



Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County's volunteer Guy Lasnier has been a dedicated member of our team since the start of the Pandemic.

Answering the Community's Call for Help

Guy Lasnier knew about the national network of Meals on Wheels programs thanks to his Aunt Mary and Uncle Ed, who supported their local program in Alexandria, Virginia.

Soon after the COVID-19 pandemic began, Guy heard that Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County was experiencing increased need for its services and grappling with a shrinking number of volunteers to help meet that demand. Guy had donated to the program in the past, and he decided to expand his involvement by signing up as a volunteer.

Guy has now been making home deliveries of meals since May 2020, spending around two hours every Thursday bringing nutritious meals to older adults along his route, and helping fill in for other home delivery drivers as needed.

"It is very rewarding," he said. "People are glad to see you."

He enjoys the personal connections he has made with the people he brings meals to, and he has made deliveries to some of them throughout all four years that he has volunteered.

“You do build a relationship,” Guy said, “and for some you may be one of the few people they see during the week.”

He also enjoys that by delivering food, he is bringing people something they can use right away.

“It is a basic need we all have and something we can do, one person to another,” he said.

Guy urges people to support Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County however they can.

“It provides a great service to the older population in Santa Cruz County, which is a growing group of people,” he said. “The need is there. For any volunteers who can offer their time and/or financial support, their help is welcome.”

SUPPORT MEALS ON WHEELS

Protect Support for Our Community’s Older Adults



Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County's future funding from the County of Santa Cruz is up in the air.

For more than four decades, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors has been a steadfast ally to our community’s older adults, ensuring that none of them would go hungry or be overlooked, regardless of their background or status.

Unfortunately, the board recently took a potentially devastating step away from this long-standing commitment. Through its Collective of Results and Evidence-based (CORE) Investments funding process, the board decided not to continue its ongoing support of \$405,000 to Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County — an amount that already reflected a 19% decrease in the past decade.

News & Notes

The last few 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.

This decision to not include a "carve out" for senior nutrition and continue this support for Meals on Wheels contradicts the pressing community needs and demographic trends we are experiencing locally. Older adults are the fastest-growing demographic in our area, and their needs are increasing rapidly. We strongly urge the board to reconsider its decision.

Please support our letter to the board of supervisors by [signing our petition](#). We ask the board to reconsider its decision and allocate a portion of CORE funding or general fund dollars on a recurring basis to support the meals, nutrition, wellness checks, and friendly connections that Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County provides. Your signature can help ensure that this vital and cost effective solution to the needs of our community's older adults continues to serve everyone that needs it.

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors is expected to revisit the CORE funding process in July, so now is the time to advocate for the changes we have requested. Our petition is close to reaching our goal of 400 signees. Will you please [add your name to the petition](#)? We appreciate your support!

—Raymon Cancino, CEO, Community Bridges

ACT NOW TO PROTECT MEALS ON WHEELS SERVICES

- [New mural, art exhibit sprout in Watsonville](#)
- [CA's plan for seniors overlooks the realities in rural areas](#)
- [Low-income seniors get housing help, but 'there is a need for even greater funds'](#)
- [1 in 5 older adults don't have someone they can depend on in time of need. It's driving up ER visits and food insecurity](#)

Good Reasons To Eat With the Seasons



Spring is a great time to refresh your diet and add variety to your plate with local, nutritious produce! Good reasons to eat in season include:

- **Better nutrition:** Because they are freshly picked, seasonal fruits and vegetables retain more vitamins than those that are harvested early for long-distance transport.
- **More variety:** Planning your meals according to the seasons helps you incorporate a broad selection of healthy choices into your diet — and it keeps you from being bored with food.
- **Lower cost:** In many cases, seasonal produce can cost you less because it is more easily and readily available.

—Caren Dix, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

Broccoli Strawberry Orzo Salad Recipe

Salad ingredients:

3/4 cup orzo pasta, uncooked
2 cups fresh chopped broccoli
2 cups fresh diced strawberries
1/4 cup sunflower seeds

Lemon poppy seed dressing ingredients:

1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons olive oil (or cooking oil of choice)
1 teaspoon sugar (or honey)
1 teaspoon poppy seeds (optional)

Instructions:

Wash hands with soap and water.

Cook orzo pasta according to directions. Drain and rinse with cold water.

In a large bowl, combine orzo pasta, broccoli, strawberries, and sunflower seeds. Drizzle with lemon poppy seed vinaigrette and toss to combine.

Season with salt and pepper. Chill in refrigerator until ready to serve.

Developed by Caren Dix RDN. Recipe Adapted from USDA MyPlate 2024.

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

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