



SPRING 2016

NEWSLETTER

Our Mission:

Meals at Home fosters health and contributes to individual well-being and independence by delivering nutritious meals and medically prescribed diets and by providing other supportive services to the homebound, elderly, disabled, and persons temporarily unable to care for their nutritional needs.

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Rita Weinberg, *Bookkeeper*

Meals at Home

1123 Emerson, Suite 213 • Evanston, IL 60201
847-332-2678 • www.mealsathome.org

Friends and Volunteers

I'd like to introduce you to Kate Compernelle and Emily Sharpe, two long-time friends, working together delivering meals. Kate has been delivering meals for 20 years. When her original partner moved from Wilmette, she asked Emily, who had been a substitute driver, to join her. Together, they have been delivering meals for seven years on the St. Francis Central Route.

Delivering meals gives Emily and Kate an opportunity to catch up on what's been happening in their lives and the lives of their children. As Kate said, driving gives us an opportunity for "good chatting time!" Both are active in the community - their church and synagogue, Girl Scouts, North Shore Art League, etc. They met when their children, who are now adults, were in elementary school so they have a lot to catch up on.

Emily has four children spread all over the U.S. She is thankful that her son, who was deployed with the U.S. Army in Afghanistan, is now stateside.

Kate has five children and "Keeping up with them can be hard; at one time they were in five different time zones—Scotland, China, South Korea, San Francisco, and Chicago!"

Emily and Kate appreciate the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of their clients. Often they are the first line of defense for some clients and can serve as an informal well-being check. They've been delivering meals to some clients for several years and have gotten attached to them. For example, one client is a great gardener, and they have spent time admiring his garden and the



Kate Compernelle and Emily Sharpe

beautiful and well tended plants he has.

Other clients have said, "You're a god-send" or "I can't get out and you're a blessing." One special client greets them with a smile and a "too blessed to be stressed" comment each time they arrive. They feel they aren't just delivering meals but interacting with clients on a one-to-one basis. When they leave a client's home, they leave with a smile and a "Have a nice day." They know that their visit may be the only human contact some of the clients have that day.

Emily and Kate have been so impressed with the work of Meals at Home that not only do they deliver meals monthly, but they have also decided to be on the board of directors of Meals at Home! They are active on the Volunteer and Client Relations committee and have been planning the April 7 Volunteer Recognition event, which will include for the first time a display of art done by Meals at Home volunteers. We thank Emily and Kate for their enthusiasm and dedicated assistance.

Joan Kerr

Executive Director's Report



Debi Genthe

Meals at Home is excited to introduce a new logo.

The new logo gives a nod to our history by using the historic roof line with brighter colors and crisper text... and the whimsy of an apple demonstrates our fresh approach to nutritious meal delivery.

Look for this new logo to appear EVERYWHERE. We are all excited about it. From Skip Frost and Judy Linklater who worked through many, many versions, to the full marketing committee

members who added their thoughts, and the board of directors who gave direction and final approval...this has been an exciting process. Many of our friends and family members have also had input – including Skip's wonderful daughter-in-law! I thank you all!



We hope you are as pleased as we are. If this is your area of expertise, we would still love your help! There's more to do in the area of branding and marketing – more hands make lighter work. Please give me a call! 847-332-2678.

Debi Genthe, Executive Director

President's Letter



Bob Roth

Now is an exciting time for Meals at Home. The staff has been working hard to ensure the timely delivery of meals to our clients. February saw Meals at Home reach its highest number of clients in five years; we served 107 clients. Our numbers keep growing, which means more people are getting meals delivered to their door.

The increase in clients also means that we need to increase the number of volunteers. We have more than 250 volunteers who deliver meals to our clients, so with the increase in numbers, we

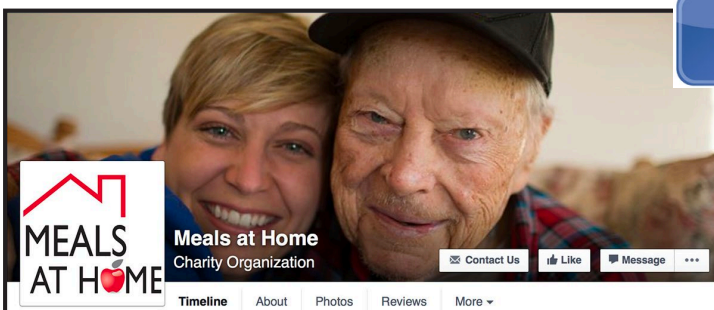
will need more volunteers. If you know of people who have the flexibility of two hours in the middle of the day, ask them if volunteering for Meals at Home is a possibility. Now with four routes from St. Francis Hospital, four routes from Evanston Hospital, and four Saturday routes, we are always looking for more volunteers.

