Meals on Wheels of Charlotte County

NEWSLETTER

FALL/WINTER 2026



Sharing Warmth, Building Connection

The holidays bring familiar traditions, shared meals, and time with people we love. But for some older adults in our community, they can also bring a deeper sense of loneliness. The loss of a spouse, family living far away, or difficulty leaving home can make a season centered on togetherness feel especially quiet.

It's easy to assume someone has family checking in or a place to spend the holidays. Yet a neighbor who has always been independent may now find it difficult to reach out. A simple phone call or visit can open the door to conversation, and remind them they still have a place in someone's life.

We can all help create that connection. Invite an older neighbor to a gathering, offer a ride, or take time to call and listen. Small gestures can bring warmth to a quiet day. Together, we can help our neighbors feel remembered and included, through the holidays and long after the season ends.

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> "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."
> Mahatma Gandhi

FOR MORE INFORMATION



UPCOMING EVENTS

Take a Swing Against Hunger
FALL Golf Tournament

October 24th, 2026
Riverwood Golf Club





From the Desk of our Board President

Dear Friends,

As fall arrives and we look ahead to the holiday season, our Florida weather may not change much, but this time of year still brings a renewed spirit of gratitude, generosity, and connection. For many homebound seniors, however, the holidays can increase feelings of loneliness and isolation, making a warm meal and friendly visit more meaningful than ever.

Every weekday, our staff and dedicated volunteers deliver nutritious meals along with comfort, companionship, and reassurance. Each visit reminds our seniors that they are valued, remembered, and not alone. For their families, it provides peace of mind knowing someone is checking on their loved one with care and compassion.

There are many ways you can help this season. Make a one-time gift, become a Monthly Meal Maker donor, volunteer to deliver meals, donate gently used items to our thrift store, shop with us, or share our mission with others. Every act of generosity, large or small, helps us continue serving seniors throughout Charlotte County.

As the holidays approach, I encourage you to check in on an older neighbor, friend, or family member. A simple phone call, visit, or kind word can brighten someone's day.

From my heart to yours, thank you for standing beside us and helping bring nourishment, connection, and hope to our seniors. We wish you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season.
With gratitude,

Nancy Woods

Board President

NEED A LITTLE HELP AT MEALTIME?

Do you or someone you know struggle to prepare or obtain nutritious meals? We can help!

Our Mission at Meals on Wheels of Charlotte County is to provide a warm nutritious meal to homebound seniors and or mentally or physically disabled adults who are unable to provide for themselves..

- *60 years of age or older.*
- *Unable to physically meet basic nutritional needs temporarily or long term.*
- *Have no other reliable means of obtaining your daily meals.*
- *Have a residential address in our Charlotte County delivery area.*





WHAT WE DO

- **Deliver a Warm Nutritious Meal**
- **Provide a Friendly Visit & Wellness Check**
- **Support Independence, Help End Isolation**



Meals on Wheels of Charlotte County

Call us today at (941) 625-4343

Or Visit our Website at

www.mowofcc.org/meals-1

Office Tidbits

Client Reminders

- Meals are usually delivered between 10am & 11am please be ready to ensure delivery
- Please contact us when possible within 24hrs of delivery to let us know if you will not be home (941) 625-4343
- Please keep your coolers clean for Food Safety
- Place an icepack or frozen water bottle in your cooler if you won't be available to personally receive your meal. Make sure to reheat once cooled.



Al, Volunteer Driver



Don, Kitchen Volunteer



David & Janet, Volunteer Drivers

We ♡ our Volunteers



#BeKind

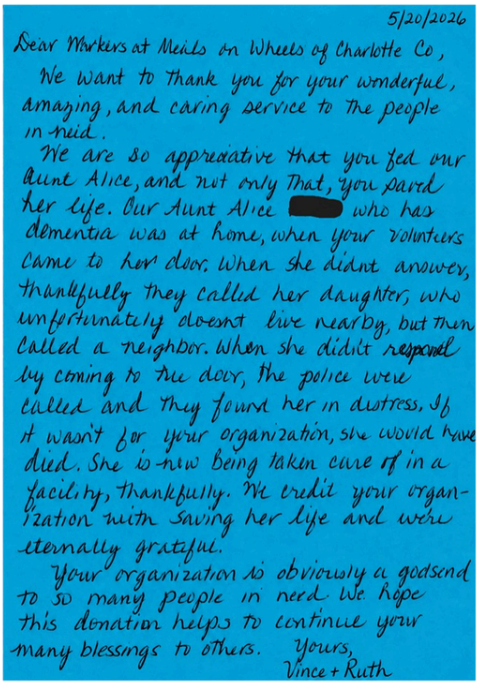


A Meal. A Knock. A Life Saved.

