

Nourishing News

Meet Ellen: Staying Connected At Home

Ellen has been making music for as long as she can remember. Growing up in Baltimore, Maryland, she recalls sitting on her mother's lap at the piano and making up tunes. By age 11, she had progressed so quickly that her piano teacher recommended conservatory-level training, leading her to the Peabody Conservatory Preparatory School.

Her passion for music continued throughout her life. After earning a college degree in music, Ellen moved to California at age 22 and went on to make a lasting impact on the Bay Area arts community. For 30 years, she composed and arranged music for the Oakland Symphony and co-founded, played piano, and served as music director for organizations including the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, Jazz Camp West, Berkeley Broadway Singers, and the Great Dickens Christmas Fair.

Today, Ellen continues to teach piano from her home in El Cerrito, sharing her love of music with her students. Although she no longer drives, music remains an important source of purpose and connection for Ellen.

After developing long COVID, she became a Meals on Wheels client through our service provider partner, Meals on Wheels West Contra Costa. The condition leaves her fatigued, unable to stand for long periods, and struggling with breathing. These challenges have made everyday activities more difficult and have changed how she participates in the community that has always been such an important part of her life.



Ellen Hoffman at her piano.

The nutritious meals she receives help her continue living independently at home, while the familiar faces of the Meals on Wheels drivers provide friendly connection and a welcome moment of conversation. Ellen says those interactions make a meaningful difference.

“Being stuck at home for the past three and a half years gets lonely and boring.”

For someone whose life has always been filled with music and community, those moments of connection matter.

Ellen's story is a reminder that independence is about more than meeting basic needs. With the right support, older adults can continue to pursue the interests they love, maintain meaningful relationships, and live independently at home.

Make Your DAF Count on DAF Day

October 8 is DAF Day, a national day highlighting the impact of donor-advised funds and encouraging donors to put their charitable dollars to work.

A **donor-advised fund (DAF)** is a charitable giving account that allows you to contribute funds, receive a tax deduction when you make the contribution, and recommend grants to charities over time. If you already have a DAF, DAF Day is a great opportunity to support the causes that matter most to you.

Consider recommending a grant to **Meals on Wheels Contra Costa**. Your gift can help ensure nutritious meals are available to homebound seniors throughout Contra Costa County.

Have a DAF? We would be honored to be part of your charitable giving this DAF Day.

New Charitable Giving Deduction for Non-Itemizers

You may be able to receive a federal tax deduction for charitable giving—even if you take the standard deduction.

Beginning with the **2026 tax year**, taxpayers who do not itemize their deductions may be eligible to deduct up to **\$1,000 in qualifying cash contributions** to eligible charities, or up to **\$2,000 for married couples filing jointly**.

That means your charitable giving may provide a tax benefit even if you don't itemize.

As always, consult your tax advisor about your individual circumstances.

EVENTS

Island Charity Cruise: A Day of Community and Giving

The 3rd Annual Island Charity Cruise brought boaters and community members together on September 19 for an afternoon of fun, friendship, and philanthropy on the Delta. Hosted by the **San Joaquin Yacht Club**, the event once again brought the community together in support of **Meals on Wheels Contra Costa** and **Bethel Island Children's Support**.



We are deeply grateful to the boat captains, sponsors, volunteers, local businesses, and community members whose generosity helped make this special event possible. Their support helps Meals on Wheels Contra Costa ensure nutritious meals are available to homebound seniors throughout Contra Costa County, while also supporting children and families in the Bethel Island community.

This cherished event continues to honor the spirit of giving that Dennis Pippin inspired so many years ago. We are grateful to everyone who continues to carry that spirit forward.



In memory of Dennis Pippin



In celebration of community



And always, in the spirit of giving

36 Years of Impact

10,623,355 meals & counting

We are so grateful for the dedicated nonprofits, foundations and donors who have made this tremendous impact possible.

Thank you for all you do for older adults in our community. Thousands of seniors have received millions of meals because of you.



A LASTING LEGACY

We are deeply grateful to

**William Walt Schnitzer
&
The Hoenig Family Trust**

for including Meals on Wheels Contra Costa in their estate plans.

Their generous gifts will help ensure **more than 16,000 nutritious meals** for older adults in our community.

Thank You

GRANTOR SPOTLIGHT

For nearly two decades, **The Mervyn L. Brenner Foundation** has been a valued partner of Meals on Wheels Contra Costa. Since 2007, their generous support has helped us continue our mission of ensuring nutritious meals are available to older adults across Contra Costa County.

We are grateful for their longstanding commitment to our community and for the opportunity to build on this partnership year after year.

Thank you, **Mervyn L. Brenner Foundation**, for standing with local older adults for nearly 20 years!

TRIBUTES & MEMORIALS

In Memory Of:

Stan Cichon.....	Edward Cichon
Thelma Devereaux.....	William and Patricia Horton
Mary Eckert.....	Joanne Doorack
Gret.....	Ronal Larson
Ernesto Grikalva.....	Antoinette Davis
Hilda Kubernick.....	Karen Yamamoto
Melvin Petersen.....	Julia Petersen
Jane Potter.....	Karen Crosby
Michael J. Sullivan III.....	Marilyn Sullivan
Gerald "Jerry" Edson Tennant.....	Denise Freitas
Gerald "Jerry" Edson Tennant.....	Donna Koehler
Richard F. Wilson.....	Pamela Wilson

From:

In Honor Of:

Yvonne Duarte.....	Carolyn and Gerald Dinelli
Abigail Pacheco.....	Barbara Liepman
Dan and Saga Sigge.....	Susan Sigge
Alex Quintana.....	Imran Khan
My favorite volunteer's birthday.....	Jennifer Grace

From:



Meals on Wheels

CONTRA COSTA

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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):

Have a Donor-Advised Fund through Fidelity, Schwab, Vanguard, or your local community foundation? You can turn your charitable investment into nutritious meals and vital safety checks for local seniors. Directing a DAF grant to Meals on Wheels takes just a few clicks—simply search for our legal name (Meals on Wheels Contra Costa) and EIN: 68-0231350 through your fund provider's online portal.

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

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 our partners at Car Donation Services handle all the details for you. Your gift helps ensure 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.



www.CarDonationServices.com

In partnership with:



Car Donation Services, Inc.



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