



SAVING LIVES ONE MEAL AT A TIME

FALL 2024

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68-0231350

# Nourishing News:

## Meet Karen, a Meals on Wheels Client

At 91 years old, Karen's life has been rich with adventure and creativity. Born in San Francisco to a Norwegian father and an Irish-English mother, she devoted her high school years to art, earning a scholarship to the California School of Fine Arts & Crafts. However, her path took an unexpected turn after she became a young mother. Her journey led her abroad, where she spent nearly three decades living in cities like Oslo, Rome, and Spain. Karen's career mirrored her adventurous spirit, including roles with Trans World Airlines (TWA), various sales positions, and her favorite job as an interviewer in research studies with the University of Chicago.

After three decades in Europe, Karen returned to the Bay Area to be closer to her family, particularly her grown children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who are the joys of her life. But as the years passed, Karen noticed a change in her energy, especially when it came to cooking. Once a passionate home cook who loved preparing meals from scratch, Karen no longer had the drive to spend hours in the kitchen. "I would rather starve than cook," she admits with a laugh. That's when she turned to Meals on Wheels.

Since then, receiving meals has become essential for Karen's well-being. "It's good and nourishing," she says. "It keeps me alive, actually." The meals don't just ease the burden of daily cooking; they also help manage the rising cost of food, which can be overwhelming for many seniors. "The meals are a tremendous help financially," Karen adds.

The connection with her volunteer drivers has been just as valuable as the meals. While living in Martinez, Karen formed a special bond with Jim, a volunteer driver for Meals on Wheels. What began as simple meal drop-offs during COVID gradually grew into a friendship. Jim would bring meals into her home, and eventually, he would sit and chat with Karen, sharing stories from their respective time spent in Europe. For Karen, Jim was not just a volunteer—he became a trusted companion.

Now living in Pinole, Karen has found a new friend in her current volunteer driver, Kim. Just like with Jim, Karen enjoys the meaningful interactions she shares with Kim, reinforcing that Meals on Wheels is about more than just food—it's about fostering human connection and community.

For hundreds of seniors like Karen, Meals on Wheels is a lifeline. The program does more than provide nutritious meals; it helps individuals maintain their independence, stay healthy, and avoid the dangers of isolation. As Karen points out, "When seniors get hungry, they're low on energy. I didn't realize that for a long time, but it makes a huge difference." The program's impact extends beyond the physical, giving recipients comfort in knowing that someone cares—whether it's through a delivered meal or a simple conversation with a friendly driver.

As Karen reflects on her experience, she emphasizes the importance of Meals on Wheels in her life: "You're keeping people alive." The program not only sustains her physically but also emotionally, reminding her that she is part of a community that values her health and well-being.

Meals on Wheels continues to be a vital service for seniors across our county, helping individuals like Karen live with dignity and independence in the comfort of their own homes.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear friends,

As we head into the holiday season, I want to take a moment to express my deep appreciation for your continued support of Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa. Now more than ever, our mission of ensuring that seniors receive the live saving, nutritious meals they need is critical.

The reality we face is stark—government funding continues to fall short, while food prices and the cost of living in the Bay Area remain among the highest in the country. This has made it increasingly difficult for us to meet the growing needs of the most vulnerable members of our community. Seniors, who often live on fixed incomes, are particularly at risk as they struggle to afford basic necessities like food.

We are incredibly grateful for the generosity you've already shown in supporting our mission. Your donations have helped us provide essential meals to countless seniors. But with the holiday season approaching and the challenges

growing, we need your help more than ever. Together, we can ensure that no senior goes hungry or feels forgotten during this critical time of year. Every additional contribution makes a difference in keeping our seniors healthy and safe at home. Please join Target Circle Giving Program and make a donation matching their generous \$10,000 contribution to Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa, made possible by our community's votes! Your support can double the impact and help us reach even more homebound seniors in need.

I am confident that with your continued support, we can rise to the challenge and continue to serve our seniors in the months ahead.

Thank you for standing with us. Together, we can continue providing the meals that help seniors stay healthy and independent in their own homes - saving lives, one meal at a time.

*Cassandra Miranda*  
Cassandra Miranda  
Executive Director

## UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENT



**Friday, November 15th, 6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.**  
**Bayview Eagles Hall, El Cerrito**

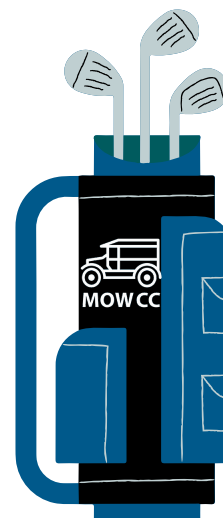
Join us for a fun evening of creativity and community at our brand new Paint and Sip event! No experience needed—just bring your passion for a great cause. All proceeds support Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa in providing meals to homebound seniors. **Tickets are limited, so don't miss out!**

For more details and to purchase tickets, please call 925-387-5001  
**This events venue is generously donated by the Bayview Eagles, Aerie #2323.**

**Save the Date: Annual Golf Tournament**  
**Friday, May 24th, 2025**  
**Shadow Lakes Golf Course, Brentwood**

Mark your calendars for our annual golf tournament where we will Drive Out Hunger, One Swing at a Time. Join us for a day on the green to support Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa mission. Stay tuned for more details as the date approaches!

