DEAR FRIENDS,

For many of you reading this 2022 edition of Meals on Wheels of RI’s annual newsletter, daily life has all but returned to its pre-pandemic normalcy—and for that we are thankful.

It is our great hope that you are once again enjoying, without worry, family gatherings, travelling and impromptu get-togethers with friends and colleagues.

While we are continuously monitoring the public health environment to best protect everyone’s safety and well-being, we are also welcoming the renewed chance to further connect with our clients and supporters.

In March, we held a kickoff celebration for our March for Meals campaign with R.I. Lt. Gov. Sabina Matos and visited clients throughout Rhode Island alongside our elected officials and sponsors. The lieutenant governor joined us again in April to announce our Culturally Responsive Meal Program.

In June, we held an annual meeting to thank our major sponsors and donors and this month we’ll celebrate delivery of our 20-millionth meal. Festival of Meals, our signature fundraiser, will return to an in-person event after a two-year pause later this year.

Between all this, we’ll be participating in activities across the state to raise funds and advocate for our seniors. We invite you to follow us across social media for details and to join us at an event near you.

We also ask you to make a generous donation to Meals on Wheels of RI this year, so that we can also keep helping those for whom the loneliness and isolation of the pandemic will continue to be an everyday reality—for our homebound clients.

As we continue to move forward from the past two years, we remain, as always, extremely grateful for your generosity and trust in our mission. It’s what has made this year’s 20-millionth meal milestone possible—and it’s what will make our next 20 million meals, and beyond, possible as well.

In gratitude,

Meghan Grady
Executive Director

Corey McCarty
General Manager,
Commonwealth Care Alliance Rhode Island
Board Chair, Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island
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My driver deserves kudos for walking up my driveway in the snow. I appreciate what he did. Thank you very much!
– Gloria, Foster

70 Bath Street | Providence, RI | 02908

SO FAR IN 2022*
*estimated based on daily meal service

171,171 meals* delivered
to Rhode Islanders in need

2,153 senior citizens served

752 new homebound seniors added to our program

$107k+ raised during our 2022 March for Meals campaign
NEW IN 2022

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE MEALS

With funding granted by Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island, Meals on Wheels of RI has piloted a year-long culturally responsive home-delivered meal program, which provides Home-Delivered Meal Program clients with foods reflective of Hispanic and Latin American cultures alongside a daily well-being check and social visit. In 2022, approximately 6% of program clients identify as Hispanic. By mid-June, the program had served 90 clients and delivered a total of 5,361 culturally responsive meals.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The Culturally Responsive Meal Program is part of the organization’s overall DEI strategy, which has made great strides since a formal strategy was issued in 2021. We have made incredible strides, including implementing the use of pronouns or other self-identifiers in email signatures, increased community outreach to sustain connections with diverse populations, inclusion of diverse client populations in our marketing materials, and making team members available by phone who speak English and Spanish. We will continue our work this year and beyond to build organization practices that reflect our commitment to diversity, cultural competency and inclusion.

AMERICORPS SENIORS VOLUNTEERS

In April, Meals on Wheels of RI was awarded a $150k federal grant through AmeriCorps to engage 150 new AmeriCorps senior volunteers for our Home-Delivered Meal Program. With the grant funding, the volunteers will conduct outreach on health education to clients through education materials. Topics will include COVID-19 preventative measures.

20-MILLIONTH HOME-DELIVERED MEAL

This month, we will celebrate a tremendous milestone-delivery of our 20-millionth home-delivered meal. Be sure to follow our social media channels for photos of a very special delivery!
At 95 years old, Helen S. has been a Home-Delivered Meal Program client for about three years and a Rhode Island resident for more than 44 years, since she and her late husband Carl, a U.S. Navy WWII Veteran, made the Ocean State their home after time spent living in various Northeast cities. Mrs. S., a former nurse, considers herself lucky to have family nearby—her elderly son is able to help her with laundry and her grandchildren, themselves caring for children and building careers, visit regularly—but credits Meals on Wheels of RI with helping her to remain living independently and not reliant upon caretakers for her everyday needs.

“\n\nThe Kosher meals have been great. I am thankful to have the service after returning from the hospital. Keep up the great work.

– Howard, Pawtucket\n\n"
MEALS ON WHEELS OF RI HOME-DELIVERED MEAL PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS IN 2022

Longtime volunteers Ned, 95, and Ruth, 94, delivered meals for 38 years and now help their daughter, Ruthie on a Newport route.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are delivery heroes, helping us to provide an unduplicated statewide service each weekday & alleviating food insecurity & social isolation amongst homebound seniors— and we always need more! Sign up today at www.rimeals.org
SPOTLIGHT ON: PET FOOD PROGRAM

THE NEED

Many of our homebound clients cherish the companionship and comfort their small dogs and cats provide to them on a daily basis.

Often, their pet is the only “family” they have and because of their homebound status and other factors, they have difficulty accessing adequate nutrition and other supplies to care for their pets. This not only endangers their pets’ health but contributes to their own stress and anxiety.

Helping our clients to care for their pets through our Pet Food Program is part of Meals on Wheels of RI’s “More Than A Meal” service model and works to address social isolation amongst our client population.

This program is largely dependent on in-kind donations from supplier and community partners and we are always in need of new partnerships to ensure we can continue to keep our clients’ furry family members healthy and safe as they help our homebound seniors stay happy at home.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Holding a collection drive to benefit the Meals on Wheels of RI Pet Food Program is a great team-building activity or community service project. Pick a collection location, drop-off date, and spread the word amongst your professional and social networks. A list of the most in-need items can be found on our website, www.rimeals.org, and we will be happy to coordinate acceptance of the donated pet supplies with you.
Gerontologist Joseph Brown (1924-2014) founded Meals on Wheels of RI in February 1969; that year he & a small group of volunteers delivered meals to 17 Providence homebound seniors. Within 10 years, he was running a statewide program and had served one million home-delivered meals.

In 2022, Meals on Wheels of RI will celebrate delivery of its 20-millionth home-delivered meal and is serving approximately 1,400 seniors statewide per day.

When you designate a place for Meals on Wheels of RI in your estate plan, you are doing much more than making a gift to our organization; you are making a lasting contribution to fighting food insecurity and social isolation amongst homebound seniors.

We invite you to become a member of our Joseph Brown Society and allow us to recognize you for the trust you have placed in us to care for our state’s vulnerable seniors.

A MONTHLY DONATION OF
$9.00 supports one meal per month for a homebound senior
$15.00 supports a month’s of meals for a homebound senior
$42.00 supports nearly three months of meals for a homebound senior AND qualifies donors for our 1969 Society

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MEALS ON WHEELS OF RI’S GIVING SOCIETIES, PLEASE VISIT WWW.RIMEALS.ORG
Thanks to everyone helping. (We) love you all.

—Emily & Manuel, Pawtucket