

COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND REPORT



**MAKE GOOD
GO FURTHER™**



SINCE COVID-19 STRUCK, YOU'VE HELPED MEALS ON WHEELS

MAKE GOOD GO FURTHER





Last year was a year like no other – a year of tremendous struggle and suffering around the globe. For Meals on Wheels, it quickly became a time to step up, fight and ultimately persevere – all in the name of protecting America’s seniors from the threat of the deadly pandemic. The stakes couldn’t have been higher, because the seniors who rely on Meals on Wheels were – and remain – most at risk in the face of COVID-19.

Meals on Wheels didn’t back down – we doubled down, doing everything in our power to **MAKE GOOD GO FURTHER™**. We launched our COVID-19 Response Fund through which your support made an immeasurable impact on countless lives: It enabled us to serve meals to a million more seniors, and to go further than ever before to provide social interaction and a watchful eye to older Americans. Now more than ever, you can be confident that your donations are making the greatest impact possible.

Over 5,000 local Meals on Wheels programs serve virtually every community across the country – urban, suburban and rural. Normally, through a simple knock on the door, they provide so much more than a meal to millions of older Americans by addressing three of the biggest threats to independent living: hunger, loneliness and personal safety.

It’s a challenging mission during the best of times. 2020 was the worst of times.



HOPE
SAFETY
COMPASSION

The coronavirus hit with the impact of a tidal wave, leaving a trail of devastation in its wake, and taking millions of innocent people along with it. The wave crashed down, upending livelihoods and pushing innumerable businesses to the brink and beyond. The unthinkable suddenly became the unstoppable.

As of this writing, COVID-19 cases are still rising at a terrifying rate. Meals on Wheels has managed to ride the wave – refusing to relent and continuing to serve. As lifelines were cut and the world stayed in, Meals on Wheels truly stepped up and proved that it would help older Americans at any cost. Our programs have been working around the clock, rethinking and restructuring their normally high-touch service model to safely address a surge that dramatically increased demand.

THANKS TO YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT, THE
MEALS ON WHEELS COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND SENT OVER

\$31 MILLION

DIRECTLY TO THE FRONTLINES TO KEEP SENIORS SAFE.

Meals on Wheels America is the leadership organization that has long supported these community-based programs through funding, education, advocacy, research and more. By continuing to partner with us and offering your support, we'll be able to **MAKE GOOD GO FURTHER** for many years to come.

This report reflects the rapid and effective response of the Meals on Wheels COVID-19 Response Fund, the heroic acts of our Meals on Wheels network and all that you made possible in 2020.

A THANK YOU FROM ELLIE HOLLANDER, PRESIDENT AND CEO

As the world stayed home, local Meals on Wheels programs and their volunteers battled the impact of the coronavirus from the frontlines. Member programs of Meals on Wheels America fought against incredible odds, and in the face of immense chaos, to protect our nation's seniors. But the fight is far from over, and we must remain vigilant.

Knowing that our country's senior population is expected to double by 2060, we were already bracing for an uphill battle as we entered 2020. We spent the first few months of the year building up our network and preparing for the inevitable influx of new clients nationwide.

However, as fate would have it, we didn't have 40 years. When COVID-19 hit, an overwhelming number of new seniors became immediately in need of our services – and our protection. We've all now seen just how ill-prepared our nation is when it comes to dealing with this kind of crisis, and it's made one thing very clear to me: Meals on Wheels fulfills a critical need in this country by striving to ensure that no senior is left behind.

Still, the cards felt stacked against us. Daily face-to-face visits had to be turned into “knock-and-drop” deliveries. In-person chats were replaced by phone call check-ins. Senior centers and group dining facilities became grab-and-go meal sites, and their diners often had to be converted to home-delivered meal clients, all practically overnight. Meanwhile, fundraising activities – galas, luncheons and in-person events – were no longer options. Local programs couldn't rely on this revenue to keep operations going at a time when a substantial increase in funding was desperately needed.

