

1ST QUARTER
2025

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO. 03

News and views from the Board & Staff

Navigating Budget Cuts, Rising Costs, and Overwhelming Need

A few weeks ago, a woman walked into our office to sign up Robert, her father-in-law, for meals. According to her, he is not very mobile, does not drive, and can't cook for himself. She and her husband live out of state and they don't have any local relative who can help Robert. We told her that we had a long waitlist and it would be awhile before we could enroll him in our meal program. "How long will it take? A few months? A year?" she asks. "I'd like to sign him up anyway. He needs help." As of this writing, there are 416 seniors waiting to receive services. How do we end the wait for these people?

The federal funding freeze order announced -- and rescinded -- in late January gave us all pause about our work here at Meals on Wheels Waco. How do we sustain our programs and services for the long term? How do we continue to serve the vulnerable older adults in the three-county area we cover -- Falls, Hill and McLennan? How do we get people off our waitlist?

For more than a year now, government funds that come to us through the Area Agency for Aging of the Heart of Texas, have been on the decline. In 2023, we received funding for 113,964 meals. In 2024, state funding covered 94,392 meals. In 2025, the number is much lower -- 66,636 meals. All this despite the rising cost of supplies and the growing, overwhelming need for meals.

Government funding, such as it is, pays for a



portion of the cost to provide meals. We raise the rest of the funds through grant writing, fundraising events, and community support. This is where we need everyone's help. A tax-exempt donation of \$41.25 will provide meals for someone like Robert for one week. A gift of \$189.75 will cover the cost of meals for 1 month or \$2,277 for 1 year. Donations of any amount matter. And there are many ways you can donate:

- Visit our website (mowwaco.org)
- Send funds to donate@mowwaco.org on PayPal
- Scan the QR code
- Send a check by mail (PO Box 85, 76703)
- Stop by our office -- we'd love to meet you!



Recently, Franny, one of our volunteers, wrote to us, "I'm happy to contribute to MOW. Your letter in November really impressed on me that if we each do just a little, it can help so much. I hope others felt the same." We do, too.

Client Spotlight: Maxine Turns 107

We had the honor of sitting down with Maxine and her daughter, Shirley, a few days before her birthday. Maxine turned 107 on February 16th, lives by herself and tends to her beautiful orchids daily. Maxine believes age is just a number and feels blessed to live independently. "I quit driving when I turned 100 and it seemed like from then on everybody is always doing something for me," she says. "I've never put too much importance on age. I feel wonderful and that's the important thing."

Being on the Meals on Wheels program has not only been a godsend for Maxine (she says she has the best volunteers ever), but to Shirley as well. "I live in Valley Mills. I am not close by. Having somebody here daily to check on her is just wonderful. Not only has it



increased my confidence to go somewhere if I need to, but it just brought wonderful people into her life." Shirley is clearly very proud of her mom. "Her attitude is amazing. It's so positive. She's so glad to be alive every day."

"Life is what we make it and what we set our minds to," says Maxine. If you want to hear more about Maxine, check out our video post on Facebook <https://bit.ly/4gMIIGj>.

Deliver a Lasting Legacy

Do you want to give a gift to Meals on Wheels Waco that has an impact NOW and beyond your lifetime? Plan your legacy by starting a conversation with a financial advisor. There are many ways you can make your mark on the future: leave a gift in your will or trust, consider a gift of real estate, investment stock or life insurance.

If you do not have a financial advisor, join the Waco Foundation Pie Society -- a community-wide giving group made up of generous donors like you. The Pie Society's members are individuals who have promised to leave a portion of their estate, or a piece of their pie, to charity. The amount of the gift and the charity or charities you choose is up to you. No estate is too small to leave an impact! If you are ready to make a promise of a gift, simply fill out the form at wacopiesociety.org or contact call 254-754-3404. We hope you will consider including Meals on Wheels Waco as part of your lasting legacy.



What's in a Name?

Some people confuse us with Meals on Wheels Central Texas. We like our friends at MOW Central Texas, which is based in Austin, but please note that we are **NOT one and the same**. There are over 5,000 Meals on Wheels programs nationwide and over 300 in Texas alone.

What some of you might not know is that these programs are independent of each other. We are **Meals on Wheels Waco** and we serve not just the Waco area, but all of McLennan, Falls and Hill Counties.

Whether you are making a donation, signing up to volunteer or wanting to know the latest news from us, please be sure you are following us or looking up **Meals on Wheels Waco**. Of course, it won't hurt our feelings if you follow Meals on Wheels Central Texas, too.



