

Mission in Motion

Updates, stories, and community impact

Spring 2026

Stepping Up for Seniors – Together

Extraordinary community support raised over a million dollars to help end hunger and isolation for older adults in McLennan, Falls, and Hill Counties.

Thanks to the overwhelming support of our community, our Step Up for Seniors campaign has come to a powerful close – raising an extraordinary \$1,037,727. The fundraising campaign was launched in September 2025 to eliminate Meals on Wheels Waco's waitlist and expand critical services. Before the campaign, there were over 400 individuals on the waitlist. As of this writing, that number is down to 87, and new older neighbors are being added to our meal routes every week.

What began as an urgent effort to reduce the waitlist for home-delivered meals grew into a community-wide movement of compassion and action. Donors from Waco and McLennan County led the way in generosity, demonstrating the community's deep commitment to caring for its aging neighbors.

Supporters in the 57-75 age group emerged as especially strong leaders in giving, reflecting a powerful investment from community members who understand firsthand the importance of ensuring nutrition, dignity, and connection later in life.

"Thanks to everyone involved in donating and supporting our campaign," said John



Hawes, Meals on Wheels Waco Board President. "With the \$1 million plus funds that were raised, we will be able to serve more seniors in need."

"I am beyond thrilled about the community response to our call to step up for seniors," CEO Estrellita Doolin added. "I am especially pleased with the recurring gifts because they will help us address current needs and plan for the future."

The campaign may be over, but the need continues – and so does the opportunity to make a difference. Whether through volunteering, advocacy, or financial support, every act of kindness helps ensure that no older adult in our community faces hunger or isolation alone. Your continued engagement keeps this lifeline strong.

Honoring Our Centenarians: 100+ Years of Wisdom and Joy

We're proud to serve and honor three remarkable centenarians in our community. Their lives inspire us every day with stories of resilience, humor, and a love for life.

Helen, 103, is like a walking encyclopedia for the City of Waco, brimming with trivia and local history. Independent, outgoing, and relentless, Helen lives by her motto: "You should not put off something for tomorrow that can be done today." Her energy and cheerful nature are an inspiration to all who know her.



Florence, 102, radiates energy and spirit. Her powerful gospel voice and joyful heart can lift any room, filling it with laughter and song. She reminds us that passion and enthusiasm have no age limit.



Doris, 101, enjoyed many years as a dedicated nurse. Her simple advice resonates through generations: Live a clean life and pray daily.

We also pause to honor three centenarians who recently passed away. **Lela** passed away in February at the age of 104, while **Venia**, 100, died in January. Both are surely missed by the volunteers whose lives they've touched through the years.

We also remember **Walter**, who helped deliver meals with his daughters for many years even beyond his 100th year. He passed away in early March three months short of his 102nd birthday.



Through the lives of these incredible individuals, we see the power of resilience, purpose, and community. They teach us that age is not a limitation but a canvas for living fully, giving generously, and inspiring others along the way.



More Than Three Decades of Kiwanis Kindness

This year marks an extraordinary milestone: nearly 32 years of continuous service from the Kiwanis Club of Waco as volunteers with Meals on Wheels Waco!

Since the mid-90s, Kiwanis members have been delivering more than just hot meals. With every knock on the door, they've brought warmth, friendship, and a sense of connection to hundreds of homebound seniors across our community.

"I enjoy getting to know the people on our route. I consider them my friends," said Steve Dow, a Kiwanis member and coordinator for their MOW Waco volunteer team. "Serving through Meals on Wheels has been a joy, in terms of meeting a lot of great people and knowing we are making a difference," Gene Hall added.

We are honored to shine a spotlight on this remarkable group whose decades-long commitment is a true reflection of what it means to step up for seniors. To the Kiwanis Club of Waco: thank you for 30 plus years of partnership, purpose, and impact. We look forward to many more meals -- and memories -- to come.

