



THE MEAL TIMES

Newsletter of Meals On Wheels Central Texas

VOLUME 45,
ISSUE 3

OCTOBER
2020



Meals on Wheels Central Texas client Billie Nichols says phone conversations with her Care Calls volunteer “mean the world” to her and help her stay connected during the pandemic.

“THEY’RE SO HAPPY SOMEONE IS CHECKING ON THEM”

“I can hear the joy in their voices,” says Judy Evans, who has spent the past few months delivering happiness one friendly phone conversation at a time. She volunteers for Meals on Wheels Central Texas’ Care Calls program, reaching out regularly to some of the homebound seniors we serve. “They’re so happy someone is checking on them,” says Ms. Evans.

The older adults we serve are most at risk when it comes to COVID-19. That’s why, as the pandemic hit Central Texas in March, we switched our meal service from daily deliveries to supplying clients with two weeks’ worth of shelf stable meals, every other Friday. This reduces their odds of being exposed to the virus, but it also means they miss those heart-warming daily visits from volunteers. Seeing

a friendly face at the door each day helps fight feelings of isolation.

During the pandemic, Care Calls is just one of the many ways in which Meals on Wheels Central Texas is reaching out to our clients who are most at risk of loneliness and depression – “viruses” which can be just as insidious as COVID-19. Here’s how we nourish the spirit of our homebound seniors while also protecting them from the coronavirus.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Our Case Managers and the rest of the Client Services team is spending hours on the phone each day calling the nearly 3,000 homebound older Central Texans we serve, checking on them, assessing their needs, and easing their concerns.

CARE CALLS

Care Calls volunteers like Judy Evans are reaching out by phone to our most vulnerable homebound clients—those who live alone. Folks like 87-year-old Billie Nichols, one of the clients on Ms. Evan’s Care Calls list. “I miss the contact,” says Ms. Nichols of her daily meal deliveries. But she looks forward to those calls from Ms. Evans: “It means the world to me. She’s precious.”

SOCIAL CONNECTION PROJECT

A new collaboration between Dell Medical School’s Factor Health team and Meals on Wheels Central Texas, this project will measure the efficacy of programs like Care Calls. MOWCTX clients who participate in this study will receive daily phone calls, over a four week period, from volunteers from the Steve Hicks School of Social Work at the University of Teas at Austin. Then, the Factor Health team will assess the impact of providing high frequency connection to homebound

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seniors and whether that interaction reduces feelings of loneliness, depression and anxiety.

SENIOR CENTERS

Although all local Senior Centers are temporarily closed due to the pandemic, we continue to nourish and enrich the lives of program participants by offering weekly curbside meal distribution at the sites. Clients not only receive a week's supply of lunches, they also take home an activity packet containing games, puzzles, etc. Participants are also offered different virtual activities like workshops and Bingo.

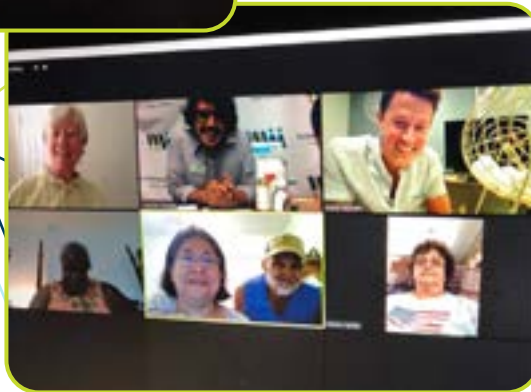
CONNECTING SENIORS WITH TECHNOLOGY

While our Connecting Seniors with Technology (CST) program has temporarily suspended in-home face to face training sessions, CST volunteers are staying in touch electronically with their tech clients, helping them trouble-shoot any issues they might have and stay socially connected with the outside world.

