

# the dish



Meals on Wheels  
OF RHODE ISLAND

In a home that he has lived in for more than 62 years, Mr. William H. Strand, 89, is surrounded by a lifetime of memories.

His walls are lined with family photographs and framed paintings of the places that he, his late wife, Patricia, and their daughters had visited and loved together.

Mr. Strand painted all of these himself, a beloved hobby he had to give up three years ago, and he never misses a chance to showcase them and tell of his family's many adventures.

Mr. Strand has been a Meals on Wheels of RI Home-Delivered Meal Program client since October 2020. He lives with several chronic health conditions that limit his mobility to the point where he cannot safely leave the home on his own.

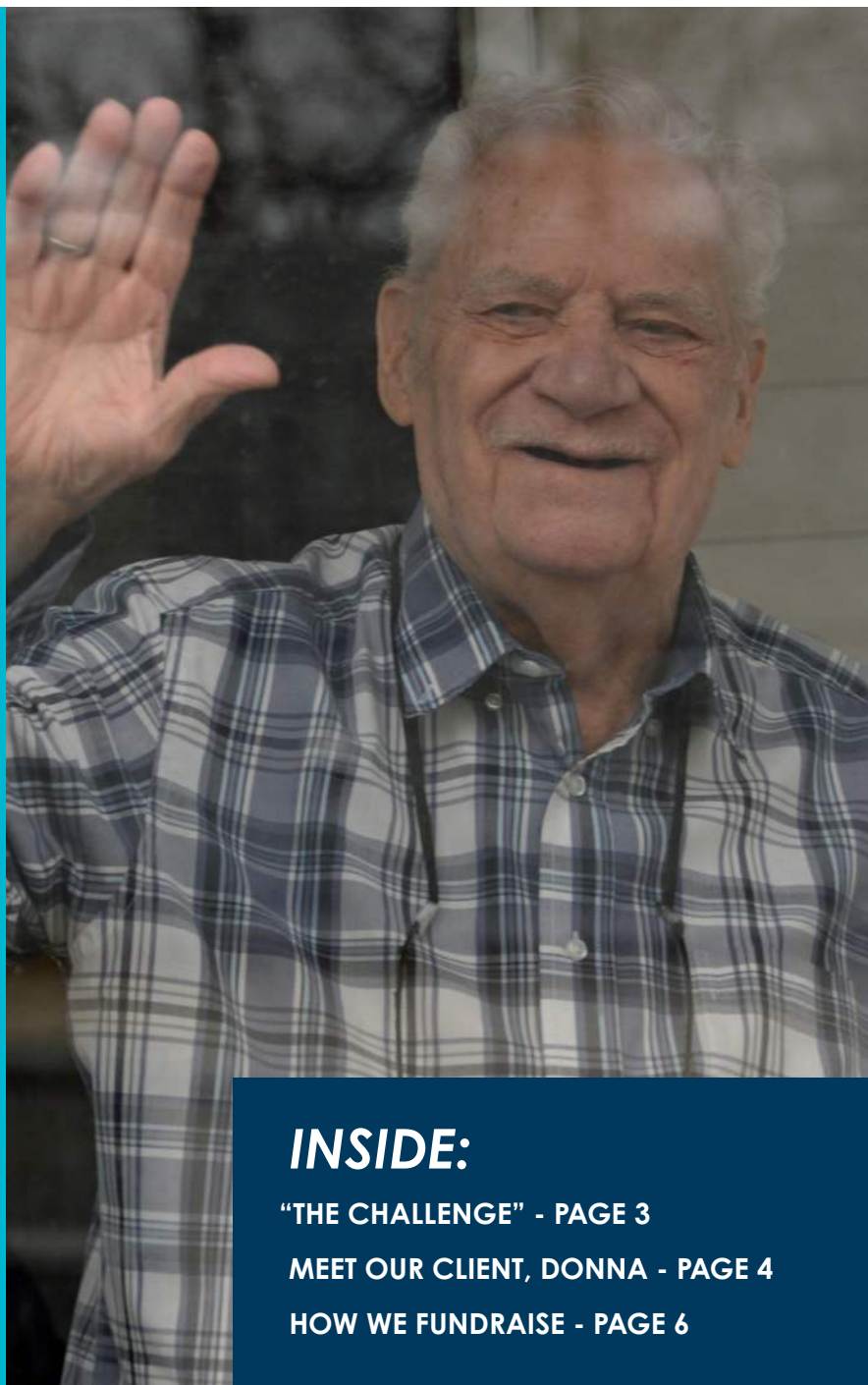
"Because I don't cook, the meals give me enough to eat," Mr. Strand said. "For the most part I like the meals. Except the vegetables."