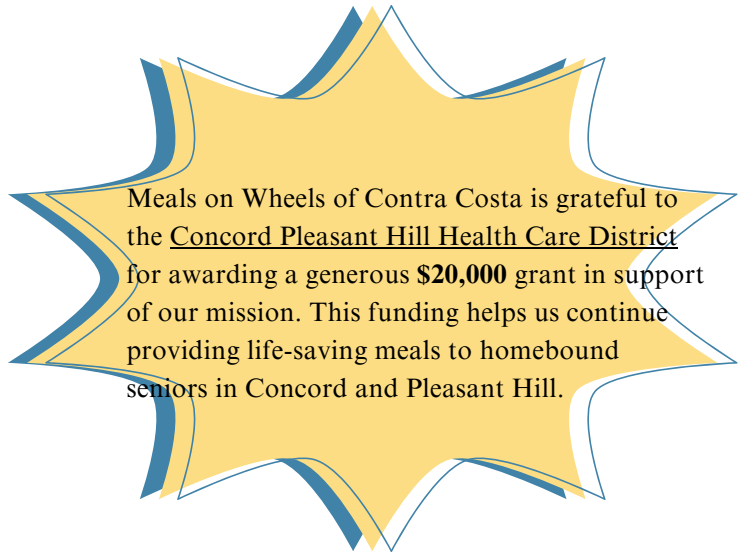
Contact us for sponsorship opportunities and pre-sale of tickets!



## GRANTORS



Thank you to the City of Martinez Community Groups Funding Program for awarding Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa \$1,750 to provide meals to homebound seniors in Martinez! We are grateful for your support of our mission!



In recognition of the nonprofit sector's essential work in improving the quality of life in Contra Costa County, the Dean & Margaret Lesher Foundation awarded 43 local nonprofits a CARE grant to prioritize staff care and organizational resilience. Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa was awarded \$5,000 from the CARE Fund.

## Double the Impact!

**In our summer newsletter, we announced the generous \$10,000+ grant from the Target Circle Giving Program, made possible by your votes. Now, we're calling on YOU to match these funds and double the impact of your support! Your contribution will help us reach even more homebound seniors in need, providing them with nutritious meals and vital companionship. Together, we can make a significant difference in our community!**

## MEMORIALS & TRIBUTES

### Gift from

Ron Chapman  
 Melissa Hughes  
 Katherine Rice  
 Yvonne Ruiz  
 Barbara Trujillo  
 Ronald Kunstal  
 Deb Borba  
 Loan Cravotto  
 Ta Vee Lee  
 Gwenda Webster  
 Deepal Karunaratne  
 Edith Olsen  
 Donna Cook  
 Steve & Antonette Steffensen  
 Steve & Antonette Steffensen  
 Mary Crosby

### In memory of

Barbara Chapman  
 Ethel Geist  
 Gordon Trowbridge  
 Isidro and Ana Ruiz  
 Julie Lassalle  
 Kathleen Kunstal  
 Margaret Borba  
 Marilyn Cravotto  
 Myron and Birdie Paine  
 Nancy Webster  
 Nirmala Karunaratne  
 Norm Olsen  
 Pauline Brammer  
 Robert Soderbury  
 Salvatore Cardinale  
 Thomas Piazza

### Gift from

Joyce Niebur  
 Michael Pitts  
 James Storms  
 Debra Pohlson

### In honor of

Anouschka Wardy  
 Debra Bagot  
 Mary Perata  
 Sharon Goodall





# Meals on Wheels

OF CONTRA COSTA

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Toll Free: 866.669.6697

Federal Tax ID: 68-0231350

## REMEMBERING MEALS ON WHEELS

Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa Legacy Circle members are an exclusive group of caring individuals who have made a Planned Gift in their Will or Trust to ensure that we will be here to help provide for all the homebound elders who will need us in the years to come. Your planned gift may be in stocks, bonds, mutual fund shares, real estate or cash. Such assets can be gifted immediately with many tax advantages, or as Planned Gifts and bequests in the future. Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa has partnered with the East Bay Community Foundation for their 75 years of experience in assisting charitable nonprofit organizations in receiving a variety of gifts. To join the Meals on Wheels Legacy Circle, simply let us know of your intention to make a Planned Gift to Meals on Wheels. Please contact us at 925-387-5001 to discuss other planned giving options.

## JOIN OUR SUPPER CLUB!

### BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

Generous donors who make monthly gifts provide Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa with steady income needed in order to provide food to homebound neighbors in need.

I would like to make a monthly contribution to support Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa.

**Please enroll me in the Supper Club with a monthly gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Please charge the amount written above to my:

Visa  MasterCard  Amex

NAME ON CARD

CREDIT CARD NUMBER

EXP DATE

SIGNATURE

SECURITY CODE

I authorize Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa to charge my debit or credit card each month for the amount I stated above until I notify Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa of any changes, and they have had reasonable time to act on it. A record of each payment in my monthly bank or credit card statement will serve as my receipt and Meals on Wheels of Contra Costa will provide me with a statement of my annual gifts.

If you would prefer an email version of our newsletter,  
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