It's the most formidable challenge Meals on Wheels America has ever faced, and yet, we've prevailed ... and we've prevailed because of you. You demonstrated that you're here for us, and you're here for older Americans. Last year, you truly did **MAKE GOOD GO FURTHER**, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



Your generosity made it possible to distribute emergency funding quickly through our Meals on Wheels COVID-19 Response Fund. That kept our network going, and kept the seniors we serve healthy and out of nursing homes and hospitals, both of which were already overwhelmed in their efforts to cope with the onslaught from the pandemic. Meanwhile, all of your donations; your letters, emails and phone calls to Congress; your volunteer work (both virtual and in-person); your distribution of goods, services and in-kind support ... all of it made a huge difference.

But, our work has really just begun. We still need to safely serve vulnerable seniors through the end of this pandemic, and long into the future. Meals on Wheels absolutely must stay strong so we can always stand up against senior isolation and hunger. It's the only way to ensure that everyone can age with dignity at home, and not end up alone.

With your ongoing support, I have no doubt that such a future is within reach.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellie Hollander". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ellie Hollander
President and CEO
Meals on Wheels America

YOUR GENEROSITY ENABLED MILLIONS OF SENIORS TO SHELTER IN PLACE



ERLE'S COVID-19 SAFETY STORY

A man who has worn many hats, Erle is a World War II veteran, a former science-fiction book publisher and former criminal defense lawyer. For the last 50 years, he's lived in a rent-controlled apartment in San Francisco. Since the coronavirus arrived, he's been doing his best to stay out of harm's way.

"I was so happy to have Meals on Wheels while in lockdown," Erle says. "You couldn't walk the streets at the time because it just wasn't safe. It was such a relief to have food delivered right to my door. With or without COVID-19, I'm just so incredibly thankful that I don't have to worry about ever missing a meal."

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL
MEALS ON WHEELS SAN FRANCISCO
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Whether you gave five dollars or five million dollars, the cumulative impact of your generosity was absolutely awe-inspiring. Thanks to your donations, we quickly sprung into action and started distributing Meals on Wheels COVID-19 Response Fund grants in April. By July, our local programs had already successfully scaled to serve 47% more seniors than they were pre-pandemic, and had increased the number of meals by 77%. This quick-response effort harnessed a remarkable outpouring of support from thousands of concerned and passionate individuals and organizations like the United Health Foundation and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and corporations that included Walmart Foundation, TikTok, HSN and QVC.

Your efforts weren't simply about writing a check; they were about building the momentum of a movement. Companies offered their goods and services: Hilton volunteered their phone centers to make check-in calls to homebound seniors; Bonrisu designed and donated face masks for programs and volunteers when PPE was scarce; and Rebuilding Together provided hundreds of kits containing smoke alarms, flashlights, cleaning supplies and other items that helped keep seniors safe at home.



EDITH'S LIFE-SAVING STORY

While sheltering in place, Edith hadn't seen a single friend or family member in months, so her Meals on Wheels volunteer's regular delivery proved incredibly fortuitous. Edith suffered a dangerous fall and couldn't pick herself up off the floor. In desperate need of medical attention, she was unable to reach her phone.

Fortunately, her Meals on Wheels volunteer, Candy, happened to pay a routine visit to Edith's home shortly after the accident. And, since Candy has been dutifully delivering meals to Edith for the last eight years, she instantly knew something was wrong when Edith failed to answer the door.

That's why Candy immediately called 911 and Edith was quickly rushed to the hospital where doctors were able to nurse her back to health. "If it weren't for Candy's visit, I really don't know when or if I would've been found in time," Edith says. "Thank you for saving my life."

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL
SOUTHERN MAINE AGENCY ON AGING
SCARBOROUGH, ME

Meanwhile, existing funders, like The Home Depot Foundation, allowed programs to reallocate current funding to support their immediate needs, and new organizations, like Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation, stepped outside their traditional giving program to provide flexible funding that our network needed.