Vegetables aside, Mr. Strand, a U.S. Navy Veteran, said he finds the program especially helpful and really enjoys the companionship of his delivery driver.

"They are very friendly and very nice," he said.

Mr. Strand has lived in Rhode Island for more than 67 years. He and Patricia Strand were married for about 60 years before she passed away 10 years ago. He is among the 47 percent of our program clients who are at least 80 years old, the 60 percent who live alone, and the 77 percent who are not married.

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# Dear Friends,

With our operating year halfway through, we are proud to share that Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island is on track to meet its service goals for 2023 and has also made tremendous progress toward the year one targets of MOWRI 2025, our strategic plan.

Our strategic plan has three overarching themes—innovation, sustainability, and capacity. Our work this year focuses on implementing strategies that will help us to maintain and grow our signature programs, deepen our philanthropic efforts and community relationships, and extend our trusted and proven-effective service model to expand our statewide impact.

None of this work, of course, would be possible without the support of so many individuals, community groups, businesses, corporations, and foundations who continue to put their trust in us to meet the nutritional and social needs of those we serve so that they can maintain independent lifestyles.

We hope that this newsletter, which illustrates how your donations to Meals on Wheels of RI help to better the lives of our clients, will inspire you to continue to be an advocate for Rhode Islanders at risk of food insecurity and social isolation.

On behalf of everyone at Meals on Wheels of RI—and most importantly those we serve—thank you.

In gratitude,



Meghan Grady  
Executive Director



Corey McCarty  
Board Chair



*cont'd from cover:*

The couple have two daughters and two grandchildren, all of whom live nearby and are able to visit regularly. Sometimes, they are able to take him to his local senior center.

This year, Mr. Strand participated in our annual March for Meals public awareness campaign with a special visit from Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI). He was thrilled with the small crowd who came to see him.

"I only expected two of you," he said. "I expect you all to come back tomorrow!"

Among the most treasured possessions he has, Mr. Strand said, is a model amphitheater that his son-in-law made for him. Mr. Strand was a volunteer for the Providence Performing Arts Center for 30 years.

His favorite musical he got to see as a volunteer usher at the theatre was Miss Saigon.



# 2023 By the Numbers\*

## Clients Served

Home-Delivered Meal Program	<b>2,100</b>
Capital City Café Program	<b>290</b>

## Meals Served

Home-Delivered Meal Program	<b>168,784</b>
Capital City Café Program	<b>8,400</b>
Culturally Responsive Meals	<b>10,608</b>
Medically-tailored Meals	<b>6,276</b>

## And

Daily Home-Delivered Meal Program Delivery Routes	<b>79</b>
Capital City Café Dining Sites	<b>9</b>
New Capital City Café Dining Sites	<b>1</b>
** Reopened Capital City Café Dining Sites	<b>2</b>



\*Clients served and meals delivered are estimated as of June 30, 2023

\*\* Reopened following the COVID-19 pandemic



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# The Challenge

Our vision is for a Rhode Island where all seniors live well-nourished lives with independence & dignity. Our critical work is based on addressing food insecurity and social isolation amongst homebound older adult Rhode Islanders and other vulnerable populations.

Food insecurity—lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life—continues to be an alarming problem for Rhode Island seniors.



**5.2%**

of Rhode Island seniors are food insecure

*"The State of Senior Hunger in 2021," Feed America, April 2023*

**1.3%**

of Rhode Island seniors are "very low food secure"

Food insecurity is a contributing factor to chronic diseases including diabetes and heart and lung disease and can also contribute to health issues associated with limited social interaction, including anxiety and depression.

*Meals on Wheels America*

Rhode Island's senior population, already among the most concentrated in the country at 23 percent, is rapidly growing and will reach 25 percent by 2030.

*U.S. Census Bureau*

By 2040, our senior population will have grown by 75 percent from what it was in 2010.

*R.I. Office of Healthy Aging*

Transportation is a primary barrier to food access.

*Dept. of Environmental Management's R.I. Food Strategy, January 2017*

# Who We Serve

## Homebound Rhode Island Residents

We are delivering approximately 1,350 home-delivered meals to homebound Rhode Island residents statewide, on a daily basis. We expect to serve more than 3,000 Rhode Islanders this year through the Home-Delivered Meal Program. Of the clients we serve, 91 percent are older adults (60 and older). The remaining 9 percent of our clients qualify as homebound through a state Medicaid program.

## At-Risk Older Adult Rhode Islanders

Our Capital City Café Program is open to all Rhode Island residents aged 60 and older, offering socialized dining at six daily cafés in Providence and three monthly programs specifically catered to Latinx, Asian, and LGBTQ+ older adults. Most program participants who visit our daily dining sites live in the senior housing residences where the cafés are held and are at-risk for food insecurity and social isolation. Café lunches also include health education and guest speakers.