We are also looking forward to seeing you at the annual benefit on Friday, May 20, at the Hilton Garden Inn in downtown Evanston. Watch for more information in the mail. I will look forward to seeing you at the volunteer recognition event in April and the annual benefit in May.

Bob Roth, Board President

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Meals at Home Thanks Our Generous Volunteers, 2015-2016

Volunteer Recognition Event 2016

Meals at Home operates with the generous assistance of more than 250 volunteers, some of whom have joined the organization recently while others have been donating their time and compassion for decades. Meals at Home recognized the immeasurable value of all of our volunteers at this year's Volunteer Recognition event. Three Crowns Park hosted an evening event with wine, cheese, and an incredible art show of works created by our volunteers showing off their many talents and interests. Meals at Home recognized Rochelle Sincox's and Jeanne Fox's long lasting impacts on the organization with the Barbara Lavoy Award. Meals at Home also awarded volunteers for years of service, noting several who have been involved with the organization for more than 20 and 30 years!

Stephanie Hawkins, Volunteer Coordinator

New Volunteers

Just as we celebrate the volunteers who have stepped up to make Meals at Home such a successful organization, we celebrate new volunteers joining our ranks. In 2015 and early 2016 Meals at Home welcomed more than 40 new volunteers. Both new and experienced volunteers delivered more than 17,700 routes in 2015 averaging 400 meals per week. Meals at Home is excited to welcome new volunteers year round as we continue to grow and explore new ways to help our clients. The friendly visitor and shopping assistance programs that have been available for several years continue to offer additional ways for volunteers to get involved on their own schedule, offering companionship and access to household staples for our clients. The relationships our volunteers and clients develop through these programs are nothing short of miraculous. The Meals at Home office often gets calls from clients thanking volunteers who go above and beyond to make sure our clients are safe, healthy, and happy.

As we head into summer, Meals at Home will continue to develop and strengthen its volunteer base with a volunteer recruitment contest. Last year's raffle winners took home restaurant gift cards, and we are getting excited about prizes for this year's contest. Meals at Home is also encouraging young people to get involved by working with representatives at Northwestern University, Evanston and New Trier High Schools, and area youth organizations to create opportunities for families, kids, and youth. We hope you look forward to Meals at Home's continuing growth as much as we do!

Stephanie Hawkins, Volunteer Coordinator



Stephanie Hawkins



Rita Weinberg

Pay it Forward

In my eleven years as Bookkeeper for Meals at Home I have seen the number of clients who need financial assistance grow quite a bit. For some it is a struggle to decide to pay for food or medicine. We encourage them to pay for their medicine and continue their food service with our help. We are able to do this through the generosity of our donors. I recently was able to call a client to tell him that his meals were paid for in advance by

an angel donor. The relief in his voice as he thanked me for the information brought joy to my heart. We have modernized our system and accept Pay Pal donations on our website (<http://mealsathome.org/donate/>). We also accept credit cards. All information is kept confidential and shredded once it is processed. Checks are always welcome!

Rita Weinberg



Thanks to Highland Park Garden Club and Random Acts of Flowers members for their cheerful gift of plants to our Meals at Home clients. They created so much excitement and gratitude!

Volunteer Suzannah Martin

On Thursdays and Fridays, Suzannah Martin volunteers for Meals at Home on the reception desk from 9:30a.m. to 2:30p.m. Two days a week, her pleasant voice is a cheerful new addition on the phone at the Evanston headquarters. The mom of two, and thirteen-year Evanston realtor with DreamTown, can't say enough about her first few weeks working with the Meals at Home staff. "The people are great. I adore every single person here. And that's kind of rare." A University of Chicago graduate with a degree in psychology, Suzannah is well suited to make that observation.