In April, the NFL held a virtual Draft-a-Thon that raised funds for six charities, including Meals on Wheels. Macy's launched what was intended to be a month-long fundraising campaign that extended into a partnership that's still going strong, thanks to the generous outpouring of customer contributions. And, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade team even delivered meals and a friendly hello from clown volunteers who arrived at seniors' homes in festive, parade-themed delivery trucks.

Individual supporters seriously stepped up to the plate, too. Phones didn't stop ringing in those first few months of the pandemic, as so many inquired about how to donate and where they could volunteer. Thousands of supporters emailed their Members of Congress, speaking out for increased federal funding for seniors, while thousands more flocked to our website to find out how they could help. Others engaged across their social media channels and amplified our message far louder than we ever could have done on our own. The collective actions of individual supporters across the country propelled public awareness of Meals on Wheels and enabled us to **MAKE GOOD GO FURTHER**.

Celebrities also proved eager to help. Jimmy Fallon mentioned our cause on "The Tonight Show." Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin led a fundraising table read of "Grace & Frankie." Josh Groban raised money hosting a "Billboard Live At-Home" performance. Robert Ellis gave himself a Meals on Wheels tattoo. And, when Scarlett Johansson and Colin Jost got married, they asked Meals on Wheels America to exclusively break the news, telling fans that their sole "wedding wish" was for people to help vulnerable seniors during this crisis by supporting our work.

On top of all that, countless celebrities like Mariah Carey, Shawn Mendes, Justin Bieber and Drake joined what's now recognized as the world's largest digital fundraiser. Powered by Fanatics, the "ALL IN Challenge" raised over \$60 million to help feed people in need, with over \$12.5 million going to the Meals on Wheels COVID-19 Response Fund.



"CALLING ANGELS" MADE GOOD GO FURTHER ... BY OFFERING FRIENDSHIP

Hilton call center employees jumped in and volunteered their time to call Meals on Wheels seniors sheltering at home alone. One of these seniors dubbed the Hilton volunteers his "Calling Angels." Another, who lives alone, says he's found great solace in these conversations.

"It's been good," he says. "A gentleman calls just about every week and we get to talk about our meals, the activities we have for our children, grandchildren and my great grandchildren. I really enjoy it."

Calling to check in on seniors who live alone is just one way corporate volunteers are stepping up to help alleviate the suffering of so many seniors.

**YOUR GENEROSITY HELPED LOCAL
MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAMS
SERVE VIRTUALLY EVERY COMMUNITY
ACROSS THE COUNTRY**



THE IMPACT OF YOUR GENEROSITY

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EXCEPTIONAL DONORS LIKE YOU, MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA AWARDED A TOTAL OF \$31,329,554.74 THROUGH 1,132 GRANTS TO SUPPORT 628 LOCAL PROGRAMS ACROSS THE NATION, IN THE COMMUNITIES THAT NEEDED IT MOST.

19,768,352
ADDITIONAL MEALS DELIVERED

1,083,048
NEW CLIENTS SERVED

490,382+
CHECK-IN CALLS MADE TO HOMEBOUND CLIENTS

11,675
CARDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT SHARED WITH HOMEBOUND SENIORS



EMPLOYING REAL-TIME TRANSITION TO LIFE-SAVING SAFETY GUIDELINES

Driven by your generosity, local Meals on Wheels programs across the U.S. were able to successfully shift course, pivot their service models and reinvent themselves from the ground up – and on severely short notice. They figured out how to safely provide meals to, visit with and check in on millions of additional seniors who they never expected to serve.

Right out of the gate, safety guidelines posed a formidable challenge to the Meals on Wheels service model, hampering local programs' ability to continue in-home visits to homebound seniors. Many programs experienced a near doubling of demand, practically overnight. And, even though our volunteers were designated essential workers, three-fourths are over the age of 55, meaning many had to be sidelined for their own safety ... just as we needed them most.

