



Food For Thought

Senior hunger in South Florida is a pressing issue that often remains hidden beneath the region's glamorous reputation. Despite the area's affluence, many older adults face food insecurity due to a combination of factors. Fixed incomes can leave seniors struggling to make ends meet as cost of living increases, while limited mobility often hampers their ability to access affordable and nutritious food. This not only compromises their health and well-being but also places added stress on families and community resources.

The impact of hunger among seniors can lead to increased medical issues and decreased quality of life, creating a cycle of hardship that is difficult to break. To combat this, community involvement is crucial. Our organization is doing everything we can to provide support through our meal delivery services and wellness check. By shining a light on this issue, we can work together to ensure that our senior citizens live with the dignity and nourishment they deserve.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Darcy Woods, President Jami Joannes, Vice President Valerie Tiffany, Secretary Donna Kennedy, Treasurer Keith Meyer, Board Member Kevin Locket, Board Member Jennifer Neuman, Board Member Amber Weaver, Board Member Ryan Barber, Board Member Peri Bluemer, Board Member Dr. Amy Mellor, Board Member

FOR MORE



UPCOMING EVENTS

Mardi Gras on Marion Saturday, March 29th, 2025 F.M. Don's Punta Gorda



Annual "Take a Swing Against Hunger" Golf Tournament Saturday April 26th, 2025 Riverwood Golf Club Port Charlotte



From the Desk of our Board President

We at Meals on Wheels of Charlotte County are very grateful for the generosity of our community who have enabled us to serve so many Charlotte County residents without relying on federal funding. The majority of Meals on Wheels programs across the country are reliant on federal money to provide food for their recipients. When Meals on Wheels of Charlotte County, then Health Plus, was established over 50 years ago, the founders believed that the Charlotte County Community had the strength and compassion to support our seniors, and that continues to this day. We know, with your support, we can keep the wheels rolling to help our neighbors maintain their independence.

Our Impact

We are currently serving over 180 Charlotte County seniors, most of whom are below poverty level. We have a dedicated team of volunteers who deliver over 560 meals a week. Along with the hot nutritious meal, our volunteers provide a friendly smile and a safety check — a critical service for many of our recipients who don't have local friends or family checking on them daily. It is through the generosity of our community, volunteers, and volunteer board members that we are able to continue our mission of keeping seniors living safely and independently in their homes as long as possible.

How You Can Help

To sustain our efforts and expand our reach, we invite you to become involved in any way you can:

- 1. **Volunteer Your Time:** Join our team of volunteers to deliver meals, help in our kitchen or thrift store.
- 2. Join our Meal Maker Program: by joining our Meal Maker Program. You will directly support seniors in our community providing warm nutritious meals weekly, monthly, annually or at a level of your choice. Visit our website for more information. www.mowofcc.org/meal-maker-program
- 3. **Attend a Fundraising Event:** We host various fundraising events from Bingo to Golf that 100% of net proceeds go directly to our mission.
- 4. **Spread the Word:** Share our mission with your friends and family to build a stronger network of support.

Thank You

Thank you for being an integral part of our community and for supporting Meals on Wheels of Charlotte County. Together, we can ensure that no senior goes hungry and that they remain safe in their homes. With your continued support, we can keep making a difference, one meal at a time.

Warmest regards, Darcy Woods Board President

A Day in the Life at Meals on Wheels

As the sun rises, the kitchen fills with the aroma of freshly chopped vegetables and simmering soup. Jeff, our Kitchen Manager, orchestrates the day's menu with precision, ensuring each meal not only nourishes but brings joy to its recipient. Toller, his assistant, and the volunteers work seamlessly, chopping, stirring, and packaging each meal with care and attention to detail. By mid-morning, the meals are ready, and the serving begins.

The atmosphere is one of camaraderie and purpose, as everyone understands the vital role they play in supporting the seniors of our community.

While the kitchen is bustling to get the meals ready, our dedicated Program Manager, Wendy Bonsall arrives and shortly thereafter our delivery volunteers start arriving, their cars lined up to be loaded with nourishing meals. Each meal is carefully prepared and packed, embodying the love and care of those who made them. As the cars are filled, a sense of purpose and community fills the air. The volunteers set off, ready to distribute warmth and nutrition to those eagerly waiting. This effort not only provides sustenance but also a reminder that someone cares, creating a ripple of kindness and connection throughout the community.