Suzannah Martin

With one child recently off to art school in New York and the other one immersed in high school activities, Suzannah was ready to use some of her free time to return to something she has always loved – volunteering. Like most Meals at Home volunteers, she says, "I wanted to do something worthwhile." Her past activism has included helping out at an Evanston soup kitchen and collecting a wardrobe's worth of clothes, including coats and shoes, for less fortunate K-8 Evanston school students. Seeking a new volunteer opportunity, she first sought out an attorney friend who works for a youth advocacy group. Unfortunately, their volunteer needs had been met, but her friend recommended Meals at Home, which, serendipitously, was located just down the hall. Needless to say, Meals at Home is happy she joined their devoted volunteer corps.

Pardon the interruption! Perhaps you'd like to volunteer in the office, too. There are openings on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, if you think you might be interested. Free parking for starters. The day we visited the office, the thoughtful staff had brought in delicious breakfast sweets. And there is always gourmet coffee. Did we mention that the Thai restaurant downstairs has an all you can eat buffet? Also Subway is practically next door. And Hecky's famous barbecue is just a block away. Tempted? Of course you are. But we digress.

We asked Suzannah what a typical day might be like for her. Turns out there are no typical days. Apparently, boredom is not an option. Everything and anything can happen. Moments of calm are often interrupted by fire alarm drills. We asked Suzannah to give us a for instance. "I may start the day with a project from Stephanie (Volunteer Coordinator) or Debi (Executive Director), such as a filing project, fixing the wifi, or calling to find out which clients would like to have a holiday meal. On Thanksgiving many clients have plans to be with family, so they won't need their regular delivery. Or I might ask clients for some feedback about a new supplier. Sometimes we can talk

for twenty minutes. Sometimes it's only thirty seconds. Either way, it's fun to connect with our clients."

11:15. As if on cue, the phone rings. It was St. Francis Hospital. One of the drivers had not yet arrived. Suzannah starts the process of tracking them down. Were they just running late? Had they forgotten? Suzannah alerts volunteer coordinator, Stephanie, who will locate the missing driver. Or find a substitute driver. Occasionally, Suzannah will help out by leaving the office to drive a route. Her knowledge of Evanston real estate comes in handy. Sometimes drivers call in because they are confused by a new route. Fortunately, living on the North Shore, Suzannah has more than a passing familiarity with the neighborhoods where they drive. So she can solve their dilemma. Plus she has Google maps to guide her.

11:35. A driver reports that a client isn't answering the door. Suzannah will call the client to make sure they are okay. If they don't answer, she will leave a message and ask them to call her, so Meals at Home will know everything is all right. "I think we really go above and beyond the standard delivery service." If necessary, Meals at Home staffers reach out to a client's emergency contacts, or calls first responders to do a wellness check.

Sometimes the driver is the only person who has contact with a client on a regular basis. Once, while dropping off food, a driver called the office to say that the client wasn't looking quite right. Suzannah contacted the client and convinced them to call their doctor, who ultimately sent the client to the hospital. "We try to follow up to make sure they're safe."

11:48. There's a problem with missing food on one of routes. All drivers are asked to check that the food they pick up for delivery matches the clients who will receive the food. Apparently there was a mix-up in the schedule for one of the Meals at Home partner restaurants. A back up meal can be dispatched. No one should go hungry.

12:03. A driver calls in to make sure a client's meal will be left at the back door on Monday because he won't be home. Suzannah adds a note for the staff on Google docs. It almost goes without saying, "Our drivers really do an amazing job."

12:10. A driver calls in to ask for a wellness check. A client who always has the radio on isn't answering the door, and the radio couldn't be heard. Many clients live alone and aren't mobile enough to go out on their own. The drivers get to know them and look out for their well-being when they notice an unexpected change. Suzannah coordinates these requests with Stephanie to insure a client's safety.

The phone calls slow down. So we ask Suzannah, is this a busy day or a quiet day? Pretty quiet according to this "I like to do all that I can do to help" woman who has an idea for an app to help people help each other by trading favors. Meanwhile, she'll probably eat lunch at her desk while answering the phone because there is sure to be more troubleshooting to do before her day ends at 2:30p.m.

Judy Linklater



If you shop on Amazon, please consider using their Amazon Smile program and designating Meals at Home as your charity. It could make a tremendous difference to an organization our size!

Meals at Home Thanks Our Generous Volunteers, 2015-2016

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If you would like more information about Meals at Home, to make a donation, or to volunteer, please contact us at:

Meals at Home, 1123 Emerson, Suite 213, Evanston, IL 60201

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