



## Independence never gets old

**I**'m not sure exactly what I expected 'getting old' would be like," mused James in a recent conversation.

"I didn't expect my knees to last forever, so when I had to stop running, I wasn't surprised. There were plenty other things I could do for exercise."

But a few years after Julia, his wife of 58 years, passed away, the tremors started. "I can still do most things for myself; they just take longer," laughs James.

James' son, however, was concerned about his Dad's abilities in the kitchen. "I didn't want to take a chance on a knife accident, or him dropping a hot pan, or heaven forbid, a fire."

Meals on Wheels was the perfect answer. "It allows Dad to remain at home where he's happiest, **doing all the**

**things he can still do** for himself. A hot, healthy lunch is just the help he needs."

Statistics show that a senior struggling with food insecurity or poor nutrition has the mental and physical capacity of someone 14 years older. Up to 65% of older residents entering long-term care facilities and hospitals are malnourished. Malnourished patients are readmitted to hospitals and care more frequently.

Here in Lynchburg, we interview our recipients when they start our program, and again after 30, 60, and 90 days of service. After 90 days, 98% reported feeling better, stronger or healthier since receiving meals, and 97% felt safer at home knowing a volunteer will stop by.

James sums it up: "I don't know what the next few years will bring, but for now this is just great. The food is delicious, I've met lots of new friends, and I'm able to remain independent in my own home. That part will never get old."



# Making a Difference Together



Kris Shabestar,  
Executive Director

Half a century, 5 decades, 50 years ... whatever we call it, it's a long time!

Over the last fifty years, with the help of this community, Meals on Wheels has had a significant impact on the lives of tens of thousands of people and their families. We have helped keep them safe, healthy and connected to the community so they can continue to live where they are most comfortable - in their own homes.

You will notice that I said **'with the help of this community'** in the previous paragraph. This is vitally important. I have been reviewing our history and have lots of statistics available to me - 'delivered over 3 Million meals' is one of my recent favorites! But how did that happen? It is only possible because of the incredible generosity of the community in which we live.

'Giving' is a word that I think is undervalued. Individually, our giving is significant. Collectively, it's unstoppable: volunteers commit their time, energy and fuel to deliver; donors know that we cannot continue to serve vulnerable neighbors and friends without their help; and those who advocate for our recipients and our program provide support in myriad ways.

**Giving comes from the heart** and is unshakably rooted in our capacity to care for one another. This is especially true at Meals on Wheels because it celebrates the idea that the well-being of a neighbor or stranger is just as important as that of our loved ones, and that our smallest actions can impact the lives of others.

*Giving...celebrates the idea that the well-being of a neighbor or stranger is just as important as that of our loved ones.*



We were pleased to welcome the team from Long & Foster as a new business delivery partner recently

These are just a few of the reasons I am so excited to celebrate our 50th anniversary this year. Some days it seems the news is only filled with division and strife, but all I have to do is stop by any one of our pickup locations and I see dozens of generous, giving people doing amazing things every day - and they have been doing so for half a century!

We are celebrating the individuals who have made a difference, we are celebrating our community that steps up in time of need, but most of all I believe **we are celebrating our capacity to make a difference together.**



Michele Curlee takes a friend to deliver!



For a number of years we have shared the news that Meals on Wheels delivers so much more than a meal.

Yes, of course, it's the hot, fresh meal that nourishes the physical needs of our homebound neighbors. But we also heard the stories and saw the benefits that came with making new friends of the volunteers who deliver. That daily check-in provides much needed peace of mind to both recipients and their families. We had anecdotal evidence that our recipients felt safer, stronger, and healthier after consistently eating nutritious meals. We were encouraged by the stories recipients and their families shared about improved health and well-being.

It was a challenge, though, to 'prove' what we were seeing and hearing.

