

APRIL 2021

FRIENDS AT THE DOOR

“And the world came together as the people stayed apart”



BACK IN ACTION

Meals on Wheels welcomes volunteers back!

(Special Coverage on Pages 4 and 5)

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DELIVERING FOOD, HOPE, AND COMFORT IN HARD TIMES

CHRISTINE HOCKIN-BOYD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

Over the past year since the COVID-19 pandemic first hit our community, there are only two things I can think of that have been consistently reliable: Need and Generosity.

As it became increasingly clear that the pandemic put seniors at the greatest risk, need surged like nothing we've ever seen. We were flooded with calls and overwhelmed with requests. We had to say goodbye temporarily to our volunteers for safety reasons. It was all-hands-on-deck as we enacted an emergency plan calling for all staff to load up their cars and become delivery drivers, covering 2,772 square miles through Johnson, Ellis, and Navarro counties!

Innovation became essential to keep serving seniors in a way that was safe and still made them feel connected. We launched a new texting service that allows seniors to feel less lonely and isolated while we had to pause our in-person visits. (You can read more about that on Page 6.) We delivered cards and notes and thoughtful messages of care and concern. We stayed connected despite the odds.

And it's because of the outstanding generosity of this community that any of these efforts were possible. Every time we asked, you all stepped up and opened your hearts to give. You made donations, you made calls, and you made notes and cards for our seniors.

I can never thank you enough for the kindness and compassion you repeatedly show as we continue to face challenges and increased need. I hope you enjoy this special edition of *Friends at the Door*, filled with a look at the difference you've made over the past year.

Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine Hockin-Boyd".

Christine Hockin-Boyd
Executive Director



That's me with Miss Ozie the encourager! What a great day we had delivering meals for our seniors!

“I’M SO THANKFUL TO MEALS ON WHEELS”

When his local senior center shut down its hot meal service as part of their COVID-19 safety precautions, Mr. James was left without a source of reliable food.

Mr. James doesn’t have a car so he’s homebound, and with limited resources, he was concerned he wouldn’t have a way to get the food he needed. So he turned to Meals on Wheels.

“I’m so thankful to Meals on Wheels — I love the food and appreciate the help,” Mr. James says.

At the time, we were experiencing a flood of calls and referrals because of the pandemic and the extra strain it placed on our seniors. We had to start a waiting list — but for Mr. James, help couldn’t wait!

Thankfully, we were able to start getting him meals quickly. He’s really been enjoying our home-delivered email and our new Friendly Visit texting program, which allows us to stay connected with seniors even while social distancing keeps us apart.

Mr. James loves the connection the texting program offers — and even gets to share pictures



Mr. James couldn’t be more grateful for the help he’s received for him and his pup since the pandemic started.

of Billy, his beloved companion pet, who recently joined our AniMeals program. Now both Mr. James and Billy have a reliable source of food delivered to their door.

*Without generous friends like you, we never would have been able to keep up with the surge in need caused by the pandemic. **Thank you for all you do!***

WORDS OF SUPPORT

“We at Baker Foundation understand that food is common ground of mankind. A hundred years from now it will not matter how much money we had, the buildings we owned, or the way we appeared to others, but the world will hopefully be much better because we helped feed vulnerable members of our community. Our contributions to Meals on Wheels North Central Texas are among our most vital.”

