



MEALS **on** WHEELS
DIABLO REGION

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022



Resilience



OUR MISSION

WE ENHANCE
the lives of older adults by
**DELIVERING
HEALTHY MEALS**
and providing an array of
**SUPPORTIVE
SERVICES**
that empower seniors to live
**INDEPENDENTLY,
SAFELY, AND
WITH DIGNITY.**



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We'd like to thank our individual donors for their generous support!

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CAITLIN SLY



We've all heard that the term the "new normal" refers to how we live in a post Covid-19 world. The "new normal" for MOW Diablo Region has meant expanding new programs like Breakfast Bags and Grocery Bags to combat hunger, delivering meals weekly instead of daily, and shifting certain staff to work remotely.

Now we are experiencing another kind of "new normal" — we need to deliver meals and services to a rapidly growing number of seniors. It is estimated that 10,000 people turn age 70 every day in the United States and in Contra Costa County, seniors are the fastest growing segment of the population.

This past fiscal year, MOW Diablo Region delivered over 600,000 meals! This is the most we have ever delivered in our 50-year history and represents a 50% increase since the pandemic. We accomplished this during a time of record inflation, that affected our operations and has had a serious impact on the clients we serve. The toll of rising costs has forced some seniors to choose between purchasing food or paying for medicine. Facing these difficult choices, more and more elders turned to MOW Diablo Region for help. We are the safety net keeping our home-bound older neighbors from going hungry, and the need shows no sign of decreasing.

This past fiscal year, there was a greater demand for our supportive services like Fall Prevention which grew by 150% since before the pandemic. Our Care Management team provided services to seniors facing challenges such as housing insecurity and elder abuse, including financial scams. We also began new health and wellness classes as more mobile seniors got back to group activities, and our Cafés increased their serving days.

While this Annual Report covers our progress from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, we must also mention the fire that occurred in our Walnut Creek office this past September. While we are lucky that no one was hurt, the damage was severe, making our building unusable for at least a year. We are grateful to now be in temporary office space provided by BPM LLP, an accounting firm in Walnut Creek. During this difficult time, no client missed a meal or service thanks to the resilience of our staff and volunteers.

Whatever "new normal" comes our way, MOW Diablo Region has proven that we are up for the challenge and are able to continue keeping seniors nourished, safe, healthy, and at home with dignity.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Meals on Wheels



The flagship Meals on Wheels Program continued to exceed all expectations due to a rapidly growing senior population and greater demand for home delivered meals. This past year we reached a new milestone in our over 50-year history and delivered over 600,000 meals! That is a 50% increase since 2020. Additionally, the Breakfast Bag Program expanded to more communities, delivering to 529 older adults last year. The bags now include sandwiches, salads, and snackable vegetables. We also began the Cultural Cuisine pilot program to offer a Latin-American inspired menu. Working with a chef from the Mt. Diablo Unified School District who prepares the meals, our clients in Concord and Bay Point can enjoy the food they prefer.

Care Management



The Care Management team continues to help seniors who face a myriad of challenges such as depression, evictions, financial problems, transportation, elder abuse, and more. This year, Care Management helped 1,029 seniors find the resources and solutions to help them be protected and safe. Additionally, the Elder Abuse Prevention Specialist helped nearly 100 seniors who experienced elder abuse, including being victims of scams. Their assistance helped seniors remain independent, living with dignity.

Health & Wellness



As more mobile seniors began to return to activities, we witnessed a desire for additional exercise classes. We were able to double the number of classes and to expand locations through a “train the trainer” model. We increased the variety of classes offered, now providing line-dancing classes and classes in Spanish. Overall, this has resulted in a 33% increase in participants.



Fall Prevention



The Fall Prevention Program grew by 150% since 2019 demonstrating that this service is essential to keeping seniors safe at home. The program's home modification services installed a combined total of 591 devices and adaptations to 306 seniors' homes. Also, with classes resuming, we witnessed a 30% increase in Fall Prevention class participation since last year, serving a combined total of 410 older adults with presentations, coalition meetings, and A Matter of Balance classes. These classes promote good balance and strength and help prevent older adults from being susceptible to falls.

Cafés



Our Cafés reopened with Covid-19 prevention protocols in place, but attendance remains below pre-Covid numbers. Seniors are still wary to return to indoor in-person activities and most Café locations are still open fewer than five days a week. MOW Diablo Region also experimented with a pilot program to serve lunch twice a week at a restaurant. This new Café model offered a different style of cuisine than at current Café sites and provided seniors an opportunity to enjoy a meal outside of a senior center, where they are traditionally served. The temporary pilot proved successful, and we are currently re-tooling the pilot to implement lessons learned during the first phase.