A family's heartfelt letter reminds us why every delivery matters.

For someone who is homebound, the knock at the door from a Meals on Wheels volunteer brings a nutritious meal, a friendly face, and the reassurance that someone is checking in. For one local family, that simple visit meant something far greater.

In a handwritten letter to Meals on Wheels of Charlotte County, Vince and Ruth shared their gratitude for the volunteers who delivered meals to their Aunt Alice. Their words tell a powerful story of caring people taking action when something was wrong.



5/20/2026

Dear Workers at Meals on Wheels of Charlotte Co,

We want to thank you for your wonderful, amazing, and caring service to the people in need.

We are so appreciative that you fed our Aunt Alice, and not only that, you saved her life. Our Aunt Alice [redacted] who has dementia was at home, when your volunteers came to her door. When she didnt answer, thankfully they called her daughter, who unfortunately doesnt live nearby, but then called a neighbor. When she didnt respond by coming to the door, the police were called and they found her in distress. If it wasn't for your organization, she would have died. She is now being taken care of in a facility, thankfully. We credit your organization with saving her life and we're eternally grateful.

Your organization is obviously a godsend to so many people in need. We hope this donation helps to continue your many blessings to others.

Yours,
Vince + Ruth

A heartfelt note from Alice's family.

When volunteers arrived at Alice's home, she did not answer the door. Concerned, they contacted her daughter, who did not live nearby. A neighbor was then contacted. When Alice still did not respond, police were called and found her in distress.

The family credits that chain of concern and follow-up with saving her life. In their letter, they shared that Alice was now receiving care in a facility and expressed their lasting appreciation for everyone involved.

> **"We credit your organization with saving her life and we're eternally grateful."**
> — Vince and Ruth, Alice's family

This is the heart of our mission. Meals provide nourishment, friendly visits offer connection, and wellness checks can bring attention to an urgent need. A volunteer's concern can become the first step toward getting someone help.

As we move through the fall and winter season, Alice's story reminds us how much it matters to stay connected. We are grateful to the volunteers who show up, the staff who support them, and the donors who make these deliveries possible. Together, you help ensure that our homebound neighbors are seen, remembered, and cared for.

Made with Care, Served with Love

A little recognition for two very important people in our kitchen
Our delivery volunteers are often the familiar faces at the door, but behind every meal are people our recipients may never get to meet. This month, we want to recognize our cooks, Debbie Koss and Pam Decker.

It's easy for the kitchen crew to get lost in the background. They're busy preparing the meals while the rest of us get ready to send them on their way. But without Debbie and Pam, there would be no meal to deliver, and no mealtime knock that brings a friendly hello and a chance to check on someone.

Debbie brings more than 25 years of cooking experience, including time with Meals on Wheels in Dover, Delaware. Helping others through food has been part of her life for years, and we're fortunate that she's continuing that work here in Charlotte County. When she's away from the kitchen, she enjoys kayaking, relaxing at the beach, and spending time with her family.

Pam began working in hospitality at just 15 years old. A New York native who has made this community her home, she brings a lifetime of experience and a love of serving others to our kitchen. She's also a proud mom of three grown children and grandmother to four. Cooking for Meals on Wheels gives her a way to give back to the community she loves.

Cooking for so many people is a big job. There is plenty to prepare, a schedule to keep, and another day's meals to think about once today's are on their way. It's steady, hands-on work that deserves more recognition than it often receives.

And those meals mean something. They mean someone doesn't have to struggle to cook that day. They mean one less worry for a family member. They mean a warm lunch and a reminder that someone cares.