Then, in 2019 we began to see some hard data from Meals on Wheels America. The data showed that:

- In 2019, individuals age 65 and older made up 14.5% of the US population. That percentage is now over 20% and expected to double by 2060.
- Meals on Wheels can **help reduce obesity. 28% of senior citizens are obese.** Research has shown that meals delivered at home to seniors can improve diet and nutrient intake (as well as general quality-of-life).
- Home delivered meals **provide food security: 9% of senior citizens live in poverty.** Meals on Wheels can provide food security, as well as healthier meals rather than the fast food or convenience store options they may resort to otherwise.
- Receiving Meals on Wheels **reduces feelings of isolation:** For senior citizens living at home, daily delivered meals ensure daily visitors. Not only will these seniors be less isolated, they will also have a consistent visitor who can keep tabs on their well-being. Daily-delivered meals improve feelings of isolation and loneliness, mental health, and self-rated health. They also reduce rates of falling and worries about being able to remain at home.

Those stories we loved so much were starting to be backed up by statistics.

In 2023, we began our own data collection process here in Lynchburg. By interviewing recipients at the beginning of service, and then again at 30, 60, and 90 days, we were able to chart our own trends. Eighteen months later, we are following up with recipients after a year or more of service.

# From Stories To Statistics Back to Stories

Here are just a few of the things we've discovered:

Nationally, 77% of participants say the meals help improve their health. Locally, 87.8% report the same.

Nationally, 1 in 2 seniors living alone lacks the income to pay for basic needs. Locally, last year 56% of people we served were at 100% of the poverty rate or below.

And now those impressive **statistics are turning back into stories.** When asked, 'What changes in your health have you noticed since receiving Meals on Wheels?' here are some of the responses:

- *I am eating better and I also am eating on days that I don't feel up to cooking.*
- *Weight loss (needed); helped me feel better and exercise; no more stomach problems*
- *I feel so much better.*
- *I can tell that your meals have helped my blood pressure; I have lost 10 (needed) pounds*
- *I am more active and jolly. I feel good. I am taking my shots on time. My diabetes has improved.*
- *I think it is helping my wife (her vitals are good) and me. The meals help "keep us going."*
- *I feel better; it helps since I don't have to stand to cook.*
- *I am eating more vegetables and some of my medications have changed for the better.*
- *My blood sugar has decreased. My A1C is better. My blood pressure is better. I have lost some weight and my swelling has gone down.*
- *My lab numbers have improved.*
- *My A1C dropped from 10 to 7.8!*
- *I feel better knowing that I have meals to eat even when I don't have much of an appetite.*
- *I feel happier.*

And, 98% of new recipients surveyed report feeling healthier, safer, and happier since receiving Meals on Wheels.

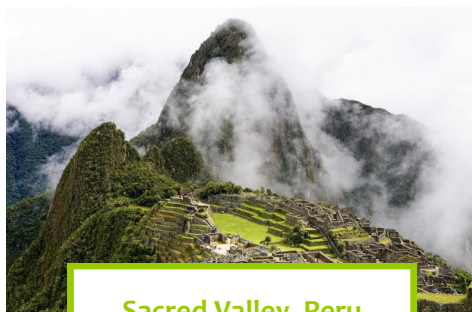
We're working on that last 2% ...

# WHEELS UP! LYNCHBURG

## Area's Premier Destination Raffle Takes Off on Year 6!



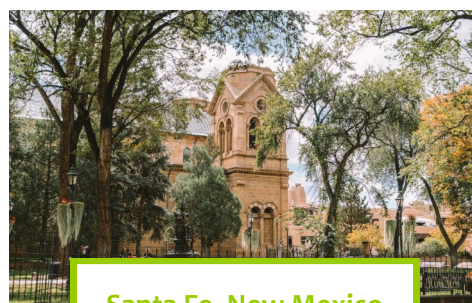
Aran Islands, Ireland



Sacred Valley, Peru



Barcelona, Spain



Santa Fe, New Mexico

The sixth annual **WheelsUp!** destination raffle is scheduled to take off again in September. This unique online fundraiser has staked its claim as the 'best deal in town,' and is now poised to help four more lucky winners take the trip of a lifetime! Here's how it works:

### Buy a Chance. Give a Chance.

- Go to [WheelsUpLYH.org](http://WheelsUpLYH.org)
- Choose your desired destination\*
- Buy your ticket(s) for a chance to win
- Winners also receive \$1,000 cash to spend as they wish!

