

Nourishing News

Behind the Meals: A Passion for Serving Seniors

Long before a MOW meal reaches a senior's table, there is a team hard at work behind the scenes—planning, preparing, and caring deeply about every tray that leaves the kitchen. At TRIO Community Meals, that work is driven by both nutrition expertise and a passion for serving seniors.

For Amy Faletti, that mission is personal.

“I grew up with my grandmother,” she shared. “Our whole family gathered around her table.”



Amy Faletti, District Manager; left to right: Carlos, Head Chef; Leo, Lead Cook; Andy, Food Service Director.

Today, Amy helps oversee the creation of meals for thousands of homebound older adults across Contra Costa County. Each day is a carefully coordinated effort to ensure seniors receive nutritious, satisfying food that supports their health and independence. Through funding from Meals on Wheels Contra Costa and partnerships with nonprofit providers, these meals reach seniors countywide—helping them stay nourished, independent in their homes, and connected to their community.

Inside the kitchen, the process is both highly structured and deeply thoughtful. Menus are developed in alignment with federal nutrition guidelines and reviewed by dietitians, ensuring meals are balanced and beneficial. But just as important, Amy explains, is making sure the food is something seniors actually enjoy.

“Choice is dignity,” she said. “Sometimes you just want the food you love, and that matters.”

That choice is built into how meals are provided. Seniors receive a weekly delivery that includes a variety of frozen meals, allowing them to decide what they want to eat and when. One day it might be Brazilian Coconut Chicken, another day Beef Ropa Vieja or a Creamy Garlic Turkey Pasta. From Tilapia Veracruz to hearty pasta bakes, these meals offer both variety and flexibility. Giving seniors the ability to enjoy food on their own terms.

The philosophy of “choice is dignity” is reflected in every detail, from menu planning to meal preparation.

It's also sustained by a team of dedicated staff, some of whom have been part of the kitchen for decades, bringing consistency, care, and pride to their work each day.

For many on the team, the work goes beyond a job. After years of preparing meals for the same program, there is a deep sense of connection to the seniors they serve. Amy shared that it's not uncommon for staff to describe their work simply as being part of Meals on Wheels, a reflection of how closely they identify with the mission and the people behind it.

Beyond the kitchen walls, TRIO's impact reaches into the lives of seniors across the community. Through partnerships with local programs, including Meals on Wheels, these meals help older adults remain in their homes, maintaining both their health and their independence.

That connection to the community is something Amy feels every day. “Everywhere you go, someone knows someone who needs these meals,” she said. “It makes the work feel real. It makes it personal.”



Trio staff, Eliza, Elvira & Ricardo in the kitchen, preparing meals.

Providing this level of care is not without challenges. Rising food costs and increasing fuel prices directly affect the cost of providing these meals, a reality that reminds us all that funding and resources are essential to keeping seniors nourished. Even so, Amy and her team remain focused on what matters most.

“The majority of what we do goes right back into the meals,” she said. “At the end of the day, it's about making sure people have what they need.”

For Amy, it always comes back to something simple and deeply human: ensuring that every senior has access to nourishing meals and the dignity that comes with them.

Whether you've supported Meals on Wheels Contra Costa for years or are just joining us, the care and commitment behind each meal is something everyone can feel proud to be part of.

A Message from Our Leadership

We are honored to introduce ourselves as the new leadership of Meals on Wheels Contra Costa. We are grateful for the opportunity to step into these roles and carry this vital work forward.

We begin our work with deep appreciation for you. Your generosity, commitment, and kindness have made it possible for life-changing, nutritious meals to be provided to seniors for more than 35 years. Since our founding in 1990, your support has helped fund more than 20 million meals for homebound seniors, supporting their health, independence, and well-being and helping them age in place with dignity.

At Meals on Wheels Contra Costa, we believe every homebound senior deserves access to healthy meals delivered with dignity, respect, and human connection. We know you, along with our nonprofit partners, share this commitment, and we look forward to all that we can accomplish together.

Thank you for being such an essential part of this work and working towards our goal of ensuring every homebound senior has at least one nourishing meal a day.