Debbie and Pam, we see the work you do, and we appreciate you. Thank you for helping us care for our neighbors, one meal at a time. You may be behind the scenes, but you are very much at the heart of Meals on Wheels.



Pam Decker, Cook with Debbie Koss, Cook

IMPACT STATS 2026

404
seniors served

35,337
meals served



Pat, Store Volunteer

Discover Treasures, Support our Mission

Step into our thrift store and you'll find more than great deals, you'll find a way to make a real difference in our community. Every purchase supports our mission of delivering warm, nutritious meals and spreading kindness and connection to homebound seniors. From clothing and books to unique finds, shopping with us helps bring comfort, joy, and care to those who need it most. Stop by, explore, and be part of something meaningful!

So, the next time you find a treasure in our store or drop off your donations, remember that your kindness nourishes those in need and strengthens the bonds within our community. Every $5 you spend feeds a senior!

Donation Drop-Off:
Days: Monday through Friday
10:00 am to Closing



Cathy, Store & Meal Delivery Volunteer

More Time to Shop, More Ways to Give Back!

Our new thrift store hours are here!

Beginning October 1, we've added more time to browse, discover a treasure, and support a mission close to home.

Monday–Thursday & Saturday: 10 AM–5 PM
Friday: 10 AM–6 PM
Sunday: Closed

Stop in, bring a friend, and see what's new. We look forward to welcoming you!


Finders Keepers Thrift Store
Give a Gift That Gives Twice
Looking for the Perfect Gift?
Every gift card helps us deliver warm, nutritious meals and friendly visits to elderly and/or disabled neighbors in our community.
A thoughtful gift for someone you love.
A meaningful difference for someone in need.
Available in $10, $25, $50, $75, $100 or your specified amount.
Thrift Card
Finders Keepers Thrift Store
NO FEES

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED





Regina, Kitchen Volunteer



Joann, Store Volunteer

KITCHEN

- Food Prep
- Packaging Meals
- Dishes

STORE

- Donation Intake
- Cashiers
- Merchandising

OFFICE

- Thank You Cards
- Assist with other office tasks

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

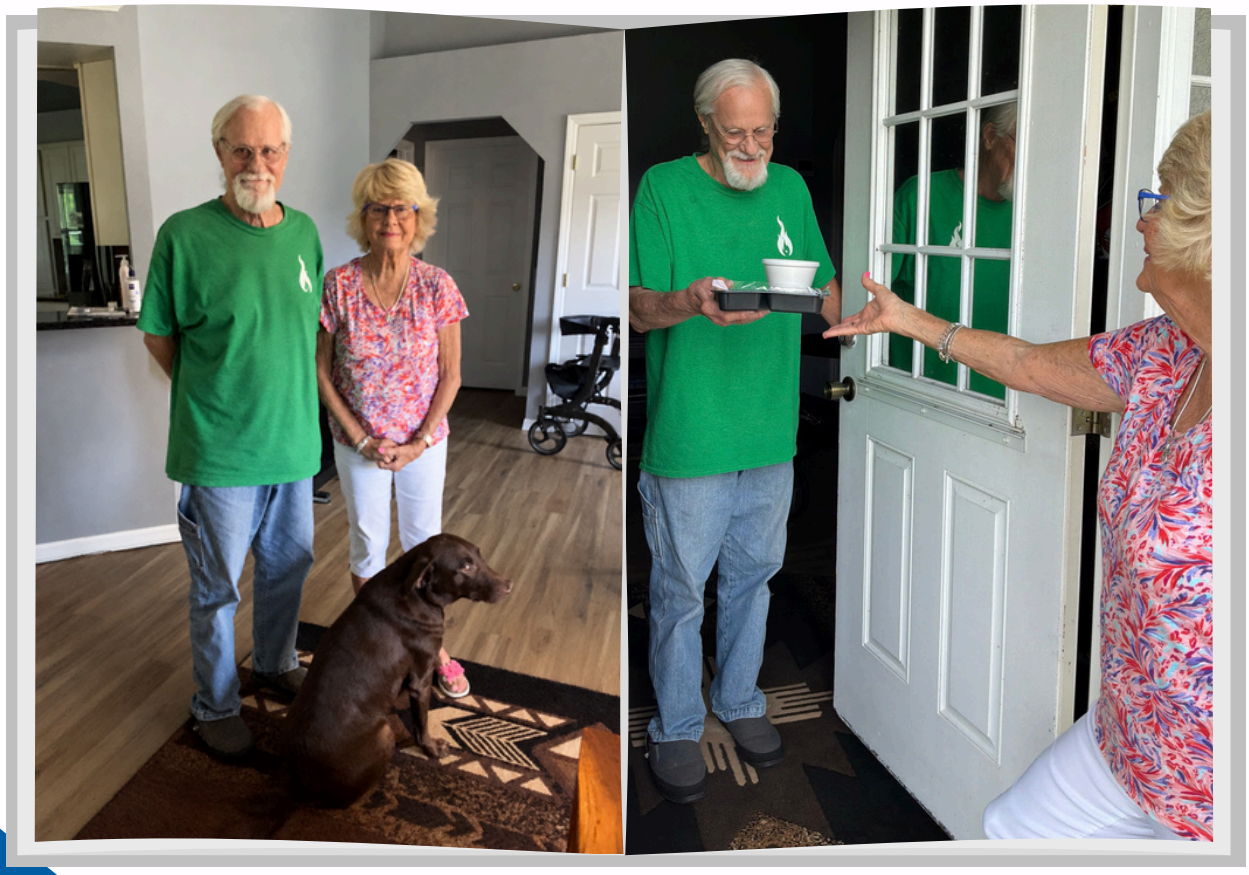
CALL OUR OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION

(941) 625-4343

Meet Everett.
Born in Pennsylvania, Everett's extraordinary journey has taken him far beyond his hometown. After proudly serving in the United States Navy, he began a remarkable new chapter in South America, where he met his wife and raised their two sons and daughter. As a physician at a free clinic, Everett devoted himself to caring for people with limited access to medical care, some traveling down the mountain by ox cart just to reach him. His life is a powerful reflection of service, compassion, and dedication to others.

Everett retired and made Florida his home in 2015, never imagining the devastation he would one day face. When Hurricane Ian struck, a massive tree crashed onto his house, leaving it exposed to the full force of the storm. For over 12 harrowing hours, Everett huddled in a corner as the hurricane tore through and destroyed his home around him. Surviving the storm was only the beginning of his long journey home. He spent the next year and a half living in a trailer on his front lawn before staying with a neighbor while his house was finally rebuilt, an extraordinary testament to his courage, strength, and resilience.

Everett spent much of his life answering the call to serve others, as a Navy veteran, physician, husband, and father. So, when the time came for him to accept help himself, saying yes did not come easily. Through a compassionate referral and gentle encouragement, he finally agreed to begin receiving Meals on Wheels in December 2025. Now, with Toby, his devoted service dog and constant companion, faithfully by his side, each warm meal and friendly visit is our community's opportunity to give something back to a man who has given so much of himself to others. Everett's story reminds us that behind every door is not simply someone receiving a meal, but a remarkable life, a courageous spirit, and a story worth knowing.



Everett with Toby and Volunteer Driver now Friend Chyleen



Volunteer Chyleen: A Heart for Helping, a Love for People

When Chyleen lost her husband, she knew she didn't want to spend her days sitting at home. In July 2020, she began volunteering with Meals on Wheels and found a meaningful way to stay connected while caring for others.

Chyleen loves being around people, especially children and older adults. Talking with the seniors on her delivery route is her favorite part of volunteering. For her, each stop is a chance to share a conversation and enjoy someone's company.

Originally from West Virginia, Chyleen and her husband built their Florida home in 1997, enjoying vacations and snowbird seasons before moving here in 2019. Today, she lives with her granddaughter. Her son and daughter are both special education teachers; her daughter lives in Punta Gorda, and her son hopes to move from West Virginia to Florida soon.