Ticket sales are open September 3 —September 29, 2024

Drawing will be held on September 30, 2024

All proceeds benefit Meals on Wheels of Greater Lynchburg

AND, for each destination, only 100 tickets are available —so if all tickets sell, your chances are 1:100 at most!

**BEST OF ALL, whether your name is drawn or not, the homebound in our community are the big winners!**

### SOUND TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

We know. It's hard to believe ... but it's true!

Each ticket sells for \$110—that's how much it costs us to deliver meals to one person for one month! So whether you win or not, for each ticket you purchase, you've provided a month of meals for one homebound neighbor.

### \*More about destinations:

Travel Lovers has graciously offered a \$2,500 travel voucher for each winner, allowing winners to plan the trip as promoted, **or** design one of their own choosing! (see **WheelsUp!** rules for details at [www.WheelsUpLYH.org](http://www.WheelsUpLYH.org)).

*Abundant thanks to our Trailblazer Sponsors:*



**WheelsUp!**  
for Meals on Wheels of Greater Lynchburg

Travel   
Lovers

*Betty Lynn &  
John Blanks*

# Our Need for Volunteers

## Ongoing, Immediate, Vital

We deliver meals on 45 routes per day, five days a week, 52 weeks per year.

That's a minimum of 900 volunteer opportunities each month; 11,700 routes this year.

All the while, the number of recipients we serve continues to grow at a rapid pace - we added 86 people in the last sixty days! When we say 'it takes an army of volunteers to deliver Meals on Wheels,' we're not kidding!



Mary Ann Sigler at meal pick-up

Meals on Wheels volunteers come in all varieties: retirees, business professionals on their lunch hour, grandparents, grandchildren, teachers on summer break, nursing students or med students, moms - on their own, or with children in tow, members of a civic group or faith community... Lots of differences, but all with one thing in common: they've made time in their schedule to help their homebound neighbors in need.

Mary Ann Sigler has been delivering for 8 years. Unlike many MOW volunteers, she did not start on a 'regular route' - instead Mary Ann began filling in anywhere she was needed. She quickly became aware of the critical need for volunteers, and so enamored with the recipients that she is now a full-time substitute, delivering several days each week on whatever route is open.

"I'm a people person," says Mary Ann. "I want to get to know everyone and see all the places we serve!"

"Mary Ann's flexibility is amazing," says Sarah Lent, Meals on Wheels Volunteer Manager. "We certainly don't expect everyone to be available multiple days each week, but we really appreciate those who are!"

Meals on Wheels can tailor a volunteer schedule that suits your specific availability. Many people will select a day that typically works well for them, and sign up for two or three days a month - maybe the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Friday. For others, once a month is what works best. And some like the regularity of delivering the same day each week.

Mary Ann has taken advocacy a step further. Earlier this year, she arranged a Moment for Mission at her church and followed up with a luncheon to talk about volunteering for Meals on Wheels with those who were interested. The response was so great that she has now helped secure volunteers to fill openings on five different routes and is helping MOW staff look at implementing this same recruiting model at other churches.

*Food connects us - to our neighbors and community. I love that driving for Meals on Wheels breaks down the barriers that separate us - health, finances, faith, biases, etc.*

*You will know LOVE as a MOW volunteer. I am blessed and honored to have this amazing opportunity!*

*Mary Ann Sigler, Volunteer*

If YOU have time to volunteer or can help us spread the word, we'd love to hear from you! Call 434-847-0796 or apply online at [www.mealslynchburg.org/volunteer](http://www.mealslynchburg.org/volunteer).

THANK YOU

Sponsors

Thanks to you, we're flying high!