See how technology opened up the world to Lionel Dotson in "One of the Best Things That Ever Happened to Me"



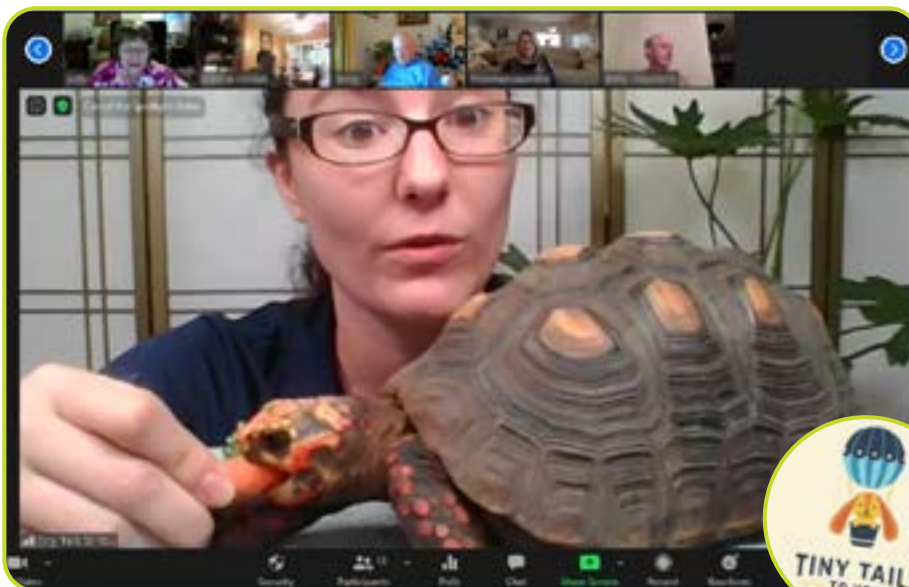
ABOVE Celebrity callers for our Senior Center program's virtual bingo games have included (l-r) Longhorn football coach Tom Herman and his wife, Michelle Herman; Austin PBS' Judy Maggio; KXAN meteorologist David Yeomans; and Elvis (aka MOWCTX's Director of Facilities and Purchasing, and Administration, Donnie Roberts).



MIKE'S PLACE

Although Mike's Place has temporarily suspended respite care, we are providing participants with nutritious meals and activity kits delivered to their home and staying in touch by phone with their caregivers. And while they can't get together in person for the time being, Mike's Place participants and volunteers stay in touch via Zoom every Tuesday.

LEFT Participants in Mike's Place, our respite care program for people with Alzheimer's or dementia, recently enjoyed a virtual presentation by Tiny Tails, a local travelling petting zoo.



A LIFE SPENT SERVING OTHERS

John Limon spent his life in service of others – and all of us at Meals on Wheels Central Texas mourn the loss of this sweet, gentle man. Mr. Limon passed away in August after a brief illness. He began volunteering for MOWCTX in 1992 after seeing a TV PSA that stressed the importance of our mission.

He then spent the next 28 years delivering hot meals, warm smiles, and friendly visits to the homebound older adults we serve. He was a familiar face at our Central Kitchen; delivering a route every Monday and then serving as a substitute volunteer the rest of the week – filling in for regularly scheduled volunteers who were unable to deliver their route on any given day.

Then again, Mr. Limon was a familiar face just about anywhere he went in East Austin. After all, he lived there his entire life. He was a member of the Limon clan, a well-known local family whose patriarch, Jose Limon, moved here from Mexico in 1889. Calle Limon in East Austin is named after the family and that's where John Limon lived



Longtime Meals on Wheels Central Texas volunteer John Limon (right), who passed away in August, shares a laugh with client Gareth Pollard in this 2018 photo.

for the last several decades of his life. He spent years caring for his mother until she passed away in 2017 at the age of 103.

Mr. Limon genuinely cared about the elders of our community, especially those on his meal routes. During a 2018 interview with The Meal Times, he said “when the clients give me their blessings, that’s priceless. When they tell me ‘God bless you for what you do,’ what else can I ask for? That is such a huge blessing for me.”