Friendly Visitors, Callers, and Helpers



The Friendly Helpers program, which was started during the pandemic, has proved to be incredibly popular. Friendly Helpers ran 463 errands this past year, which is an increase of 321% from last year, proving that this is an essential service that elders need to help them remain independent at home. Friendly Visitors returned to in-person visiting after more than a year of providing social connection over the phone. We see that the elders we serve are in need of in-person companionship. Friendly Callers had a small increase as fewer family members are calling their aging relatives now that people have resumed their normal activities, and homebound seniors are in need of the socialization they receive from Friendly Callers.

2022 AT A GLANCE

FINANCIALS



5,057

Grocery Bags Delivered



693,815

Meals Delivered



98

Elder Abuse Interventions



973

Friendly Visits



12,674

Friendly Calls



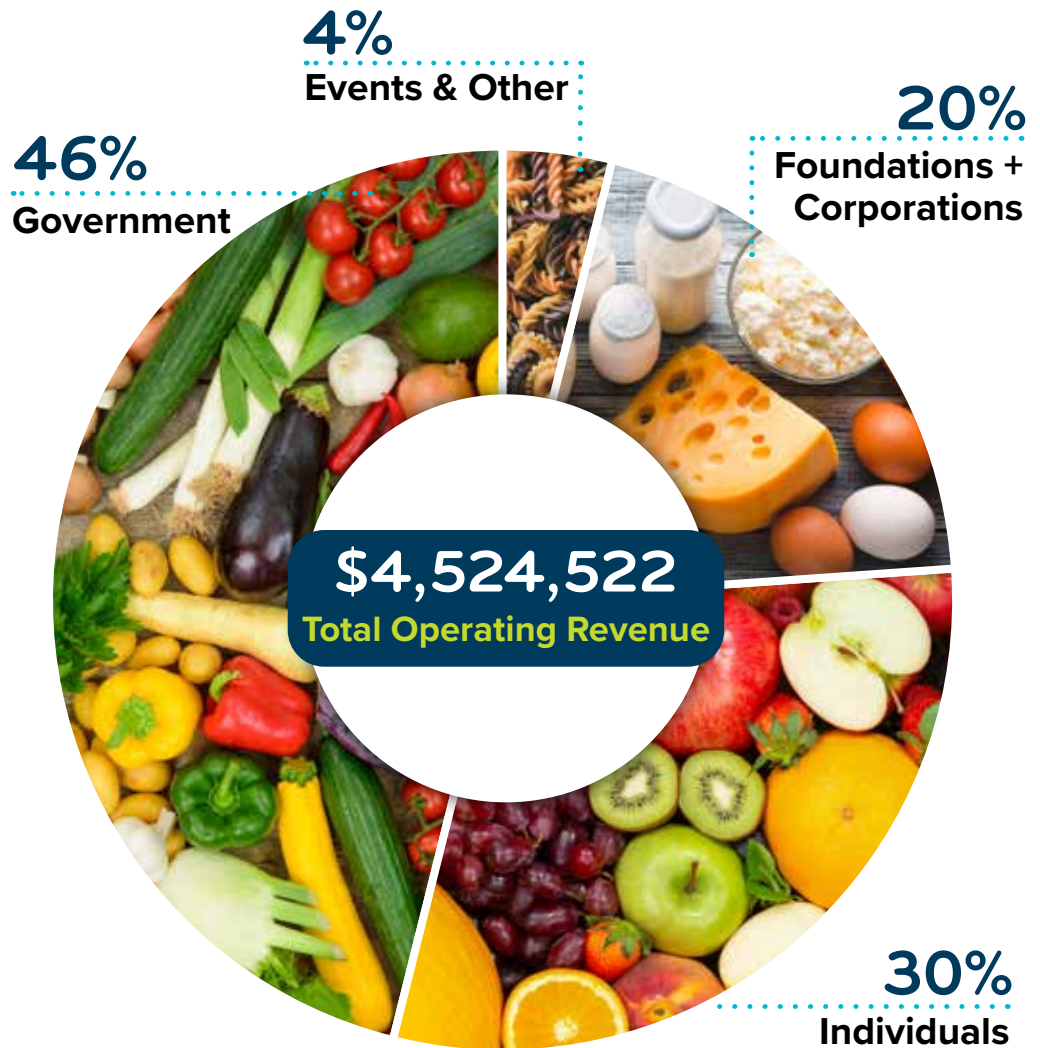
463

Friendly Helpers



306

Homes Modified



\$4,524,522
Revenue

\$4,174,406
Expenses

\$350,116
Increase in Net Assets

MAKING A SENIOR'S LIFE BETTER

Meals on Wheels Diablo Region is more than a meal and that was truly the case for 70-year-old "Ruth." She was referred for meal delivery after sustaining hairline fractures in her back making it difficult for her to cook. Also, because she didn't drive, getting food on a regular basis was a challenge.