Each delivery is more than just a meal; it's a moment of connection, a chance to check in and share a smile or a brief conversation. As the day progresses, the impact of our work becomes clear—your contributions not only fill plates but also hearts, fostering a sense of community and care with every doorstep visit.





Shawn Joannes, Volunteer



Vivian, Volunteer



Toller Saller, Kitchen Assistant







Our Thrift Store "Finders Keepers"

Shopping at our Finders Keepers Thrift Store offers a wonderful opportunity to make a meaningful difference in your community while discovering amazing bargains on a variety of items, from clothing to housewares. Each purchase or donation you make directly fuels our mission to provide warm, nutritious meals to elderly individuals in Charlotte County who struggle to obtain or prepare meals on their own.

This initiative not only serves a hearty meal but also includes a welfare check and a friendly smile from our dedicated volunteers, enabling seniors to maintain their independence in the comfort of their own homes. 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 3:00 pm

Please note, our donation door is closed Saturdays, however we would love to take your smaller donations in our store.

> Now OPEN SATURDAY Oam-4pm

By shopping or donating, you become part of a compassionate mission that prioritizes community support and togetherness.

Gwen Blocker Store Associate MaryAnne Maddage Store Associate

Cindy Carallo Volunteer



als on Wheels Clien

Meet Wendy Bonsall, Program Manager

Wendy joined our organization in December of 2020, initially as a store associate. Her remarkable passion and unwavering commitment to our mission led to her swift promotion to Program Assistant. This role allowed her to engage directly with our clients, guiding them through the onboarding process of our program. Throughout her tenure, Wendy received training across all facets of our organization, which paved the way for her current role as Program Manager.



Client Reminders

 Meals are usually delivered between 10am & 11am please be ready to ensure delivery

Office Tinhits

- 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.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

SUNDAY MARCH 9th

Don't forget to Spring Ahead!

10

We offer More than just a Nutritious Meal!



Help is Available

If you or someone you know is 60 years or older and is struggling to obtain, prepare, or afford warm, nutritious meals, we are here to assist. Our dedicated staff and volunteers are eager to help.

Our program is designed to meet the needs of seniors, ensuring they receive the nourishment they deserve. We aim to support health and well-being.

Our program not only focuses on providing nutritious food, but we also prioritize social interaction and connection, helping to combat loneliness and isolation. Reach out today to discover how we can make a positive difference in your life or the life of a loved one.

How Can you Help?

Become A Meal Maker! visit our website for more information www.mowofcc.org/meal-maker-program



Benefits

- Proper Nutrition
- Wellness Check
- Maintain Independance



Charles & Diana Constanzo Volunteers



Volunteer Spotlight

Meet Al Uber

Al has truly led a life of service and dedication. Drafted into the Army in 1969, he served our country by ensuring that military vehicles, like Jeeps, were in top condition while stationed in Europe. This skillset and commitment to hard work carried over into his civilian life when he returned to Ohio to contribute to his family's towing business. Since July 2021, Al has been generously delivering for Meals on Wheels of Charlotte County, showing his unwavering dedication to helping others. His efforts have made a significant difference in the lives of seniors, providing them with not only meals but also companionship and kindness. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Al for both his military service and his ongoing commitment to his community.

thank you

2024

Appreciation

DINNER

Hosted By



<u>www.laisleycrabhouse.com.</u> 150 Laishley Ct, Punta Gorda, FL 33950











































































FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Meet Our Fundraising and Event Coordinator

Debbie Amaral-Chow

Debbie's long-standing commitmer County community is evident thre involvement and personal invest: Having resided there since 198° raised her three sons with the husband, a dedicated Punta Gor also extended her love and care to that includes three stepchildren.

Debbie's commitment to serving others is evident through her work with Tidwell Hospice and Meals o. Wheels of Charlotte County. Her deep-seated passion lies in supporting the elderly residents of area, striving to ensure they remain independent in their homes with access to proper nutrition. With over 11 years of involvement with Meals on Wheels, Debbie has been a tireless advocate for spreading awareness about the importance of providing nutritional support to the elderly.