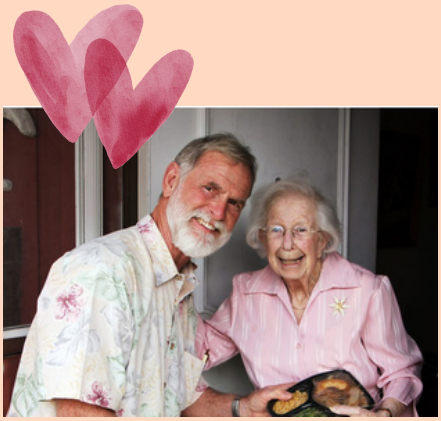
Asked what she wanted readers to know about her, Chyleen put it simply: "I really enjoy my people!"

We're grateful she shares that warmth with our Meals on Wheels family.

SMALL ACTS. BIG IMPACT.

GIVE MONTHLY

Become a Monthly Mealmaker



SHOP OUR THRIFT STORE

Every $5 Provides a Meal



JOIN THE FUN!

Attend or sponsor a fundraising event.



LEAVE A LEGACY

Let your legacy live on.



DONATE A FUEL CARD

Your kindness keeps us going.



Become a MONTHLY MEAL MAKER

Together we feed more than hunger!

Every meal you help provide is more than nutrition, it's comfort, connection, and a reminder that someone cares. As a Monthly Meal Maker, you stand beside seniors who might otherwise face hunger and isolation. Your ongoing support ensures they're never alone, and never forgotten.





Supports Seniors

Promotes Independence

Strengthens our Community



Supporting our Local Seniors, One Meal at a Time.



Volunteer Spotlight



MEET Ontario
Meal Delivery Volunteer

Meet Ontario, a smiling face and a steady presence on our delivery routes for more than 19 years.

Ontario volunteers alongside others from the Janet Jones Group Home in Port Charlotte, helping deliver meals to seniors throughout our community. As a disabled adult, his commitment to giving back is truly inspiring, showing that compassion and dedication have no limits.

For nearly two decades, Ontario has been showing up with consistency and heart. With every delivery, he brings more than just a meal, he brings connection, a friendly face, and a reminder that someone cares.

His kindness, reliability, and positive spirit brighten the day for so many.

We are incredibly grateful for Ontario and the entire Janet Jones group for being such an important part of our mission.

"When you give your time, you deliver more than a meal, you deliver comfort, connection, and kindness."

thank you

holiday WISH LIST

The holidays are a time for sharing, and together we can make the season brighter for our seniors. Starting in November, we'll be accepting donations from our Holiday Meal Wishlist to bring comfort, joy, and holiday cheer to every table. If you'd like to donate, please contact our office at **(941) 625-4343**



FROZEN TURKEYS OR BONELESS HAMS
16-20lbs or larger



RUSSET POTATOES
10lb bags



SWEET POTATOES



STUFFING CUBES



NO SALT ADDED CANNED WHOLE KERNEL CORN OR CUT GREEN BEANS (large cans if available)



CANNED JELLIED CRANBERRIE SAUCE (large cans if available)



2% MILK GALLON



EASY PUMPKIN PIE MIX



unsalted Butter



Dash Salt free Garlic & Herb Seasoning

*Please note we due to food safety requirements, we cannot accept turkeys or hams that are not frozen. And we cannot accept partial bags or items that are not within the best by, use by or expiration date.

Please note we due to food safety requirements, we cannot accept turkeys that are not frozen. And we cannot accept partial bags or items that are not within the best by, use by or expiration date.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Mark Your Calendar For Our Upcoming Events



SATURDAY
OCT 24TH

REGISTRATION
7:30AM

RIVERWOOD GOLF CLUB
4100 RIVERWOOD DRIVE, PORT CHARLOTTE FL

CONTACT DARCY FOR TICKETS & SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
(941) 763-2195

100% OF NET PROCEEDS BENEFIT

Meals on Wheels of Charlotte County

NISSAN | HARBOR NISSAN

LIFETIME RainSoft WARRANTY

Spinal Health & Rehab Integrative Medicine

DK BOOKKEEPING SERVICE "Accountants Have Nice Figures"

H.E.L.P. IN CHARLOTTE COUNTY

CREWS BANK & TRUST

LCBW LOCAL CHAPTERS OF BUSINESS WOMEN, LLC

AVENUE GARAGE

4 SEASONS AIR CONDITIONING, INC. ...FOR YEAR 'ROUND COMFORT

Darcy & the Divas Party Rentals & EVENT PLANNING

ActivAge DAYTIME SENIOR CARE

Publix

The Healer's House FAMILY CHURCH

Slack ORTHODONTICS

BlueStream HOME LOANS Lending Made Simple.

