



Congressman Jimmy Panetta joined Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County Senior Program Director Dana Wagner at the London Nelson Community Center in Santa Cruz to connect with local seniors and learn about the need in our community.

Putting a spotlight on the rising need for nutritious meals

U.S. Rep. Jimmy Panetta helped serve meals at the London Nelson dining site in Santa Cruz during a visit in late July. Panetta met with staff and participants, and he heard firsthand about the critical role Meals on Wheels plays in our community and across the nation.

His visit highlighted the importance of nutrition programs in helping older adults stay nourished, safe, and independent.

“Unfortunately, the Administration’s proposed cuts to the Older Americans Act and Department of Health and Human Services would mean fewer meals, longer waitlists, and potentially even program closures, including right here in our community,” Panetta said. “I’ll continue fighting in Congress to protect and strengthen the federal support for Meals on Wheels.”



Meals on Wheels programs across California are facing record demand — up 182% since 2019 — as food costs continue rising, yet funding for these programs remains flat.

With the population of people over age 60 rapidly growing, Meals on Wheels programs urgently need support to help older adults access nutritious meals and combat isolation.

Here in Santa Cruz County, one in four meals is provided directly through community support. Be the reason no older adult in our community goes hungry, and [make a contribution today](#).

DONATE TODAY



Director's note: New survey results reflect the impact of Meals on Wheels



Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County allows local seniors to age with grace on their own terms.

News & Notes

We're looking for volunteer drivers in Watsonville and the San Lorenzo Valley to help deliver meals and support local seniors.

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

[CLICK HERE](#) 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 supports blockage of Trump orders](#)
- [How Enhanced Care Management transforms lives—and could change yours](#)
- [Seven Medicare Changes Coming in](#)

- [On Medi-Cal? When to Expect New Rules, Higher Costs and Enrollment Freezes](#)

Staff and volunteers with Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County deliver nearly 600 meals each week and serve over 200 meals each day at dining sites, bringing nutritious food and social connections to hundreds of people across the region every year.

To better understand the impact our program has on the lives of participants, we recently conducted our annual survey of people who come to our dining sites or receive home-delivered meals. Their feedback is a reminder of the many ways Meals on Wheels improves the lives of older adults in our community.

Dining Sites: A Place to Eat and Belong

Among people who attend one of our dining sites:

- **97%** were satisfied or very satisfied with the meals served
- **96%** said the meals help them eat healthier
- **72%** said that within the past year they had worried that food would run out before they had money to buy more
- **86%** said the meals from Meals on Wheels are their main source of nutrition
- **91%** said eating at the dining site helps them feel less isolated

From feedback about the “very kind and helpful” staff and volunteers to the tasty and nutritious food, it is clear the dining sites play a crucial role in the well-being of participants.

"I would be isolated if it were not for the London Nelson senior meals," one participant said.

"Coming here has made such a big difference in my life," said another participant, who added that they are otherwise at home most of the time.

Home-Delivered Meals: Support to Stay Independent

Among people who receive home-delivered meals from Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County:

- **97%** were satisfied or very satisfied with the meals served
- **82%** said the meals help them eat healthier
- **100%** said the meals they receive help them stay in their home
- **56%** said that within the past year they had worried that food would run out before they had money to buy more
- **88%** said the meals from Meals on Wheels are their main source of nutrition

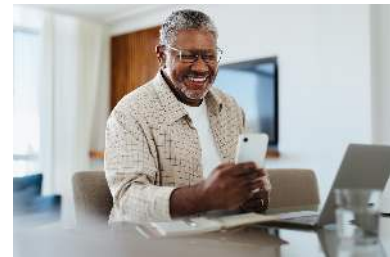
Several people noted how much they love their delivery drivers, like one who said, "The people who deliver meals are always friendly and courteous and much appreciated." Several participants mentioned that health conditions prevent them from doing much cooking or shopping for groceries, so deliveries are crucial to ensuring they have nutritious meals.

We're proud of the role we play in the lives of so many people across our community. We are grateful for the unwavering passion and dedication of our staff, volunteers, and supporters who make it all possible.

—Dana Wagner, Senior Program Director, Meals on Wheels

PG&E Launches Match My Payment Program to Help Reduce Overdue Balances

Our partners at PG&E have introduced a new *Match My Payment* program to help qualifying customers pay down past-due energy bills. Through this initiative, PG&E will match eligible customers' one-time payments—up to \$1,000—made toward their overdue balance.



To qualify, customers must:

- Be enrolled in either the [CARE](#) or [FERA](#) discount program
- Have an active residential account with a past-due balance
- Not be enrolled in [PG&E's Arrearage Management Plan \(AMP\)](#).

This program is especially helpful for seniors and low-income households facing financial hardship. Eligible customers can receive one matched payment between now and March 31, 2026.

To learn more and apply, visit PG&E's [Match My Payment](#) page. If you or someone you know is behind on their energy bills, this could be the help they need to get back on track.

[Learn More](#)

Bake an easy Zucchini bread



This tasty zucchini bread can be eaten as a dessert or snack. Serve warm or cooled.

Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil (or cooking oil of your choice)
- 2 cups zucchini (grated)
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 1/2 cups flour (all-purpose)
- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 cup raisins

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Preheat oven to 325 °F
3. Lightly grease and flour a 9x5 loaf pan.
4. In a large mixing bowl, beat eggs lightly. Add sugar, oil, zucchini, and vanilla and beat.
5. In a separate bowl, measure dry ingredients and stir to combine. Add raisins.
6. Add dry ingredients to the egg mixture. Stir just until all ingredients are moistened.
7. Spoon into loaf pan.
8. Bake at 325 °F for 50 minutes. Test for doneness by inserting a toothpick in the center. It should come out dry.
9. Allow loaf to cool 5 to 10 minutes before turning out onto a cooling rack.
10. Serve warm or allow to cool before slicing.

Source: Favorite Recipes for Family Meals; Washington State University Extension

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

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