



The annual Food from the Heart luncheon is a major fundraiser for Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County and the 1,500 older adults our program serves throughout Santa Cruz County.

Fund-A-Need at Food from the Heart

Meals on Wheels Annual Fundraiser Returns February 2!

We are excitedly counting down to our signature fundraising event: the Food from the Heart luncheon on February 2 at Chaminade Resort and Spa.

Now in its 11th year, the Food from the Heart luncheon is a vibrant celebration uniting Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County's generous supporters and local leaders. Attendees will experience a Valentine-themed event featuring romantic gift items for silent and live auctions, exciting raffle prizes, a delectable lunch catered by Chaminade Resort and Spa, updates about the Meals on Wheels program, and recognition of this year's Sweetheart and Community Champions award winners.

Food from the Heart is an opportunity for the community to come together and show their love and support for a vital service that ensures no older adult in Santa Cruz County goes hungry. All proceeds from the event directly benefit Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County.

The Fund-A-Need Levels for Food from the Heart highlight just how much impact every contribution, big or small, has in our community. This year's Fund-A-Need Levels include:

- \$1,000 to sponsor "14 Meals Strong" for 14 older adults for one week.
- \$500 to sponsor home-delivered meals for 50 people.
- \$250 to sponsor one month of home-delivered meals for a local older adult.
- \$100 to sponsor two weeks of home-delivered meals for one person.
- \$50 to sponsor one week of meals for a person to enjoy at a dining site.
- \$25 to sponsor lunch for a local older adult for one week.

To be part of this heartwarming and inspiring occasion, reserve your tickets now for the Food from the Heart luncheon. For more details, please contact Anna Vaage, Senior Development Analyst, at donations@cbridges.org or (831) 688-8840 ext. 205.

We hope to see you on February 2 as we gather to share our love and support for Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County and make a meaningful impact in our community.

FUND-A-NEED TODAY!

Join Our Growing Roster of Supporters



Your help is essential to Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County's ability to deliver warm, nutritious meals on local older adults.

Thank You for Lifting Meals on Wheels' Fundraising To New Heights!

There are few programs in our community that improve the lives of as many people as Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County. Our community's generosity is the reason we're able to continue to provide meals to older adults in the county without a waiting list. We have a suggested donation of \$2.50 per meal, but we do not turn away anyone who cannot afford to pay.

Our program relies on community financial support to fund nearly one-quarter of our services. That's 50,000 meals each year we would not have otherwise been able to fund. Every single donation, big or small, helps ensure no older adult in Santa Cruz County goes hungry.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the growing roster of people who have contributed to supporting the Meals on Wheels mission. Donations have grown by 2%, or \$5,000, so far this year, with 5% more people donating than this time last year. Major gifts increased significantly, by \$31,000. We received nearly double the number of gifts, over \$5,000 each, this holiday season compared to last year.

These contributions are crucial for supporting older adults in Santa Cruz County, especially as this segment of our population grows faster here than anywhere else in California. At the same time, the cost of living here has exploded. Through all these challenges, we remain committed to continuing to provide — and even expand — our services for everyone who needs them.

We are building up our in-person dining sites and activities to bring older adults who have been stuck at home back out into the community. We are also recruiting more volunteers to ensure meals continue to get delivered and that no older adult is left behind. Your contributions make all of this possible. Please consider [donating today](#) to help empower older adults in Santa Cruz County to remain healthy, safe, and independent.

DONATE TODAY

News & Notes

The last two newsletters might have looked a little different than previous ones. Community Bridges and Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County recently changed our donor and email database provider, so there might be some slight differences from newsletters.

Rest assured, Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County's monthly newsletter will continue at its normal tempo and Community Bridges' will continue to receive donations without interruption during the transition.

Think you were left off the Meals on Wheels newsletter during the transition? Contact Anna Vaage at annav@cbridges.org.

In the Press

Click the headlines below to read local and national news about Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County and older adult services.

- [Senior hunger takes no holiday — Congress must invest more in Older Americans Act Nutrition Program](#)
- [Why the Senior Poverty Rate Keeps Rising: Both senior and child poverty are high in America. We must defend both generations and their common fate](#)

From Our Kitchen: Beet Hummus



Yaza Shafai, Meals on Wheels
Director of Kitchen Services

Feel the Beet!

Beets are in season, and this recipe is a fun alternative to the classic hummus. The beets are vibrant in color and make for a beautiful appetizer. This dish comes together quickly with the help of a food processor or blender. Have fun with the garnishes to give the dish even more pop.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups cooked beets
- 1 15.5 ounce can chickpeas, drained, reserve liquid
- ¼ cup tahini
- 1 garlic clove, finely grated
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ¼ teaspoon coriander
- ¼ teaspoon paprika
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne
- ¼ teaspoon salt, more to taste
- ¼ cup olive oil

Instructions:

In a food processor or blender combine all ingredients. Blend until smooth. If the mixture is dry, add a little of the reserved chickpea liquid to reach desired smooth consistency. Season to taste. Chill in the refrigerator for 2 hours prior to serving.

Optional garnishes for the beet hummus include: za'atar spice, fresh chopped parsley, extra-virgin olive oil, or chopped pistachios.

Serve the beet hummus with fresh veggies and pita chips or use as a spread on a sandwich.

Thank you for your ongoing support. Your kindness is transforming our community.

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