And you were a huge blessing for the rest of us, Mr. Limon! We will miss you!

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

If you are a current Meals on Wheels volunteer, we urgently need your help for deliveries of shelf-stable meals every other Friday during the pandemic.

On several of our recent delivery days, we didn't have enough volunteers to deliver meals.

While we had enough staff members to cover those meal routes - that may not always be the case. And that means **clients could miss out on future meals.**

Our streamlined pick up process means you don't even get out of your vehicle when you arrive at our Central Kitchen. Team members, wearing masks and practicing social distancing, will load the meals in the back seat or trunk of your vehicle –and you'll be on your way.

For a list of upcoming delivery days and times, along with more information, please visit bit.ly/MOWCTX-Open-Routes.

We hope to see you at our next delivery day! Do it for John Limon!

MOWCTX EARNS TOP AWARD FOR FISCAL TRANSPARENCY!

GuideStar, the world's largest source of information on nonprofit organizations, awarded MOWCTX with a 2019 Platinum Seal of Transparency, the highest level possible!

When you donate to us, you can rest assured your generous contribution will be used in a fiscally responsible and transparent manner to help our homebound older neighbors in need!



“ONE OF THE BEST THINGS THAT EVER HAPPENED TO ME”



HOUSTON--Lionel Dotson, former Lincoln High School basketball star, is now a starting member of the University of Houston freshman team. Dotson, a 6-2 guard, is currently averaging 15.8 points per game and 5.1 rebounds per game for the Killens. Dotson was an all-district and all-state player at Lincoln High.

Before a severe injury derailed his career, Lionel Dotson played basketball for the University of Houston. These days, he uses the computer skills he learned through our Connecting Seniors with Technology program to keep in touch with the outside world during the pandemic.

When Lionel Dotson was 17-years old, he was one of the best basketball players in Texas. As starting guard for Lincoln High School in La Marque, outside of Galveston, he carved out a name for himself as well as a spot on the

All-State Team. In the late 1960's, nearly every major college team in the nation offered him a scholarship – or at least those who allowed Black athletes on their teams at the time.

He chose to play for the University of Houston and legendary coach, Guy Lewis, and he was living up to his reputation until he tore up his left knee during practice. His days as a top-tier athlete were over.

Mr. Dotson is now 71-years old and that knee still causes him pain. The college injury along with other health issues make it extremely challenging for him to get around – much less cook. That's why he relies on Meals on Wheels Central Texas for nourishment: "They bring you [lunches] and they're good. And you get a case worker that will help you. If you need anything, you can call your case worker."

Mr. Dotson's case manager is the one who told him about our Connecting Seniors with Technology program which helps older adults increase their knowledge and comfort level with computers and technology. We provide the technological hardware and training to help isolated seniors and individuals with disabilities learn to connect with the internet and the outside world. The tutoring is done by dedicated volunteers. (Note: All in-person tutoring has been suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic.) "I had to learn how to use a computer and how to get an email address," he chuckles. But he was a fast learner and he was soon using his new skills to video chat with his physician.

He credits the technology program with opening up the world for him – especially in the middle of a pandemic. Communicating with others is now a whole new experience. "Looking at somebody while you're talking to them, it makes a big difference," he told MOWCTX during a recent online interview. "When Meals on Wheels came into my life, that was one of the best things that ever happened to me."

WHEATSVILLE CO-OP PROVIDES SUPPORT TO SENIORS

Wheatsville Co-op, its shoppers and employees teamed up recently to help homebound older Central Texans.

MOWCTX was honored to be Wheatsville's non-profit of the month for August. All month long, customers had the opportunity to round up their bill to the nearest dollar – with the extra money benefiting our agency. By the time the last grocery item had been scanned and bagged on the final day of August, \$12,730 had been raised for MOWCTX!