Judge Steve McClure
Director, Baker Foundation of Burleson

WE LOVE OUR

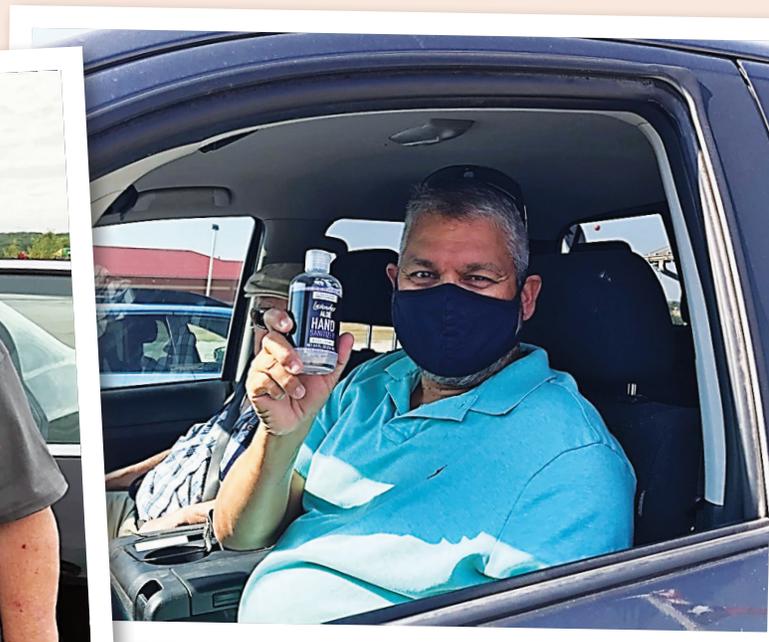
After COVID-19 put seniors (and all of us) at risk, we had to enact an emergency plan. This meant our precious volunteers couldn't help us deliver meals for several months while we navigated the strange new world of helping seniors safely during a pandemic.

Our staff found themselves in a situation like never before and a daunting challenge: Delivering thousands of meals with no volunteers. And as they say, "no one has written a playbook on this!"

For many months the staff delivered a weekly 5-pack Total Meal Service that included an entrée, drink, bread, and dessert for each day. As funds were available, we added another 5-pack of shelf-stable pantry meals containing a



wonderful variety of healthy snacks and quick-to-heat meals. The additional meals enabled seniors to remain home, reducing exposure to the coronavirus.



THANK YOU to our volunteers

VOLUNTEERS!



As our staff continued their Herculean task of delivering meals while continuing their regular jobs, we got to work on how to safely bring back our critical volunteers. We developed our new

“No Physical Contact” safety protocols and new training methods for volunteers.

We might have changed the way we deliver meals, but we haven't changed our commitment to serving those facing hunger. We promise to:

- ♥ **Serve** the elderly in our communities to care for those who once cared for us.
- ♥ **Protect** their health by practicing physical distancing, including not entering the home.
- ♥ **Encourage** the senior with a smile and thoughtful words.
- ♥ **Comfort** family members who are worried for the safety of their loved ones.

When we finally were able to make those calls and get our volunteers back, it was a great day here at Meals on Wheels. Our volunteers are truly our lifeblood, and they've never been more appreciated — especially after we walked, well, drove, miles and miles in their shoes!



and supporters for all you do!

NEW TEXTING PROGRAM HELPS SENIORS STAY CONNECTED



Receptionist Annette Cochran takes great delight in being a "texting pen pal" and giving seniors a social outlet.

The health risks of COVID-19 hit seniors especially hard, but behind the social distancing and threats of the pandemic a new crisis emerged: increased loneliness, isolation, and mental health issues.

When the pandemic hit, family members and friends were unable to be with their loved one to offer assurance, hold a hand, give a hug, and help with day-to-day house needs. Others lived far away and depended on the telephone. And sadly, many have no one to check on them.

We quickly initiated a new text messaging service to offer a new channel of communication for seniors. Immediately, it became a big hit. Just knowing someone is on

the other end to share a quick story, emoji, picture of their pet, and more can stave off loneliness and help a senior feel connected. While staff still conduct wellness checks to ensure everyone is safe and secure, the texting offers another way to stay in touch.

Our receptionist Annette Cochran manages the program, which gives her as much joy as it does our seniors! **Give it a try. Call/text 888-8MY-MEAL (888-869-6325).**



"SERVICE ABOVE SELF"

