



Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County delivers meals to more than 1,300 local older adults each year.

Will you join other volunteers in helping our community?

April is National Volunteer Month, and at **Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County** we look forward to celebrating the incredible impact of our volunteers. From delivering meals to assisting at dining sites, our volunteers are at the heart of everything we do as we provide nutritious meals and friendly connections for older adults in our community. Their dedication ensures that everyone in our community receives the support they need to thrive.

This year, as we honor the work of our volunteers, we are also calling on additional community members to step up and make a difference. Our goal for Volunteer Month is to bring on at least five new volunteer drivers for Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County.

Every weekday, hundreds of older adults rely on Meals on Wheels for nutritious meals, wellness checks, and a friendly visit. But with rising demand, we need more help to keep people nourished and connected.

What does a Meals on Wheels volunteer driver do?

- Deliver healthy meals to homes during times that work for them
- Provide wellness checks to ensure safety and well-being
- Help combat isolation through meaningful connections
- Support a program that saves older adults from hunger and hardship

By volunteering just a few hours each week, you can make a lifesaving difference. Volunteers also contribute nearly \$200,000 worth of their time annually, allowing us to serve even more older adults in need.

Will you help us celebrate Volunteer Month by becoming a Meals on Wheels driver? Sign up to volunteer today: communitybridges.org/volunteer

We extend our deepest gratitude to all our volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to strengthening our community. We couldn't do this work without you!

Take Local Action Now!

Feeling the ripple effects of the federal budget



Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County's congregate dining sites throughout the county provide local seniors an opportunity for connection and community.

We are closely monitoring the evolving budget situation at the federal level. While Meals on Wheels programs such as ours are not directly impacted by the federal budget approved this month, proposed cuts to the SNAP food aid program, Medicaid, and Medicare would lead to increased expenses for older adults across the country and in our community. More people will be put in the heartbreaking position of having to choose between paying for housing, health care, or food. This would also mean even more people must look to Meals on Wheels for providing the nutritious meals they need to thrive.

Although our federal representatives' actions did not directly impact us, the approved budget represents a missed opportunity to address the growing need for providing meals in our community.

As Meals on Wheels America President and CEO Ellie Hollander said, "Meals on Wheels America is deeply disappointed that Congress has failed yet again to prioritize the needs of our nation's older adults" by passing government funding only through the end of September.

News & Notes

We're excited to announce the launch of our **new online volunteer application**—making it easier and faster than ever to join our mission! This streamlined process will help us bring on volunteers more quickly, allowing us to expand our support for seniors in need across Santa Cruz County.

If you've been thinking about making a difference in your community, now is the perfect time to get involved. Visit

communitybridges.org/volunteer to apply today and start changing lives!

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.

- [Community Bridges, PG&E team for bill assistance workshops](#)
- [Federal union draws up lawsuit over Trump EO as RFK Jr. readies 10,000 HHS cuts](#)
- [Social Security Lifts More People Above the Poverty Line Than Any Other Program](#)

Congress could have instead worked on comprehensive spending bills and made critical investments to address the growing hunger crisis among older adults in the United States. The flat funding levels in the approved budget “represent, in effect, a funding cut,” Hollander added.

It will be a marathon ahead, not a sprint, to grapple with the ripple effects of the ongoing uncertainty in Washington. The need for assistance in the form of [donations](#) and [volunteering](#) continues to mount. Now more than ever, Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County needs ongoing, sustainable funding.

We pride ourselves on our ability to serve more than 150,000 meals each year to people in need. The only meal we can't serve is the one that isn't funded.

Becoming a monthly donor is one way to help stabilize our program and meet the needs of older adults right here in Santa Cruz County. You have the power to make a difference! We hope you will [donate today](#) and join us in building a thriving community where every person has the opportunity to unleash their full potential.

—Dana Wagner, Senior Program Director, Meals on Wheels

Save on Energy Bills with PG&E's Energy Savings Assistance (ESA) Program

As part of our commitment to supporting the well-being of our community, we're excited to share PG&E's *Energy Savings Assistance Program* (ESA), which offers free home energy upgrades to help lower your monthly bills.

If you qualify, PG&E will provide energy-efficient appliances, insulation, and weatherproofing at no cost, making your home more comfortable and energy-efficient.

How to apply: Visit pge.com/energyassistance to learn more and apply. The process is easy, and PG&E will handle the rest.

Let us help you save money this season—reach out if you need assistance with the application!

[Learn More](#)



Enjoy the benefits of asparagus



Asparagus has folate and fiber, as well as vitamins A, C, E, and K. It also has antioxidants. Try this easy recipe for Easter or Passover as a side dish, and know that you are feeding your body important nutrients and yumminess!

Asparagus with Gremolata Sauce

Ingredients:

- 2 cups asparagus, washed and trimmed (about 8 ounces)
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, or butter alternative
- 2 teaspoons lemon peel, grated
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice, fresh

Instructions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Cook asparagus in a large pot of boiling water until tender, about 4 minutes.
3. Drain. Rinse with cold water to cool quickly, and drain again.
4. Pat dry. Wrap in a paper towel and refrigerate.
5. Melt butter or butter alternative in a heavy large skillet over medium-high heat.
6. Add lemon peel and garlic, and stir for 30 seconds.
7. Add asparagus and toss to coat.
8. Sprinkle with lemon juice. Sauté until asparagus is heated through and coated with Gremolata sauce, about 3 minutes.
9. Transfer to platter. Sprinkle with parsley (optional) and enjoy!

Adapted by Caren Dix, registered dietitian nutritionist, from Eat Smart New York! Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Spring 2025

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

DONATE

VOLUNTEER

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