All Meals on Wheels' group dining programs – which normally take place at senior centers and other congregate facilities – had to be suspended indefinitely. New delivery routes, food sources and storage, personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies and increased transportation needed to be redirected, sourced and managed in real time.

And yet, with so many seniors in critical need of help, millions of lives quite literally depended on us ... and they still do right now. Undeterred, our local programs adapted to working within the so-called “new normal,” transforming their day-to-day operations in order to keep seniors and staff safe.



THE IMPACT OF YOUR GENEROSITY ON LOCAL PROGRAMS:

85%
PURCHASED MORE FOOD TO SCALE UP THEIR SERVICES

50%
PURCHASED NECESSARY SUPPLIES TO CONTINUE TO SAFELY SERVE

33%
PAID FOR ADDITIONAL DRIVERS, CATERERS, AND OFFICE STAFF TO MAKE IT ALL HAPPEN

17%
COVERED THE COSTS TO OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RELIABLE FLEETS OF VEHICLES

YOUNG VOLUNTEERS LIKE ASAIAH MAKE GOOD GO FURTHER

Asaiah Edwards spent his college career volunteering with Meals on Wheels in Mercer County, NJ. “Meals on Wheels means so much to me,” he says, “from the route work I do, to the people I meet on the staff, to members throughout the community. I love hearing seniors’ stories because they have so much to say: lots of jokes, lots of laughter.”

Asaiah realized the expanded power of this work when social distancing guidelines took hold. “I remember calling a woman to check on her. She told me, ‘I don’t think I would be here if it wasn’t for Meals on Wheels. My parents have passed. My brother has passed ... but to receive food and to be able to keep living here in my own home ... I really appreciate it.’”

Designers at Bonrisu, a company that produces N95 masks, were so inspired by Asaiah’s passion that they created a set of masks as a tribute to him and the countless Meals on Wheels volunteers like him, celebrating the many enduring friendships they’ve made with seniors across the nation.



YOU DID SO MUCH TO MAKE GOOD GO FURTHER ...

DON'T STOP *now.*

As of this writing, COVID-19 is rapidly rising in nearly every state across the country. Whatever the future holds, we know that seniors will remain among its greatest victims unless we continue to take action.

Many of us are finding ways to navigate the current situation; meanwhile, seniors must remain sheltered in place. Meals on Wheels America needs to keep bolstering our resources to get them through. That's why we partnered with nearly 30 national corporations last fall and winter to run the Don't Stop Now™ awareness campaign on digital media and through media donated by Comcast and Univision.

The campaign celebrated the spirit of giving, while actively motivating individuals and companies to keep supporting vulnerable seniors. Companies stepped up to meet three important calls to action:

DON'T STOP SHARING.

Dozens of corporate partners like The Home Depot Foundation, Lasting Smiles, Alpha Gamma Delta and Pressed Juicery leveraged their robust social channels to encourage followers to help.

DON'T STOP ENGAGING.

Macy's, US LBM and Synchrony rallied employees to create homemade greeting cards that were delivered to seniors alongside nutritious meals, as a gentle reminder that they are never alone. Ultimately, over 11,000 cards were created. Meanwhile, HITRECORD encouraged its community to create original works of art, inspired by the campaign and the seniors we serve.

DON'T STOP GIVING.

Bob's Red Mill hosted a "Don't Stop Baking" competition, asking fans to submit family recipes. Three lucky winners were chosen to receive a product prize package, a \$500 Visa gift card and a \$5,000 donation to the Meals on Wheels COVID-19 Response Fund in their honor. Thanks to this effort, \$15,000 was donated to the Fund.

Danone North America made a generous donation for every card an employee created for a senior, and naviHealth kicked off the campaign by matching donor gifts, dollar for dollar.

