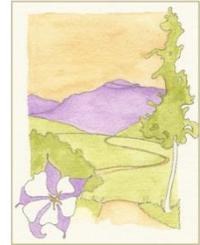


PRESS RELEASE

For release: February 22, 2021
Pagosa Springs, CO



NEWS FROM THE COMMUNITY CAFÉ

Meals on Wheels – Let's Do Lunch

Meals on Wheels (MOW) is recognized nationally for providing meals and a friendly connection to those who are homebound. Since April, we've doubled the number of deliveries we're making in our area.

Our MOW program covers those over 60 who:

- may have a limited ability to stay active;
- are recovering from an accident, injury, or surgery;
- may not be able to prepare to prepare healthy meals for a variety of other reasons, including because of disability and/or poverty; and
- *unpaid caregivers assisting these individuals.*

We combine MOW with our SIMPLE Nutrition program to provide a hot lunch and fresh and high quality shelf stable and frozen foods that provide beyond the mid-day meal. Together these activities help our consumers a nutritious meal, a friendly visit and a quick safety check; helping participants stay mentally active, as well as socially engaged.

Meals are individually prepared and packed for delivery based on the needs of each consumer. Some of our drivers have been delivering Meals on Wheels for more than 10 years. In addition to being the only hot meal of the day for many individuals, our drivers may also be the only contact with the outside world each day for many of these consumers; and the drivers serve as a "safety check" for these program participants. Our drivers get to know the consumers and are always aware of potential areas of concern when serving this population.

This type of supportive care (nutrition, social, outreach) makes it possible for these individuals to remain in their home. Connection, good nutrition, healthy and healing meals and support for unpaid caregivers are just some of the documented benefits. Ninety-two percent of consumers report that this service enables them to stay in their own homes; 83% report this service improves their health; and 87% say it makes them feel more secure (Meals on Wheels America, Colorado Fact Sheet). In addition, supporting individuals saves the consumers, their families, and the government money by keeping them out of an institution (Journals of Gerontology; Older Americans Act Fact Sheets; Meals on Wheels Fact Sheet).

Here in Pagosa and across our County, a cadre of about 20 dedicated community volunteer drivers provide the key support that makes [Meals on Wheels](#) work. These drivers work alongside 2 million other volunteers in a network of community-based, non-profit programs across the US.

Our drivers are vetted, including background checks, prior to joining the volunteers. Schedules and delivery routes allow for visits to the same consumers on a regular basis. Volunteers also fill in for other

drivers and scheduling allows for flexibility. Funding for MOW comes in part from the San Juan Basin Area Agency on Aging (SJBAAA) through the Older Americans Act. Other sources include consumer donations and contributions from private donors, foundations, and Archuleta County and the Town of Pagosa Springs.

You can learn more about The Community Café, take out and Meals on Wheels reservations, and other ASI programs on our website: <http://www.psseniors.org/>.

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