Welcome Our 2025 Board of Directors

At the end of life we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made, how many great things we have done. We will be judged by "I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless, and you took me in." – Mother Teresa.



Connie Berry, President

"I believe this quote sums up why everyone should be selfless, by giving of their time and/or money towards causes which involve helping others," shares Connie Berry, the new president of Meals

on Wheels Waco's Board of Directors. "Early on, the church was called to help individuals and families who were in need. Each church is different and may not be able to do so or may choose not to do so in the current world we live. As such, we need organizations, such as Meals on Wheels Waco, to either supplement the church or fill the role the church used to provide."

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Save the Date: May 16, 2025 Scramble Fore Seniors

We are hosting our annual charity golf tournament on Friday, May 16th, at **Bear Ridge Golf Club** in Waco. All proceeds from the all-day event will go to our meal program.

Registration fee includes: green fees, lunch, and cart (**Individual:** \$150; **Team:** \$600)

Sponsorship levels:

Presenting - \$5,000
Platinum - \$2,500
Gold - \$1,500
Silver - \$1,000
Hole - \$250



Practice those swings and get ready to have some fun with us while supporting our mission! Scan the QR code or visit mowwaco.org for details.

A Time to Open, A Time to Close

We recently teamed up with the City of Golinda and started a congregate meal program to serve active older adults in Golinda and the surrounding towns. Last January 28th, the Golinda Senior Activity Center opened at City Hall and welcomed over 30 seniors.

Led by city staff Lisa Faulkner and Mayor Jo Farar, the center is open every Tuesday and Thursday, from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm. It offers various activities including bingo, lunch, and more!

We are thrilled to serve more seniors in Falls County and hope that the center will continue to grow and thrive in the years to come.

There is a season for everything. Alas, it is with heavy hearts that we announce the closure of our longest-running congregate meal program -- the Sul Ross Senior Center. Meals on Wheels Waco has been running the senior program at this city-owned facility for more than 40 years. Recently, the City of Waco announced plans to shut down the 74-year-old facility for safety reasons.

We will miss gathering at this historic building but look forward to a fresh start at a new venue. Relocation plans are still up in the air. In the meantime, be sure to follow the **Sul Ross Senior Center Facebook page** for updates and a walk down memory lane.



Hill County Foundation Supports Local Programming

Last Fall, the George G. & Alva Hudson Smith Foundation awarded Meals on Wheels Waco with a \$8,600 grant to help boost our senior center programs in Hill County. MOW Waco has been operating senior center programs in Hill County (Hillsboro, Hubbard and Whitney) since the 1990s, hosting bingo, domino tournaments, speaker presentations, lunch and more.

The grant will enable us to fund programming and outreach costs, including new activities, new partnerships, supplies, advertising, and more.

Honor & Tribute Giving

We are always grateful for donations we receive from our community. From November 2024 to January 2025, we received monetary gifts in honor or in memory of the following individuals:

In Honor of:

Jody & Gary Barbin, Dr. Libby & Bill Bellinger, Jake Blum, Virginia Bryant, Betty Elliott, Vauda Fogleman, Karen & Kent Garbett, Troy Glasson, Craven & Nancy Green, Marlene Griffis, Daniel Hollingsworth, Carol & David Horner, JJ's Beauty Salon, Susan Johnsen, Jenna Johnston, Dana & Scott Jones, Jane Keahey, Sarah LaDelle Keck, Debbie King, Missy & Web Lowder, Vicky Mazanec, John McEachern, Frederick & Gladys Moseley, Rose Moyer, Patty Muchow, Kay & Lyndon Olson, Bernice Picha, LaVanda Raso, George & Kathyleen Roper, Eddie & Debbie Sherman, Clint & Taylor Sherman, Stacy & Chase Sligh, Susan Star, Ruby Wegwerth, David Young

In Memory of:

B.L. Barnes, William G. Breazeale Jr., Louvena Cain, Christopher Rogers Clifton, Jeannie Dickerson, Mildred Dixon, Falba Louise Evans, Willie Mae Goodlow, Walt Lavendar, Billye Owens, Vicky Parker, Vern Sauter, Carolyn Ann Stafford-Wiley, Tommy Tucker, Michael Veselka, Barbara Jo vonRosenberg, Pawnee Wansley Martin, Harrison Ward, Myra J. Ward, Shirley Williams



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www.mowwaco.org

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