When the volunteer delivered her first meal, he offered to help Ruth put the meals in the refrigerator and realized she didn't have an operational refrigerator. To keep her food cool, Ruth relied on a neighbor to bring her to the store to purchase bags of ice that she put in a cooler with her food. Not only was this an unsafe way to store perishables, but with her back issues, carrying the ice was difficult. When the volunteer alerted Ruth's MOW Diablo Region Client Service Associate, she was referred to Wendy Escamilla, in MOW Diablo Region's Care Management Department.

Wendy met with Ruth and did a complete assessment. She soon realized food storage was just one of Ruth's challenges. MOW Diablo Region's Care Management Department helps older

adults, like Ruth, who may have other struggles in addition to being food insecure that can prevent them from staying safe and healthy at home.

After the assessment, Wendy arranged to get Ruth a medical alert because she was so frail and in pain, she was at risk of further injury. Wendy also contacted PG&E who did a weatherization assessment and determined that Ruth was eligible to receive a 30% reduction on her electric bill. PG&E also signed her up to receive a refrigerator, however because of supply chain issues, there was an 8-12 week delivery delay. Ruth needed something right away to store her food. Wendy purchased a small refrigerator-freezer combination from Target online and it was delivered the next day. "The small refrigerator will solve Ruth's food storage problem until the full size is available through PG&E," explains Wendy. "When the smaller refrigerator arrived, Ruth called me crying and told me she had no words to describe how thankful she was. This is the reason we do what we do at MOW Diablo Region."

FROM SUPPLIES TO BIRTHDAY SURPRISES

Roberta Whitman was looking for an organization thirty years ago that could use some of the personal care and stationary supplies her company, Health Underwriters Association, had. As she drove down Civic Drive in Walnut Creek, she saw the Meals on Wheels Diablo Region sign and stopped in to see if we could use the extra items. MOW Diablo Region welcomed her donation and as Roberta asked questions about our organization, "I realized MOW Diablo Region's mission was one my business should support," she says.

Her involvement and support for MOW Diablo Region grew stronger with time. "When I sold my business about seven years ago, I began delivering meals. I figured if I could spend two hours with a client when I used to work, I could spend two hours delivering meals to seniors," explains Roberta. Many elders no longer drive and are too frail to negotiate their way around the supermarket. Arthritis or other health problems make it impossible for them to stand, cook, or even cut up vegetables. "When I deliver a meal, I find grateful people," says Roberta.

"There's always somebody who might be lonely. For some of my senior clients, I might be the only person they talk to that day."

She eventually became a part of a group of volunteers who make special birthday bags for MOW Diablo Region's home-bound seniors. "Clients have told me, it was the only birthday gift they received! It is sad to know that some people are alone in this world with no family and friends," says Roberta. In addition to delivering meals and birthday bags, Roberta is also a generous donor to Meals on Wheels Diablo Region. She understands that resources are needed to make sure every client gets a meal or supportive service, and her contribution makes a difference in the lives of her older neighbors. "I feel strongly about being a donor and volunteering. I'm having an impact and making sure seniors are fed, less isolated, and safe at home."





MEALS on WHEELS
DIABLO REGION

1300 Civic Drive
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

DINING, DANCING, AND DELIVERING

MOW Diablo Region was planning its first gala event when the pandemic hit in 2020. Our patience was rewarded this past June when friends old and new came together at the Dining to Deliver Gala at the Round Hill Country Club in Alamo.

The sold-out event featured a silent and live auction to help MOW Diablo Region deliver meals and supportive services to vulnerable seniors in the County. Guests also enjoyed delicious hors d'oeuvres, dinner, dancing, and an opportunity to socialize after two and half years of being separated. "People were excited to be out having fun together once again," says Caitlin Sly, Executive Director. "Because Covid-19 raised awareness of the struggle older adults face with hunger, guests were extremely generous and helped us surpass our goal!"

The 2nd Annual Dining to Deliver Gala will be held at a larger venue this year – the Blackhawk Museum in Danville on June 10th. Save the Date!



Pictures from last year's gala

