



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FESTIVAL OF MEALS – A TASTING GALA TO CELEBRATE
MEALS ON WHEELS OF RI 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

PROVIDENCE, R.I.—Meals on Wheels of RI will hold Festival of Meals – A Tasting Gala to celebrate 50 years of service to homebound seniors on Saturday, Nov. 2 at the Pawtucket Armory Arts Center.

Featuring a “Top Dish” culinary competition, celebrity judges, an exclusive VIP cocktail reception, silent and live auctions and much more, Festival of Meals will also raise critical funds to continue and expand the organization’s work to help homebound Rhode Islanders remain happy, healthy and safe in their own homes.

The event will be emceed by WPRI’s Ted Nesi and Kim Kalunian.

“The late Joe Brown founded Meals on Wheels of RI in 1969 with a vision of helping a small group of neighbors in need and over 50 years, we’ve grown to having 700 dedicated volunteers serve nearly 3,000 seniors statewide per year with a lunchtime home-delivered meal, safety check and friendly visit,” said Executive Director Meghan Grady. “As much as this event will celebrate his vision and the organization’s history, our focus is on planning for a future when our programs will be in even greater demand.”

Supported in part by presenting sponsors Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island and Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island, Festival of Meals is a tasting gala with a culinary twist. Eighteen of Rhode Island’s best restaurants and eateries—including Capital Grille, Chapel Grille, Galilee Beach Club, Savory Fare, Revival Brewing’s Tasty Room and Xaco Taco—will vie for a “Top Dish” award and for People’s Choice awards.

Judges for the competition include Providence College Friars Coach Ed Cooley and Jim Nellis of RI Food Fights.

A private VIP lounge hosted by Millonzi Fine Catering will feature passed hors d’oeuvres, a raw bar, exclusive desserts, and a whiskey and bourbon tasting, starting at 6 p.m. The Main Event begins at 7 p.m.

Guests will sample up to two entries per restaurant—meat-based and vegetarian—while they enjoy music, mingling and a silent auction. A live auction—including a Providence College Friars package, a Patriots tailgate package and an Aruba vacation—will close out the evening.

“The Rhode Island seniors we serve depend on our programs to not only stay physically healthy, but for a chance at socialization with our drivers that makes them feel less lonely



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and isolated,” said Board Chair Kevin Millonzi, chef and owner of Millonzi Fine Catering and Millonzi’s Kitchen Bar. “By supporting Festival of Meals, guests will be helping to ensure that we can continue to provide for our seniors and prepare to serve a rapidly growing and changing senior population.”

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2040, one in four Rhode Islanders will be aged 60 or older and Rhode Island is expected to add 100,000 seniors to its population 2030. With Rhode Island having the highest concentration of “very low food secure” seniors as reported by Feeding America and National Foundation to End Senior Hunger, the need for services such as Meals on Wheels of RI’s Home-Delivered Meal Program is expected to grow exponentially within the next two decades.

Event tickets are \$125 per person for VIP and \$75 per person for the Main Event. More information and tickets are available at www.rimeals.org/festivalofmeals.

About Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island

Since 1969, Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island has focused on meeting the nutritional and other special needs of the elderly in order to help them maintain their independent lifestyles. Meals on Wheels of RI directly addresses the issues of nutrition, health and safety in our senior population, impacting thousands across the state every year with our Home-Delivered Meal Program, the only nonprofit meal delivery program of its kind in Rhode Island; the Capital City Café Program and Senior Restaurant Program, which offer community-based dining for more mobile seniors; an Emergency Meal Program; the Senior Wish Program, providing necessities for seniors in need; and the Pet Food Program.

Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island, a 501 (c) (3) organization, is not an affiliate of a national organization and relies on donations from individuals, corporate funding and sponsorship and foundation grants. All funding received directly provides services for RI residents.

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