With gratitude,

Michelle Leporini, Executive Director &
Rick San Vicente, Board President

EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE

Join the San Joaquin Yacht Club for the **3rd Annual Island Charity Cruise** on **September 19th, 2026**. A portion of the proceeds from the event will benefit **Meals on Wheels Contra Costa**, helping us nourishing homebound seniors in Contra Costa County.

Stay tuned for more details!

Email: LLoving@mowcontracosta.org with any questions



The Growing Need in Contra Costa County

In our Fall edition, we shared findings from *Meals on Wheels America's 2025 Waitlist Research Initiative*, which reported that one in three providers nationwide has a waitlist, with older adults sometimes waiting months to begin receiving services.

Today, here in Contra Costa County, approximately **500 seniors are waiting** to begin receiving meals. This reflects a growing senior population, rising costs, and the continued need for both funding and volunteers.

For years, your generosity has helped ensure that seniors were not placed on a waitlist due to funding shortages. That support has made a meaningful difference. As our senior population continues to grow, so does the need for sustained community investment.

We are deeply grateful for your continued support. Together, we can meet this moment and ensure every senior receives the nourishment and connection they deserve.

Interested in volunteering?

Contact us at

info@mowcontracosta.org

to learn how you can support communities

experiencing volunteer shortages.

GRANTORS

A LEGACY OF CARE

Thank you to the following grantors!

Your generosity helps guarantee thousands of nutritious meals for approximately 3,800 homebound seniors across Contra Costa County. We are deeply grateful for your support & partnership.

**The Excelsior German Center
The Louise P. Hackett Foundation
Dermody Properties Foundation
The Dean & Margaret Leshar Foundation
Edward and Elizabeth Kozel Foundation
McCabe Walls Family Foundation
Finance of America Cares Foundation
Contra Costa County Community
Impact Fund:
Supervisor Andersen
Supervisor Burgis
Supervisor Carlson**

As Meals on Wheels Contra Costa enters our 36th year of ensuring meals remain available for seniors across the county, we are deeply grateful for those who include our mission in their legacy plans.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to:

- **The Hoenig Family Trust**
- **William J. Anthony Trust**
- **Eileen M. Godinez**

These thoughtful legacy gifts help sustain nutritious meals for seniors today and in the years ahead, creating a lasting impact in our community.

Thank You

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Meals on Wheels

CONTRA COSTA

PO Box 3195 Martinez CA 94553

Toll Free: 866.669.6697

Federal Tax ID: 68-0231350

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THESE GIVING OPTIONS?

Legacy Giving:

A legacy gift to Meals on Wheels Contra Costa ensures that we can continue funding nutritious meals for homebound seniors for generations to come. Whether through a bequest in your will or trust, or by giving assets such as stocks, bonds, real estate, or cash, your gift can provide lasting support. Legacy gifts offer tax advantages and allow you to make a meaningful impact on our mission.

Donor-Advised Fund (DAF):

A Donor-Advised Fund (DAF) is a flexible and tax-efficient way to support Meals on Wheels Contra Costa. By contributing cash, stocks, or other assets to your DAF, you can recommend grants to us whenever you'd like. This provides immediate tax benefits, while allowing you to direct your charitable giving to our cause in a simple and effective manner.

Workplace Giving:

Many employers offer workplace giving programs that make it easy to support causes you care about—often through automatic payroll deductions. Even better, some companies will match your gift, doubling or even tripling your impact! Ask your HR department if your company offers matching gifts or workplace giving options to support Meals on Wheels Contra Costa.

If you are considering a legacy gift or wish to support Meals on Wheels Contra Costa through your Donor-Advised Fund (DAF) or workplace giving program, we would be happy to discuss your options and guide you in making a lasting impact. **Please contact us at 925-387-5001 for more information and assistance on how to create a meaningful partnership with our organization.**

If you would prefer an email version of our newsletter, please email LLoving@MOWContraCosta.org



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Turn Your Wheels into Meals



Donating your vehicle is a simple way to support Meals on Wheels Contra Costa. A wide variety of vehicles are accepted - including **cars, trucks, boats and RVs** - and they handle all the details for you. Your gift helps guarantee nutritious meals for homebound seniors throughout Contra Costa County.

For more information or to start your donation, please **scan the QR code** below or call our office at 925-387-5001.



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