Jon Gesicki D.D.S. General Dentistry & Sleep Apnea

DR. AMY MELLOR, MD NEUROLOGIST

MR. FRONT END FRONT END ALIGNMENT SPECIALISTS

Modern Woodmen FRATERNAL FINANCIAL

MARY KAY BEAUTY AND ELEGANCE Anne Woodward 941-661-9974

THE HOME DEPOT

Elite Inspections & Pest Solutions "Where Quality Matters"

SUNLAND PAVING

ATTIC CONTROL Insulation & Home Services

CADDY CARTS

MOVEMENT CHURCH

When you support our mission, you help seniors feel seen, valued, and remembered every day.

the power to prevent
ELDER ABUSE
Is in Your Hands

Elder Abuse. Neglect. Exploitation.
It happens to your friends, neighbors and family.

To Report Abuse, Call:

1-800-96-ABUSE
(1-800-962-2873)



Elder Affairs FLORIDA

Florida Department of Children and Families

Stop! ELDER ABUSE



WORD SEARCH

Find 16 seasonal words across, down, or diagonally.

E N E B J L Z B C L G V H V D
T H A N K F U L O L Y S R N T
X E H F P Z Z F C N A N F X K
Z N Z C V U X Z O H I O F Z W
D M B G H P M H A G O W L J Z
H H A A I R V P G M K F H I C
Y I L U U V I Q K M V L A R K
A D I F T S I S I I B A R D T
N L X Z K U N N T J N K V T Q
W I N T E R M D G M O E E M L
M I T T E N S N S G A Y S I E
G R A T I T U D E B W S T N A
A Q Z R V X X F A M I L Y X V
V G L N C H O L I D A Y V K E
T T U R K E Y K V D X J Q J S

- ☐ AUTUMN
- ☐ CHRISTMAS
- ☐ COCOA
- ☐ FAMILY
- ☐ GIVING
- ☐ GRATITUDE
- ☐ HARVEST
- ☐ HOLIDAY
- ☐ JOY
- ☐ LEAVES
- ☐ MITTENS
- ☐ PUMPKIN
- ☐ SNOWFLAKE
- ☐ THANKFUL
- ☐ TURKEY
- ☐ WINTER







RESOURCE GUIDE



DIAL 2-1-1

Did you know you can dial 2-1-1 to get connected to local resources? Whether you need help with food, housing, utility bills, medical care, or other community services, 2-1-1 is available 24/7, free, and confidential. Trained specialists will listen and connect you with the support you need.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY
FLORIDA

FREE TRANSPORTATION

Charlotte County Transit – FREE Rides
Charlotte County residents can use Charlotte Rides, a free, safe, and convenient curb-to-curb transit service.



Cost: Free of charge
Ages: 13+ ride independently; under 13 must ride with an adult

Destinations: Medical appointments, shopping, banks, restaurants, airport, schools/colleges, library, sports events, and more

Accessibility: Wheelchair, scooter, walker, and stroller friendly

How to Ride: Download the Charlotte Rides mobile app or call **941-575-4000 (option 1)** to set up an account and schedule rides

Did you know we have an Amazon Wishlist?
This season, you can help bring extra comfort and joy to our seniors by purchasing items from our list. Your gift goes beyond a meal, it provides the everyday essentials that make life brighter and easier.

With our Program Manager, Wendy Bonsall, carefully overseeing distribution, every donation finds its way directly to the clients who need it most.
Together, let's make the holidays a little warmer for our community.

wishlist amazon

3082 TAMIAMI TRAIL, PORT CHARLOTTE, FL 33952

(941) 625-4343

WWW.MOWOFCC.ORG

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MOWOFCC

@MEALSONWHEELSCHARLOTTECOUNTY



Thank you for reading!