



The annual Food From the Heart Luncheon returns on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2025.

Join us at the 12th Annual Food from the Heart Luncheon

Are you ready to celebrate Valentine's Day with purpose? Join us on Friday, February 14, 2025, at our Food from the Heart Luncheon benefiting Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County.

The luncheon will be at the scenic Chaminade Resort and Spa in Santa Cruz from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., for an afternoon of delicious food, a live auction, raffle prizes, and the Sweetheart Award ceremony. It is all to support the Meals on Wheels mission of preventing hunger and isolation among local older adults through healthy meals and friendly human contact. To reserve your tickets now, visit CommunityBridges.org/Events.

We also welcome your love-inspired auction item donations. If you would like to do even more to support our mission, you can sponsor Food from the Heart. Each sponsorship level includes unique benefits, from tickets and premium seating to recognition across event promotions and materials.

Champagne Sponsor – \$5,000

One premium table for eight with preferred placement; Verbal recognition on stage and on-screen at the event.

Chocolate Sponsor – \$2,500

Four premium tickets with preferred seating; Recognition on stage and on-screen.

Red Rose Sponsor – \$1,000

Two tickets with preferred seating; On-screen acknowledgment at the event.

Auction/In-Kind/Media Sponsor

Donate an auction item or in-kind advertising support; One event ticket for every \$240 value of your donation.

All sponsors receive:

Press and media mentions, inclusion in event email promotions and Meals on Wheels Facebook event page, and on-stage and on-screen recognition.

For more event details and to purchase a ticket, become a sponsor, or make an auction item donation, visit CommunityBridges.org/Events. Together, let's join hearts to deliver nutritious meals and heartfelt companionship for older adults in our community!

Recent funding shortfalls will force a first-ever waitlist



Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County received a 25% reduction in County funding from the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors.

Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County is a lifeline serving more than 1,700 older adults in our community every year. We deliver more than 150,000 meals directly to homes and offer nutritious meals at dining sites across the county. Our services provide independence, health, and dignity, empowering the fastest-growing population in our community to live safely in their homes.

Unfortunately, our program by one point narrowly missed a recommendation for Collective of Results and Evidence-based (CORE) Investments funding from Santa Cruz County this fall, despite receiving a very strong score of 95 out of 105 possible points. County funding makes up 17% of our budget.

With your help, we advocated for \$450,000 in funding from the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors to prevent drastic service cuts. We received \$300,000 from the Santa Cruz County

News & Notes

This holiday season, you can make a difference with Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County through Subaru's annual **Share the Love Event!**

From November 21, 2024, to January 2, 2025, Subaru of America and its retailers will donate a minimum of \$300 to charities like ours for every new vehicle leased or sold. Since 2008, Subaru has helped provide more than 4.6 million meals and friendly visits to seniors served by local Meals on Wheels programs nationwide.

For more details, visit [Meals on Wheels America - Share the Love](#).

Thank you for helping us nourish lives and bring joy to seniors in our community!

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.

- [Santa Cruz County supervisors approve](#)

Board of Supervisors and \$36,000 from the City of Santa Cruz from their respective discretionary funds.

It marks a reduction of \$105,000 in county government funding from the previous CORE cycle allocation of \$405,000. Even with the city contribution, this leaves Meals on Wheels with a \$69,000 shortfall in local government funding compared to funding for this fiscal year, which ends in June 2025.

This shortfall means a reduction of around 18,000 meals over the next three years. We now must implement a waitlist starting July 1, 2025. This is the first time in our nearly 50-year history that we have had to do so. We will work with the community and our partners to create an acuity scale that we will use to determine priority among older adults applying for Meals on Wheels.

The reality is that despite our efforts to offset this cut, we need additional community support more than ever. Please consider supporting Meals on Wheels today with a [one-time or monthly contribution](#).

The impact of the program speaks for itself:

- 92% of participants say Meals on Wheels helps them live independently.
- 87% feel safer at home.
- 79% report eating healthier foods.

Food is a fundamental human need, and we cannot leave anyone in our community behind. Your support will make a powerful difference for local older adults.

—Dana Wagner, Senior Program Director, Meals on Wheels

[latest CORE funding cycle amid community uproar](#)

- [How supporting Community Bridges can transform lives this giving season](#)
- [Rising demand, shrinking resources: The challenges facing Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County](#)



Share the Love This Holiday Season

During Subaru's Share the Love campaign, Subaru of America, Inc. and its retailers will donate \$300 to Meals on Wheels programs for every new vehicle leased or sold from November 21, 2024 through January 2, 2025.

Since 2018, Santa Cruz Subaru has contributed more than 10,300 meals to Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County with the help of our local community. Nationwide, Subaru retailers have donated 4.6 million meals since 2008.

Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County is a vital service that depends on community support from donations and volunteers. Our 2023 Subaru Forester helps us deliver more than 200,000 meals to local seniors each year.

Thanks to Subaru of America, Inc. and Santa Cruz Subaru for keeping our wheels on the road. The annual Share the Love campaign is a national partnership with Meals on Wheels

Holiday food safety tips



Whether it is holiday cookies, perogies, roast goose, latke or tamales, foods are an important ingredient of holiday celebrations.

Here are some tips to keep holiday cooking and feasting fun and healthy:

- Cook and wash thoroughly. Bacteria are often present in raw foods. Fully cook meats and poultry, and thoroughly wash raw vegetables and fruits.
- Wash your hands frequently, with warm water and soap for 20 seconds.
- Sample safely. If you have a taste, be sure to wash the spoon before putting it back into the food. Also, make sure that taste doesn't include raw eggs or other ingredients that should be cooked before being eaten.
- Separate raw foods. Always keep raw foods and cooked foods separate, and use separate utensils when preparing them.
- Thaw in the fridge. Always thaw meat in the refrigerator, never on the countertop.
- Put away or toss? Foods that require refrigeration should never be left at room temperature for more than two hours. When in doubt, throw it out!

Ya sea que se trate de galletas, perogies, ganso asado, latkes o tamales, los alimentos son un ingrediente importante de las celebraciones de fin de año:

- Cocine por completo y lave bien. Con frecuencia las bacterias están presentes en los alimentos crudos. Cocine bien todas las carnes y pollos, y lave bien las verduras y frutas crudas.
- Lávese las manos con frecuencia con agua tibia y jabón durante 20 segundos.
- Pruebe los alimentos de forma segura. Si le de a proba cerciórese de lavar la cuchara antes de colocarla de nuevo en los alimentos. Cerciórese también de no probar huevos crudos o

- cualquier otro ingrediente que debe ser cocido antes de consumirlo.
- Separe los alimentos crudos. Guarde siempre los alimentos crudos separados de los cocidos, y utilice utensilios diferentes para prepararlos.
 - Descongele en la nevera. Descongele las carnes siempre en el refrigerador, nunca en la encimera (mesa de cocina).
 - ¿Guardar y desechar? Los alimentos que requieren refrigeración nunca deben dejarse a temperatura ambiente por más de dos horas.

How much time is too long in the refrigerator?

Cuanto tiempo es demasiado tiempo en la refrigerador?

Remember these guidelines:

- Fresh produce / Verduras frescas: 3-5 days
- Cheese / Queso: 1-2 weeks
- Raw meat and poultry / Carne y aves crudas: 1-2 days
- Leftovers / Sobras: 4 days

— *Caren Dix, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist*

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

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Our Contact Information

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