol, Reza offers a friendly "How are you doing?" to every client because personal connections are even more critical in this time. Meal deliveries are uplifting for homebound seniors, and acts of kindness are life-enriching for volunteers. For Reza, volunteering also provides a refreshing change from the virtual world. As a member of the OC Digital Rotary, Reza shares his enthusiasm with others who wish to serve. "I lead by example," he said. "I tell people, get off the computer, get in a car, and deliver Meals on Wheels!"

Reza prepares to distribute meals during one of his weekly volunteer shifts.



Holiday Gift Program: A Reminder that Someone Cares

Meals on Wheels OC's annual Holiday Gift Program will soon spread holiday cheer to 1,200 homebound older adults! Each year, caring individuals, groups, and businesses provide unexpected holiday surprises to seniors who may otherwise feel forgotten. One long-time supporter, Anaheim United Methodist Church, has participated annually for 23 years. Church member Sandy Duff has passionately coordinated their efforts for two decades and loves knowing the joy it brings. She said, "It is so important to make seniors feel special and let them know someone cares...even if it's someone they don't know. The gift itself is not as significant as the knowledge that someone took time to think about them."

Due to ongoing COVID concerns, we have redesigned the program. Supporters can purchase items from our Amazon Wish List, cover the cost of a special holiday meal, or provide gift cards that will be used throughout the year to buy necessities for our homebound clients, such as walkers, hygiene items, and pet food.

Sandy believes that participating this year is likely to be especially impactful. She said, "So many seniors are alone during the holidays. Since everyone is rethinking [the safety of gathering] this year, we all may get a taste of what homebound seniors go through."

For more information about providing a gift for one of our Meals on Wheels clients this holiday season, visit MealsOnWheelsOC.org or contact Linda at (714) 229-3377.



"I am so grateful, this gift just meant the world to me.

Thank you so much!"

- Carolyn

Here to Serve: Terry Mullins



What is your role at Meals on Wheels Orange County?

I'm a Lead Site Manager, overseeing the Lunch Café program through several of our partnering senior center locations. Because of the pandemic, we've converted our program to a Grab & Go option.

What does your average day look like?

There is no such thing as a typical day - every day is an adventure! I can be packing meals, helping with distribution, or training volunteers. I also fill in when staff or volunteers need to be off for a day.

What do you like the most about your work?

I've met such wonderful people with rich histories and interesting cultures, and I love listening to stories about their lives. My mother-in-law worked for Meals on Wheels OC for 30 years, and my two daughters volunteer as well. We're a three-generation Meals on Wheels family!

Ways to Give

Mail a check to:
Meals on Wheels OC
1200 N. Knollwood Cir.
Anaheim, CA 92801



Visit our website at:
MealsOnWheelsOC.org



Text "OCMEALS"
to 44-321



Recognize a loved one
through an honorarium
or memorial gift



Make a gift of
appreciated assets or
include us in your
estate plan



Did you catch the show?
Step Up to the Plate: Our Community in Action
Watch online at www.MealsOnWheelsOC.org