UPCOMING EVENTS





Saturday March 29th

1:30pm

F.M. Dons 201 West Marion Avenue Punta Gorda, FL





Saturday April 26th

Registration starts at 7:30am! Shotgun at 8:30am!

Riverwood Golf Club 4100 Riverwood Drive Port Charlotte, FL







Tuesday July 8th



6:00pm - 9:00pm

24TwentyOne Event Center

2421 Tamiami Trail Port Charlotte, FL































Thank you



1059 Tamiami Trail Port Charlotte



























Thank you

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VOLUNTEER

WE NEED YOUR

call our office for more information (941) 625-4343

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- <u>KITCHEN</u>
- Food Prep
- Packaging Meals
- Dishes

OFFICE

- Answering Phone
- Client Intake

F

From the Desk of our Operations Manager

As hurricane season approaches, it's crucial for every individual and organization to have a well-thought-out emergency plan in place. At Meals on Wheels of Charlotte County, we understand the unpredictable nature of hurricanes, having witnessed and experienced the devastation caused by past storms like Charley, Ian, and most recently Helene, and Milton.

Our priority remains delivering warm, nutritious meals to our clients, but we must also prepare for potential disruptions to our facilities, staff, and volunteers. An effective emergency plan ensures not only the safety and well-being of our team but also the continued support for those we serve. It involves assessing risks, establishing communication protocols, securing resources, and coordinating with local emergency services. By taking proactive steps now, we can mitigate the impact of these powerful storms and ensure our community remains resilient and supported in times of need.

Let's all commit to preparing and protecting each other as we face the upcoming hurricane season together.

We encourage our clients and volunteers to stay informed by following local weather updates and advisories. It's important to have an emergency kit ready, containing essential items such as water, non-perishable food, medications, flashlights, and batteries. Additionally, having a clear evacuation plan and knowing your local shelters can make a significant difference in ensuring your safety.

Our team is dedicated to maintaining open lines of communication during emergencies. We will provide updates through our website, social media channels, and direct communication with our clients and volunteers. This will help ensure everyone is aware of any changes to our services or operations.

Together, with preparedness and community spirit, we can navigate the challenges posed by hurricane season. We thank you for your continued support and commitment to helping those in need. Stay safe, and let's work together to weather the storms ahead.

Sincerely, Kate Grossl Operations Manager



DONAE e

WAYS YOU CAN HELP

Supporting our mission can take many forms, each essential to our ongoing efforts.

One of the simplest ways to contribute is to join our Meal Maker Program. To become a Meal Maker Donor, visit our website at www.mowofcc.org/meal-maker-program.

You can also support us by shopping at or donating items to our Finders Keepers Thrift Store, located at 3082 Tamiami Trail, Port Charlotte, FL 33952, where 100% of net proceeds go directly to our cause.

Donating gas cards helps us meet immediate logistical needs and enhances our volunteer activities.

You can connect with us by sponsoring or participating in our fundraising events, which are both enjoyable and impactful.

Volunteering your time and skills is another invaluable way to make a difference.

or If you're considering long-term support, think about leaving a legacy gift.

Additionally, monetary donations can be made via check or money order, made payable to Meals on Wheels Charlotte County. Mail to: Meals on Wheels of Charlotte County

3082 Tamiami Trail Port Charlotte, FL 33952

Every contribution is fully tax-deductible. Your support in any of these ways greatly strengthens the success of our mission. If you'd like to discuss any of these opportunities, please feel free to contact our Program Manager, Wendy Bonsall at: (941) 625-4343



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FLOWERS			BREEZE			RAINBOW				BEE			
BLOSSOM			SUNNY			LADYBUG				RAIN			
BUTTERFLY			PICNIC				SPROUTS				GROW		

Did you know we have an Amazon Wishlist?

When you purchase items from our Wishlist, you play a vital role in enhancing the wellbeing of our clients by supplying them with essential items.

We understand that our clients' needs extend beyond just meals, as everyday necessities can significantly impact their lives.

With Wendy Bonsall, our Program Manager, overseeing the distribution, we guarantee that every donation is delivered to those who need it the most.

3082 TAMIAMI TRAIL, PORT CHARLOTTE, FL 33952