Wheatsville Co-op team members load meals into the car of a Meals on Wheels volunteer. Wheatsville has been a longtime supporter of our mission.

On top of that, Wheatsville team members pitched in to help with our August 14th delivery of shelf-stable meals. Co-Op employees spent the morning loading thousands of meals into volunteers' vehicles.

Wheatsville, the only retail food cooperative in Texas, is a longtime supporter of our agency and has donated more than \$77,000 to MOWCTX since 2005. We thank them for helping us deliver "More Than a Meal"!



THANKS THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS AND COMPANIES FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR MISSION

All Together ATX for supporting MOWCTX during the COVID-19 pandemic

American Institutes for Research for supporting MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

ARM, Inc. for supporting MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

Austin Telco Federal Credit Union for supporting MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

Austin Board of Realtors for supporting MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

City of Austin, Public Health Department – RISE Funding for supporting MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

Donald D. Hammill Foundation for supporting Meals on Wheels Central Texas

Emergency Food and Shelter Program for supporting Breakfast Meals and MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

Ferrovial for supporting MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

FlexRadio Systems for supporting MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

Georgetown Health Foundation for supporting Meals on Wheels Central Texas and MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

Husch Blackwell LLP for supporting Meals on Wheels Central Texas

Isla Carroll Turner Friendship Trust for supporting Meals on Wheels Central Texas

James R. Dougherty Foundation, Jr. for supporting Meals on Wheels Central Texas

LGR Foundation for supporting MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

Meals on Wheels America for supporting PALS and MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

Meals on Wheels Texas for supporting MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

Pflugerville Downtown Association for supporting Meals on Wheels Central Texas

Qualcomm Foundation for supporting Meals on Wheels Central Texas

Shield-Ayres Foundation for supporting Breakfast Meals

Silicon Valley Bank for supporting MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

St. David's Foundation for supporting MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

TRIO Community Meals for supporting MOWCTX services during the COVID-19 pandemic

Wells Fargo Bank for supporting Meals on Wheels Central Texas

CLIENTS GIVE HIGH MARKS TO MOWCTX COVID-19 RESPONSE

A recent random sample of nearly 300 MOWCTX clients reveals:

80%

feel safer because of our COVID-19 safety protocols.

90%

are pleased with MOWCTX's response to the pandemic.

84%

are pleased with the support they receive from MOWCTX and their Case Manager.

ADAM'S CORNER



Dear Friends,

Our dedicated volunteers keep the wheels moving at MOWCTX. Their service to our community is where the rubber meets the road – that moment when the implementation of our life-sustaining mission is achieved. After all, in addition to nutritious meals, our volunteers also deliver friendly visits and vital safety checks to the homebound Central Texans we serve.

The wonderful thing about donating your time and passion to Meals on Wheels is that you get to know the people who benefit from your philanthropy. The beautiful relationships that develop between volunteers and clients are at the very core of what we do.

Nobody knew that better than John Limon. He delivered meals and compassion for nearly 30 years before he passed away unexpectedly in August. Elsewhere in these pages,

you'll find a tribute to this humble yet driven man. All of us at MOWCTX mourn the loss of John Limon – as do the homebound seniors on his delivery route.

Mr. Limon embodied the indomitable spirit of our volunteer corps. Their desire to assist their neighbors in need makes it possible for us to help thousands of older Central Texans age in place with dignity. Never has that been more evident than during the pandemic. Thanks to MOWCTX volunteers, we have been able to deliver close to 500,000 meals since mid-March.

We, along with those we serve, look forward to the day when it is safe to resume daily lunch deliveries. Until then, we are so very grateful for the volunteers who continue to show up every other Friday at our Central Kitchen to deliver two-weeks of meals to homebound seniors. Their noble efforts reflect Mr. Limon's passion for putting others first - and our community is a better place because of their good deeds.

Yours in Service,

Adam I. Hauser
MOWCTX President/CEO

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