

Mixing meals with wheels, it's a team

RAN 10/9/85

by Elizabeth Rigby

They have all known better, happier times, but now they have problems that hold them housebound, unable to shop for groceries, finding it difficult to prepare the one nutritious meal each day that is essential to their wellbeing.

A man and his wife, she unable to walk except with the aid of two canes, he suffering from an advanced case of glaucoma.

A lady over 90 years old who is very hard of hearing, almost blind, and confined to her chair most of the day, with no family to help her.

Another, also living alone, who needs a special diabetic diet.

A bachelor recovering from surgery, who must remain in bed for a while.

A woman who must use an oxygen tank in order to breathe, and her husband, also in very poor health, who has been struggling to take care of her without outside assistance.

These are a few of the ailing or elderly Sedonans whose independence has been taken from them by circumstances and who are now being helped by the Adult Community Center of Sedona's urgently-needed new program, Meals On Wheels, that moved into high gear on Monday, September 30 and is now prepared to roll on full speed ahead.

"Mixing meals with wheels, it's a team," says Margaret Flynn, the program's originator and coordinator, reporting on the first week's successful operation.

During the five days of that first week, 52 individual hot lunches were delivered by 46 volunteers working in teams of two each. During that time, only one team was called upon to deliver on more than one day, and they delivered only

twice. Most had two homes on their schedules, although a few had three. All were pleasantly surprised to find out how little time was required for the service, due to the efficiency with which the program has been organized.

This is the ACCS's first major undertaking, and it has been made possible by the cooperative effort for which the Sedona community is so well known.

The nutritionally-balanced meals (or special diets, if prescribed by a physician) are being prepared at cost (\$3.50 per meal) in the Kachina Pointe Health Center's kitchen under the direction of the Center's Food Service Supervisor, Joan Owen. An initial donation of \$2,000 from Sedona Healthcare Services made possible the purchase of the special equipment needed to transport the hot meals and the covering of other expenses.

On Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays, the Kachina Pointe Health Center van brings the insulated-container-enclosed meals to the Revco end of the Bayless parking lot, where Adult Community Center volunteers pick up the containers for delivery to the assigned homes. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the meals are picked up at Kachina by a Seventh-day Adventist Church vehicle and brought to the volunteers at the parking lot.

The Aladdin Insulated Delivery System containers are equipped with disposable dishes that contain the components of the meals, which follow the regular, or special, Kachina menus. Generally speaking, those meals are low in sodium and sugar, and milk and a fruit drink are always included.

At the homes being served, the volunteers set the tables and may visit briefly with the clients before

returning with the empty containers, which can then be readied for re-use the following day.

All the volunteers reported that the men and women receiving the meals appeared to be delighted with them and most appreciative.

One client said, "It looks like a meal fit for a king," but, says Mrs. Flynn, "I think he was also glad to see some friendly faces. I wish the recipients could have seen the smiles on the faces of the volunteers when they returned with the containers. Those smiles were ample testimony to the reward that comes with this kind of service."

Although Meals on Wheels currently has 78 volunteers enrolled, it is anticipated that as the number of clients grows, more will be needed in order to keep the time of service low. Those willing to help may call 282-1804 extension 2001. Persons wishing to avail themselves of the service on a permanent or short-term basis should call the same number.