

MEALS WHEELS[®]

WESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA

QUARTERLY



APR 2024
ISSUE NO 2

STAR VOLUNTEER

During this volunteer shortage, it's always a treat to have a dedicated helper like Marie.



Marie Quinn was named Black Hills Volunteer of the Month in January by the Helpline Center of the Black Hills! In just 12 months, Marie has selflessly volunteered 122 hours with Meals on Wheels, forging deep connections with the seniors she serves and their families.

“Her exceptional dedication to serving families and improving the community is commendable, and people like her make the world a better place,” Schnider stated.

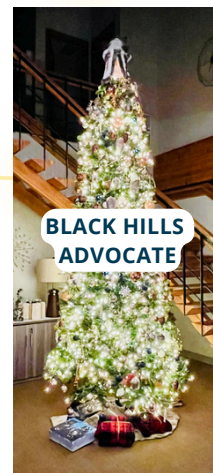
To join Marie and the dedicated folks volunteering in your community, please contact Tim at (605) 381-2129



STURGIS MEALS ON WHEELS



SEQUEL



BLACK HILLS ADVOCATE



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

SALVATION ARMY OF THE BLACK HILLS



FLORA GRACE

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS



107.1 KSLT'S INITIATIVE 'MY GOLDEN VALENTINE'



TIMBER LAKE MEALS ON WHEELS



MEALS ON WHEELS SENIOR

BANK STEPS UP FOR SENIORS

During a time of looming closures and financial hardships, a local bank steps up to help their community.



First Interstate Bank heard seniors' cries for help and has come to lend a hand by announcing a stunning partnership with Meals on Wheels Western SD! Through the partnership, the First Interstate Bank Foundation is sponsoring over 17 seniors - all year long!

The Foundation had this to say, "The health and happiness of the places we call home matter to us, and that's why #TeamFirstInterstate is proud to partner with Meals on Wheels Western South Dakota to bring comfort, care and nutrition to older adults who need it most."

If you or your business is interested in sponsoring seniors in YOUR community, please contact Jonah Baier at (605) 394-6002 or jonah.baier@mealsprogram.com

A wide variety of public recognitions and incentives are available to participating sponsors.



Cyrisa Thompson, longtime Meals on Wheels volunteer and employee of First Interstate Bank

SENATORS IN THE KITCHEN

March for Meals has passed, but the fight for #savelunch stays strong.

Encouraged by the letters expressing incredible growth and need of seniors in western South Dakota, Senator Mike Rounds' office reached out. The Senators team toured the Rapid City kitchen and the nearby senior center with an interest in wanting to learn more about the program and the impact on the community. Here is what George Larson, Meals on Wheels Western SD Executive Director had to say about the visit,

“They realized what amazing work the team there is doing via staff and volunteers, but also how in the coming years, the need is going to outpace that existing space.”



With every wall covered and every nook and cranny filled, the message was clear.

“The kitchen was originally built and designed to do about 750 meals a day. Right now, we are doing almost 1,500 meals a day. We can’t store much more than a couple days of food in the kitchen.”

Seeing the strain, Senator Rounds' team was glad to get hands-on, packing over 700 frozen meals during their visit.



“They know the need is getting larger and larger every single day... and we have to be prepared to have the facilities necessary to serve those seniors. They felt very positive about that.” says Larson.

The visit was a powerful opportunity to raise awareness of underfunding, as well as a positive reminder that when a community comes together, elected officials and representatives are here to listen.

Call the Fire Department!

2023 marked the most Thanksgiving meals served in Meals on Wheels Western SD history! Luckily, the Rapid City Fire Department was here to help!

“[We are] Grateful to be part of something special this Thanksgiving season!”

- Rapid City Fire Department

Thank you RCFD for taking care of our community in more ways than one!



FIRE AND FURRY!



Happy Birthday Norman!

This special sausage's birthday festivities brought in over 230 lbs of pet food for the Kibbles of Kindness program! This special Meals on Wheels Western SD program relies on community donations of kibble and pet necessities for seniors' furry family!