Care Corner: Neighbors Helping Neighbors



Last year, Meals on Wheels Waco launched the **Senior Care Corner** – a special extension of our mission to support the whole well-being of the older adults we serve. Stocked with shelf-stable foods, hygiene items, seasonal essentials like fans and heaters, and more, it's a helping hand for homebound seniors who may need a little extra care between meal deliveries.

Brown Foundation Repair donated \$7,950 which allowed us to set up the Care Corner. Others followed suit to help keep the shelves filled – volunteers from St. Jerome Catholic Church, members of the Waco Women's Lions Club, and other members of our community.

You can help keep our Senior Care Corner stocked and ready for those in need.

- Shop our Amazon Wish List: <https://a.co/hdTtorP>
- Donate in-kind (fans, heaters, hygiene items, cleaning supplies, etc.)
- Give online to support this program year-round (www.mowwaco.org)

Every contribution, big or small, helps ensure every senior feels supported and cared for.

Impact That Lives On

Did you know that anyone – even without great wealth – can make a difference for our community's seniors?

Through planned giving (also known as legacy giving), you can help ensure seniors in our community continue to receive meals, friendly visits, and support for years to come. Meals on Wheels Waco has been fortunate to receive legacy gifts of all sizes – each one making a meaningful impact on our programs and the neighbors we serve.



A legacy gift – whether through a will, trust, or other estate plan – allows you to support our mission in a way that fits your life and your values. Even modest contributions can have a lasting effect over time, helping seniors stay nourished, independent, and connected.

Starting the conversation about legacy giving is simple, and it can bring peace of mind knowing your support will continue to make a difference long into the future. Visit <https://mowwaco.org/legacy-giving/> for more information.

WANTED: PRIZES

Bingo is more than a game at our senior centers – it's a joyful social event that brings laughter, friendly competition, and connection to older adults who look forward to it each week. For many, it's a highlight of their day, and an important way to stay mentally active and socially engaged.

Donations of bingo prizes help us keep this beloved activity going strong. With your support, we can continue creating fun, meaningful experiences for our senior center participants. Small prizes make a big difference. Simple items like snacks, toiletries, puzzle books, kitchen towels or gift cards add excitement, turning every win into a moment worth celebrating. Drop off your donations at our downtown office.

Stay in the Loop: Follow Us on Social Media

Did you know we share regular updates online? By following us on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, you can stay connected to the work we're doing, see how your support is helping others, and enjoy uplifting stories from our Meals on Wheels Waco family.



We post photos, event updates, volunteer spotlights, and special moments with our seniors that don't always make it into our newsletter. It's an easy way to feel part of something meaningful – right from your phone, tablet, or computer.

Here's where to find us:

- Facebook: @MealsOnWheelsWaco
- Instagram: @MealsOnWheelsWaco
- LinkedIn: @MealsOnWheelsWaco

Not sure how to get started? Ask a family member or friend to help you follow us. We'd love to have you along for the journey.

Your Old Car Can Deliver Hope

Do you have a car, truck, van, or even a boat you no longer need? Is it taking up space in your garage or driveway? What if it could feed a senior in need?

Donating your unwanted vehicle is easier than you think – and it can make a life-changing difference for local seniors. Through our CARS Program, your unwanted vehicle – in any condition – can be the reason someone gets a meal and a friendly visit. The process is fairly easy and towing away is free. You will also receive a tax-deductible receipt for your generous gift. Visit our website for all the details.



Step Up for Seniors – Turn Compassion Into Action

Meals on Wheels Waco receives less than half of our funding from the government and relies on the kindness and generosity of our community for the rest of our financial needs. YOU have the power to help and impact lives. **\$50 will feed a senior for a week. \$200 will feed a senior for a month. \$2,400 will feed a senior for a year.**

Every dollar you give makes a big difference and allows us to strengthen our programs and ability to provide essential services to our senior neighbors. Here are ways you can give:

- Donate through our website (mowwaco.org)
- Send funds through PayPal or Venmo
- Send a check by mail (PO Box 85, 76703)
- **Scan a QR code**

PAYPAL



WEBSITE



VENMO



501 West Waco Drive, 76707



254-752-0316



www.mowwaco.org