**WheelsUp!**  
for Meals on Wheels of Greater Lynchburg

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# Meals on Wheels Note Cards 2024 Collections

Your \$12.50 purchase will pay for two meals for one of our neighbors

Each Package  
contains 8 assorted cards

## Close to Home



**Spencer Garden Path**  
by Dennis Johnson



**Batteau Race Prep**  
by Purnell Pettyjohn



**Inner Courtyard, Westminster Pres.**  
by Bob Blevins



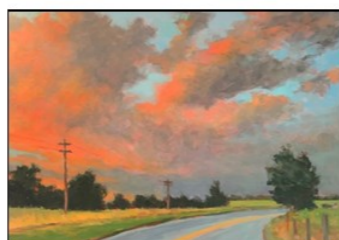
**MayLynne's**  
by Purnell Pettyjohn



**Lynchburg Grows**  
by Betsy Jones



**Boat House at Sweet Briar**  
by Jim Hicks



**Lynchburg Sunset**  
by David Eakin



**Awareness Garden**  
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**Summers Remembered**  
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**Raven's Roost Overlook**  
by Rodney Laughon



**Where the River Goes**  
by Meg Davies



**Rivers**  
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## Around the Region



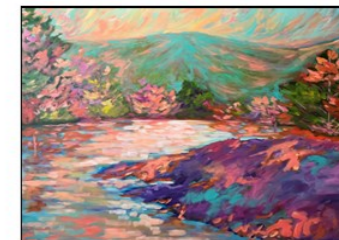
**Sharp Top**  
by Carolyn Womack



**Spring Fields**  
by TJ Liston



**Boy's Camp**  
by Sallie Sydnor



**A Colorful River Trip**  
by Lori Leist

## Petal Perfect



**Mother's Day**  
by Peggy Kiley Dillon



**Poppies Galore**  
by Caroline Womack



**Sunflowers**  
by Deliece Blanchard



**Floral Collage**  
by Amy Calandra Davis



**Lenten Rose**  
by Jane Vaughan



**Pink Roses**  
by Cindy Vener



**Down the Road**  
by Caroline Q. Murphy



**It's a Fall Affair**  
by Lori Leist

## Notecard Order Form

You can now order on-line at [mealslynchburg.org](http://mealslynchburg.org)

Name: _____	Close to Home _____ @ \$12.50 = _____	Quantity	Total
Address: _____	Around the Region _____ @ \$12.50 = _____		
City, State, Zip: _____	Petal Perfect _____ @ \$12.50 = _____		
Phone: _____			
Email: _____			

I will pick up cards from the office at 605 Clay Street,

call or  email when they are ready

Please mail my cards - I've included postage.

Postage for 245 \_\_ zip codes, please add:  
Packages: 1 add \$5.00 2 add \$5.75; 3 add \$6.50; Call if over 3 pkgs.

Total for Cards _____
Total for Postage _____
<b>Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____</b>

Make check payable to Meals on Wheels  
Mail to P.O. Box 1388, Lynchburg, VA 24505  
434-847-0796

## Donations Received January 6, 2024 through June 30, 2024

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**Meals on Wheels**  
*on the Green*  
 Delivering independence,  
 nourishing body and spirit

2024



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Day of Service

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And to those who donated in response to the  
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## Faith Communities

Antioch Baptist  
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Meals on Wheels appreciates  
 each donation and makes  
 every effort to recognize your  
 gifts as you wish.

If for any reason your gift is  
 not acknowledged correctly,  
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Wendy Golden  
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## And abundant thanks also to those who donated:

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*Addressing the unique needs of the homebound in our community*



## ***In October we will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Meals on Wheels of Greater Lynchburg!***

Half a century ago, a few local faith communities collaborated to address the growing need of delivering meals to the homebound.

Five decades ago, we served an average of 52 recipients each month. In June 2024 we served 694 recipients.

Half a century ago, a hand full of volunteers stepped up to meet the need. Currently our volunteer roster numbers almost 700 dedicated individuals and business partners.

The loving and generous support of this community is the reason that Meals on Wheels has been a pillar of hope to our homebound neighbors for 50 years. **WE THANK YOU!**

**OCTOBER 22, 2024**

*Save the Date!*

*Let's Celebrate!*