Special thanks to Slip Knits for putting together this kibble-drive!

\$5 = 1 MEAL

64
COMMUNITIES
SERVED

MORE THAN
27%
OF SOUTH
DAKOTA'S
POPULATION
WILL BE
OVER 60
BY 2030

2,000 Meals
Served to
Seniors a Day

18
SD NURSING
HOMES CLOSED
SINCE 2017

AVERAGE \$\$\$ / MONTH IN SD

ASSISTED LIVING = \$3,638

NURSING HOME = \$9,155

MEALS ON WHEELS = \$110

THE AVERAGE
SOCIAL SECURITY
INCOME IN SD IS

\$16,108
A YEAR

 MEALS
on WHEELS
WESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA

CATASTROPHIC CRASH



The Rapid City Police and Fire Departments were called to the 400 block of Philadelphia Street around 10:40 p.m. April 9 when an SUV crashed into Memorial Park Apartments, a Meals on Wheels serving location.

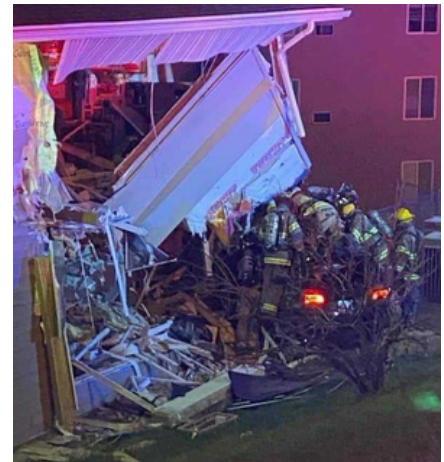


Tragically, two passengers of the vehicle were pronounced dead on the scene while a third remains in critical condition. No one inside the apartment building was seriously injured, however, the building was immediately evacuated. The impact of the crash caused a gas line to break, leading to a leak that reached dangerous and explosive levels.

Of the 61 residents of Memorial Park Apartments, nearly 30 relied on Meals on Wheels services. The residents were temporarily placed in a nearby hotel. Unfortunately, due to the immediate nature of the evacuation, many were without their personal belongings. The seniors were missing dentures, shoes, glasses, and other important items.

“I lost everything...”

Says an older woman weeping over her walker, barefoot in the lobby of the hotel. Her apartment had taken the brunt of the crash.





This is when the community sprung into action. Graciously, the hotel reserved a room for Meals on Wheels and Feeding South Dakota to serve their meals and store their supplies. Through dedicated staff and volunteers, the MOW Rapid City kitchen was miraculously able to produce an additional 612 meals on top of the 1,500 meals prepared earlier that day - a historical feat.

Soon, the displaced seniors were supplied with breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, beverages, and shelf stable foods for the duration of their stay.

Smiles and reassurance were spread and a visit from the Pennington County Sheriff's Department brought appreciation for all the involved community members.

It is unsure when the residents will be able to return to their homes, but it is guaranteed they will be supplied with 3 meals a day for the duration of their displacement. This is made possible by the good work of the community, Meals on Wheels, and a generous grant through Black Hills Area Community Foundation that will help offset a portion of the disaster costs.



Pennington County Sheriffs Office, Feeding South Dakota, Meals on Wheels Western SD

**TO HELP PROVIDE MEALS FOR THESE DISPLACED SENIORS, PLEASE VISIT
MEALSPROGRAM.COM/DONATE OR CALL (605) 394-6002**

**ADDITIONALLY, TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DISPLACEMENT FUND, PLEASE
CONTACT BLACK HILLS AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AT (605) 718-0112.**

ADOPT-A-SENIOR: UPDATE

The word is out and communities are starting to come together!

Awareness spread when the devastating news - 500 seniors could lose their meals - was released following the State's proposal for further funding cuts.

This sparked response from several communities such as the Ogalala Lakota Nation, Butte County, and the City of Martin, **each** pledging to cover 60 seniors!

