



Phylois Norman, homebound and using a wheelchair, has relied on Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County for weekly meals for over 15 years.

Home-Delivered Meals Make a Difference: 'I Couldn't Make it Without Them'

Santa Cruz resident Phylois Norman learned about Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County from her neighbor, Anita. Anita thought that Phylois, who uses a wheelchair and is homebound, would benefit from the weekly home meal delivery service. Phylois signed up right away and has now been receiving weekly meal deliveries to her home for more than 15 years.

She appreciates that the meals are easy for her to warm up in her kitchen, which is not fully accessible to her from her wheelchair.

"It helps me a great deal, because my stove is too high for me to try to fix something myself," Phylois said. "Since the meals are frozen, I can take them and stick them in the microwave."

The meals are delicious, she added, and her favorite dishes are anything with fish.

The Meals on Wheels drivers who deliver meals to her home are often one of the very few people she sees each week.

"One of the drivers is Bob, and he always puts my meals away for me because trying to reach up hurts my shoulders. I just love him. He is so sweet," Phylois said.

Talking with the Meals on Wheels volunteers and staff helps her feel connected to the community.

Phylois' neighbor Anita moved to a different neighborhood, but the two still talked on the phone now and then. They often ended up talking about how much they appreciate Meals on Wheels.

"This team, they care for me and I really need them," Phylois said. "I couldn't make it without them."

The Growing Demand for Services



Your support changes lives: Donations are Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County's largest funding source.

Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County is dedicated to improving the lives of local older adults and their families through nutrition, resources, advocacy, and connection. By providing nutritious meals and regular wellness checks, we help combat hunger and isolation. We are proud to provide these crucial services in our community and ensure people can live with dignity and independence in their homes.

The demand for our services is growing faster than our current funding can sustain, though. Recent changes to local government grant processes have put half a million dollars of local support in jeopardy. Already, county government dollars have decreased by 19% in the past 10 years. At the same time, funds from the federal and state government have not kept pace with the increasing cost of food and gas, and have put a strain on our operations.

People continue requesting our services at a steady pace. **We served 1,737 clients** in the most recent fiscal year, **429 more than in the previous fiscal year**. We provided **155,702 home-delivered meals and 23,042 meals at our dining sites** last fiscal year. With 1,000 Californians turning 65 every day for the next decade, and the population of older adults growing at a faster rate in Santa Cruz County than any other region in the state, we expect demand to continue to grow.

News & Notes

We're excited to share a special opportunity for you to show your love for Meals on Wheels and support our cause at the same time!

We now have a fantastic selection of merchandise featuring our logo and designs that celebrate our mission of providing nutrition and connection to local seniors.

From cozy hoodies and stylish T-shirts to stickers, hats, coffee mugs, and more, there's something for everyone at the [Community Bridges TeePublic store](#). What's even better? A portion of each sale directly supports Community Bridges, helping us continue our vital work in Santa Cruz County.

Your purchase not only spreads awareness but also contributes to ensuring seniors in our community receive the meals and support they need.

Thank you for your ongoing support!

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.

Among our participants:

- 53% live alone
- 12% are veterans
- 54% are disabled
- 59% are at nutritional risk

The improvements Meals on Wheels makes in people’s lives is undeniable:

- 92% of participants say it helps them live independently
- 87% of participants say the program makes them feel safer at home
- 79% of participants say the program helps them eat healthier foods

One-third of the nearly 200,000 meals provided annually by Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County are funded through donations.

Without the contributions of supporters like you, our vulnerable neighbors would face a waitlist for accessing essential meal services.

You have the power to help us enhance lives through healthy meals and friendly connections. Please consider making a [recurring or one-time donation](#) today. Every contribution helps!

—Raymon Cancino, CEO, Community Bridges

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: DONATE TODAY

Support Meals on Wheels at the Farm to Fork Gala!

Tickets are going fast for the Farm to Fork Gala at La Selva Beach Clubhouse on Saturday, August 10, 2024, from 5 pm to 9 pm. Enjoy a beautiful evening with sunset sea breezes, a locally-sourced seasonal gourmet menu, live music, and exciting live and silent auctions featuring popular excursions, gifts, wines, and beers.

This elegant event celebrates Community Bridges’ ten programs that deliver essential services and resources throughout Santa Cruz County and the Monterey Bay Area. Your support helps us meet the needs of 20,000 local children, families, and older adults.

Importantly, donations to Community Bridges

- [How Many Older Adults Live in Poverty?](#)
- [Get the Facts on SNAP and Senior Hunger](#)
- [Why the Future in Senior Housing Is All About Health, Affordability](#)



directly benefit programs like Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County, providing vital home-delivered meals to our seniors. Join us to support this essential service and our broader mission to respond to the emerging needs of our community.

[PURCHASE TICKETS](#)

Pasta Vegetable Salad Recipe



Try this tasty pasta vegetable salad with whole grain pasta in your favorite shape. Enjoy with family and friends at your next summer gathering!

Ingredients:

- 2 cups cooked pasta (any shape)
- 1 cup diced cucumber
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 1/2 green pepper, medium (diced)
- 1/4 onion, medium (diced)
- 1/2 cup frozen peas (thawed)
- 1/4 cup Italian salad dressing

Instructions:

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Mix all ingredients in a medium-sized bowl.
- Cover and refrigerate for at least one hour.
- Mix again before serving.
- Refrigerate leftovers.

Source: *Eating Smart Being Active Recipes*; Colorado State University and University of California at Davis; via [USDA](#)

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

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