## Pregnant & Postpartum Women

Through our partnership with Point32 Health and Women & Infants Hospital, we are providing pregnant and postpartum women and their families with home-delivered meals that are helping them to have increased access to prepared healthy foods.



stay living independently at her Pawtucket apartment. Donna has helped MOWRI advocate for our programs by appearing in several commercials and participating in March for Meals, our public awareness campaign. In March 2023, R.I. Lt. Gov. Sabina Matos visited her for a special delivery during which Donna was all smiles.

## Meet our client, Donna D.

Our Home-Delivered Meal Program client Donna D., 67, has been with us for about 12 years and is a friend to everyone at Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island. Having become legally blind in early adulthood, Donna has been unable to work or to safely leave the home on her own. Before she had to stop working, Donna earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Rhode Island College and became a certified nursing assistant through a program at the Community College of Rhode Island. She worked as a CNA at the former Nuns Home Jesus Mary Cenacle in North Providence where she cared for elderly nuns. Without any family in the area, Donna relies on Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island to help her

# New in 2023

Operating under our strategic plan, MOWRI 2025, we are focused on reaching year-one targets within our overarching goals: (1) Develop opportunities to innovate and scale our model & (2) Implement a sustainable business model to maintain and grow our signature programs. Four supporting goals focus on diversifying and deepening our philanthropic and community partnerships, developing a high-performing structure and model, investing in our infrastructure, and diversifying and developing our board.

We have made tremendous progress toward our goals.



## Capital City Café Program Latinx Dining Site

In May 2023, we opened a monthly café program in Central Falls customized to Rhode Island's older adult Latinx population. Community response was immensely positive and we are looking forward to providing this fast-growing community with monthly social lunches that include pertinent guest speakers. Lunches are hosted at 765 Restaurant & Lounge. The café was launched in partnership with Progreso Latino.

## ACL Research Grant

Along with primary research partner UConn and the Brown University School of Public Health, Meals on Wheels of RI will take part in a five-year research project, funded by the Administration for Community Living, to test the effectiveness of an enhanced home-delivered meal program that includes community health worker interactions and supplemental grocery bag deliveries.

## AmeriCorps Planning Grant

We have been awarded an AmeriCorps grant to plan for a long-term program focused on bringing more community health workers into our service model. In 2024, we will submit a full grant application to host AmeriCorps volunteers at MOWRI who will provide CHW services to our homebound client population.

## 2023 Senior Wishes

Each holiday season, we proudly deliver gift packages filled with winter weather essentials, everyday necessities, comfort items, and at-home activity goods to our clients. Our senior wishes initiative, officially launched in 2019, delivers hundreds of packages each year to at-risk older adults who might not receive any other gifts during the holidays. Wishes are fulfilled by businesses, organizations, and individuals through workplace giving initiatives and our online wish list. Groups also host team-building and other events to make items such as no-sew blankets for seniors. For more information and our 2023 wish list, visit [www.rimeals.org](http://www.rimeals.org)



## MOWRI 2023 Fundraising Sources



- Grants
- Donations
- Annual Fund
- Festival of Meals Celebration
- March for Meals Campaign

Donations are all gifts given to Meals on Wheels of RI that are not part of a fundraiser, campaign, or from a mailed appeal letter. Sources include major donors, board members, team members, community groups, businesses, online giving, in memoriam donations, and employer matching donations.



Roger Williams Park Casino  
Providence, RI

# march for meals

#MoreThanAMeal

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



## Your Donation Matters

No matter the size of your gift to Meals on Wheels of RI, your generosity means the world. And, as an independent nonprofit organization, all funds we raise stay in Rhode Island to have a direct impact on your neighbors.

**\$10**

helps serve **ONE** general wellness meal to an at-risk Rhode Island resident

**\$25**

helps serve **TWO** culturally responsive meals to an at-risk Rhode Island resident

**\$50**

helps serve **ONE** at-risk Rhode Islander with a general wellness menu for one week

**\$100**

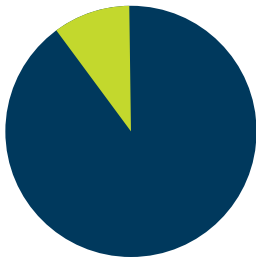
helps serve **SEVEN** medically-tailored meals to an at-risk Rhode Island resident



**Sign up today!**  
Scan to make a donation.



**How Your Gifts Are Used to Further Our Mission**



- Direct Program Costs
- Administrative Costs

**CONNECT WITH US**  
**#MORETHANAMEAL**



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