Between neighbors, businesses, and organizations, we are glad to report that as of April 26th, 2024, 247 west river seniors have been adopted! This guarantees the funding and access for 247 seniors to continue receiving their life-saving meals.

"BEFORE MEALS ON WHEELS STARTED COMING, ALL I HAD TO EAT WAS CANNED FOODS ... I'M GRATEFUL I DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT ANYMORE." (DAWN, AGE 76)

Unfortunately, that still leaves 253 seniors and several communities in jeopardy.

"PLEASE KEEP MEALS ON WHEELS GOING IN LEMMON ... MOST OF THE TIME IT'S THE ONLY HOT MEAL I GET BECAUSE I CAN'T PREPARE MY OWN ANYMORE ... SOMEDAY YOU MAY NEED THEM TOO" (LEMMON, SD)

"I DON'T DRIVE. I CAN'T WALK OVER ½ A BLOCK. THE NEED IS HERE." (EDGEMONT, SD)

Without the necessary support, the 253 seniors that currently rely on Meals on Wheels for their nutrition and socialization will be forced to suspend their services. This news has not been taken lightly and has been the spark of many conversations through South Dakota and across the nation.

"I WAS TOLD TO START THE DAY OUT RIGHT BY EATING A GOOD BREAKFAST AND IT IS IMPORTANT TO EAT BALANCED MEALS TO KEEP US HEALTHY. I LOOK FORWARD TO MY MEALS BECAUSE THEY'RE WHAT'S KEEPING ME HEALTHY." (DYE, 71)



Meals on Wheels' services are a proven remedy for malnutrition and isolation, preventing tragic accidents and emergencies in the vulnerable older population. In fact, falls are the leading cause of injury death in seniors, costing about \$50 billion in medical costs. Studies show that loneliness and isolation have comparable impact to obesity, substance abuse, and smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Focusing on prevention and optimizing health is not only essential, but significantly easier and less costly.

"IF I COULD AFFORD TO GET IN A PLACE, I WOULD. BUT BEING IN MY HOME IS SOMETHING SPECIAL. MEALS ON WHEELS HELPS ME STAY HERE." (CHARLES, AGE 82)

Shockingly, recent reports show the average cost of assisted living in South Dakota is nearly \$3,000 a month and \$10,000 a month for nursing homes. That is, if you can find a long term care facility with openings. Unfortunately, the hardships of assisted living facilities can also be attributed to the state funding issues.

"I LOOK FORWARD TO IT EVERY DAY. A LOT OF TIMES, IT'S THE ONLY THING I HAVE TO LOOK FORWARD TO." (DELBERT, AGE 79)

Between unaffordable and unobtainable long term care, rising cost of living, and the rapidly increasing over 60 population, the struggles plaguing the older population are like never before.

"THIS ROOM IS WHERE WE HAD SUNDAY SCHOOL WHEN I WAS A GIRL. NOW I'M 77 AND IT'S WHERE I HAVE MY MEAL... BACK THEN I WOULD NEVER BELIEVED THAT I'D NEED HELP LIKE THIS... BUT I'M BLESSED TO HAVE SOMETHING GOOD TO EAT. EVERY MEAL FROM THESE PEOPLE IS A BLESSING." (BETH, 77)

Seniors relying on their meals and visits, **could lose even more.**

For just \$110 a month, **YOU** can ensure that a struggling senior **NEVER** loses their meals!

Reserves are running dry and cancellations are soon to come...

CAN YOU HELP SAVE THEIR LUNCH?



YOU CAN SAVE LUNCH

**Learn How You or Your Business Can Be a
HERO in Your Community**



Adopt-A-Senior - \$110/Month

**Covers all meals and services for a senior
in your community**



Adopt-A-Route - \$110/Month x 15 Seniors

**Covers all meals and services for a
neighborhood of seniors**

Volunteer Opportunities - Contact for More Information

Meal Delivery

Kitchen Assistance

Group Projects

Corporate + Team Friendly



MEALS  WHEELS®
WESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA

www.mealsprogram.com

(605)394-6002