This campaign was such a great example of collaborative action during COVID-19 that it was featured as part of the high-profile Fast Company Innovation Festival through a panel of our partners from Comcast, Fanatics and Kroger. And, as an added bonus, Don't Stop Now™ raised an additional \$350,000 through individual contributions and participating corporate partners' networks and employees.

Thanks to you, Meals on Wheels has been able to weather the storm and face the tidal wave head-on, creating a lifeline for millions of seniors through the COVID-19 crisis.

The **DON'T STOP NOW™** gratitude video thanks 28 corporate partners who, together, built the full reach of this campaign and generated over 10 million impressions and 1 million video views.



THE CHALLENGING ROAD AHEAD

Even before COVID-19 emerged as a worldwide threat, our nation was falling far short in its efforts to care for our aging neighbors. Already, there were nearly:

- **9.7 MILLION SENIORS IN AMERICA STRUGGLING WITH HUNGER,**
- **7.7 MILLION SENIORS WHO WERE SOCIALLY ISOLATED, AND**
- **7.4 MILLION SENIORS WITH INCOMES BELOW THE POVERTY LINE.**

In 2020, Meals on Wheels programs were hobbled by COVID-19 in profound ways that will be felt for quite some time. The financial situation is expected to get worse before it gets better, and it is predicted to take up to three years to recover from the hit that they suffered in rising to this challenge. Thanks to your compassion and generosity, our network wasn't completely devastated, but it's clear that 2021 will be a very difficult year for us all, as we continue to be plagued by the impacts of the pandemic.

WE AREN'T OUT OF THE WOODS YET

In addition to the rising demand, increased costs and gaps in funding have created even greater financial strain.

- **86% OF OUR PROGRAMS BELIEVE THEY ARE NOT MEETING THE NEEDS OF THEIR COMMUNITIES**
- **29% WOULD NEED TO DOUBLE HOME-DELIVERY EFFORTS TO MEET THE NEED**
- **74% WORRY THEY'LL LOSE FINANCIAL SUPPORT, BUT KEEP CLIENTS**
- **62% WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP CLIENTS WITHOUT CONTINUED CASH HELP**

It is expected that many of our new stay-at-home clients will continue to need our services even after the pandemic has passed, and funding is expected to steadily wane moving forward. The financial health of our network will further suffer as pandemic fatigue sets in across the nation.

At the peak of summer 2020, home-delivered meals served were up 100% from pre-COVID-19 levels and they are still up 59% as of November. As more seniors seek Meals on Wheels services, the cost of meal production, safety supplies and labor will likely remain high.

However, in the face of this huge threat, our network has proven itself to be impressively scrappy, committed, smart and agile, efforts that inevitably have come at a cost.



OUR ROADMAP TO ENDING SENIOR HUNGER AND ISOLATION – THE GO FURTHER FUND

We will continue to do whatever it takes to ensure Meals on Wheels remains the solution that’s fully able to support our nation’s seniors – today, tomorrow and for many decades to come. To achieve this outcome swiftly and effectively, Meals on Wheels America has built a strategic roadmap that will guide our efforts to combat senior isolation and hunger for today’s and tomorrow’s seniors. Your continued support will enable that success.

SUPPORT COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

We’ll provide targeted emergency grants and technical assistance to local programs to enable them to meet the nutrition, socialization and safety needs of the seniors they serve.

BUILD CAPACITY

We’ll invest in infrastructure, training and technology to ensure Meals on Wheels America and our network stay strong and are prepared to address seniors’ evolving needs and meet growing demand.

DRIVE INNOVATION

We’ll conduct research and foster partnerships to identify new socialization, nutrition and safety interventions; pilot promising practices; evaluate outcomes; and, scale solutions that make the greatest impact.

LEARN HOW YOU CAN MAKE GOOD GO FURTHER

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MEALS on WHEELS
AMERICA

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