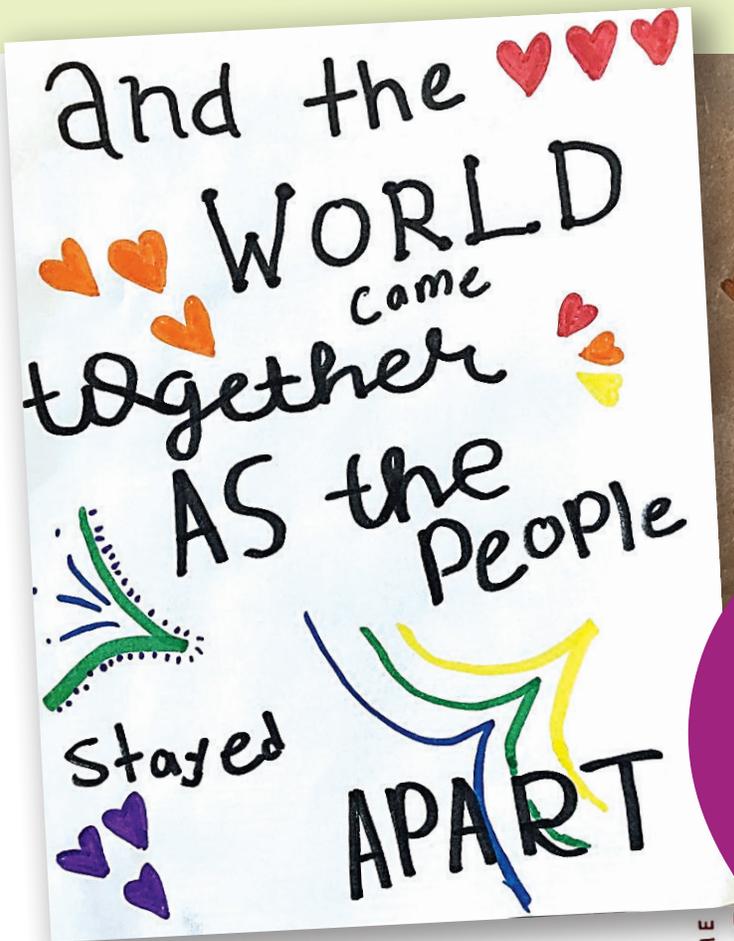
Looking to give back to the community during the pandemic, the Corsicana Rotary Club began volunteering and delivering meals for us in August 2020. Their members were looking for a new service project that would allow them to serve in a special way and make an incredible impact.

Volunteers tell us they felt so much joy in delivering meals and visiting with seniors. We so often hear that our volunteers get as much out of serving as our seniors do getting help! "We thank Meals on Wheels for the safety and security they have taught us to follow during this time of COVID-19," the Rotary Club told us. "This project goes far beyond our motto of 'Service Above Self.'"





Thank you to our friends at Johnson County Distillery who provided hand sanitizer and Bonrisu who donated homemade masks so we could stay safe while serving!



A gift for you
 Greetings to All, My thanks to all for the hard work the MOW staff is doing to make certain that our clients are all protected. I am very grateful to you for taking care of my people. Pam Roller, Burluson, Rt 7, Every other Tuesday

A GIFT FOR YOU

Our biggest thanks to volunteers and donors alike for their special care for the Meals on Wheels staff during this time. You should have heard the oohs and aahs over all the goodies!



OUR HEARTS ARE FULL
 THANK YOU FOR ALL THE KIND WORDS, DONATIONS, AND SUPPORT OVER THIS PAST YEAR FILLED WITH CHALLENGES LIKE NEVER BEFORE!
 YOU KEPT US GOING!

HONOR A LOVED ONE WITH A SPECIAL GIFT!

Tributes are appropriate at any time — celebrations, to honor a special person, in honor of a group, or in memory of a loved one. As Mother's Day and Father's Day approach, consider a gift to honor or remember a special mom or dad in your life.

What better way to honor them than to make a tribute gift

Parents are our first heroes. From home-cooked meals to bandages on scraped knees, moms and dads want to do the most for their children. And as we get older, they never stop loving, giving, and parenting (and grandparenting!).

What better way to honor them than to make a tribute gift that will help a senior who is lonely, isolated, and in need of a warm meal and friendly face. Maybe you have a loved one who benefits from Meals on Wheels, too. Your special tribute helps us continue our important work.



When you make an honor gift, we'll send a personalized card with your message to the recipient you choose, to let them know of your kind gesture.

Visit mownct.org/donate to learn more about honor and tribute gifts.

MY GIFT TO HELP LONELY, ISOLATED SENIORS!



YES! I want to help feed seniors in Johnson, Ellis, and Navarro counties. Enclosed is my gift of:

\$ _____

FROM:

NAME: _____

STREET: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

MY EMAIL: _____

I would like to donate \$ _____ automatically each month using my credit card.

I would like to have my monthly contribution of \$ _____ deducted from my checking account. (Please include a voided check.)

My check payable to MOWNCT is enclosed.

Please charge my credit card.



Amount \$ _____

Phone Number: _____

Credit Card Number: _____

Exp. Date: _____ / _____ CVV: _____

Signature: _____