



Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County Program Director Dana Wagner (second from left) joins volunteers for a route in Santa Cruz with Councilmember Sonja Brunner.

Bringing compassion to our community

To our incredible Meals on Wheels volunteers,

April is National Volunteer Month — a meaningful opportunity to recognize and celebrate the extraordinary care you bring to our community every single day.

Every day, you show what it means to care for your community in a deeply meaningful way.

Because of you, hundreds of older adults receive not only nutritious meals, but also the comfort of knowing someone is looking out for them. Your consistency, compassion, and willingness to show up — day after day — create a sense of stability and connection that cannot be overstated.

You are often the friendly face at the door, the quick check-in that ensures someone is safe, and the moment of conversation that brightens an entire day. From delivering nearly 500 nutritious meals every week to people in their homes to serving another 250 meals each day at in-person dining sites in Watsonville, Santa Cruz, Live Oak, and Ben Lomond, your generosity of time and spirit has a lasting impact.

You make it possible for older adults in our community to remain healthy, independent, and connected.

Some of you have shared your time and compassion for decades. There are more than 80 of you in our volunteer roster, helping us keep our unwavering commitment to the 1,600 older adults we currently

serve.

On behalf of all of us at Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County, thank you for your dedication, your generosity, and the care you bring to every life you touch.

With deep gratitude,
Dana Wagner
Senior Program Director, Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County

Start the positive ripple throughout our community one delivery at a time



Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County volunteers like Laura Marks ensure that vulnerable seniors in our community receive the assistance they need.

Every weekday across Santa Cruz County, something powerful happens: One small act sets off a ripple that reaches far beyond a single interaction.

Volunteers with Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County deliver more than nutritious meals. They bring reassurance, dignity, and connection to older adults who might otherwise go the entire day without seeing another person. A simple knock on the door becomes a wellness check. A brief conversation becomes a

News and Notes

Community Bridges CEO Raymon Cancino was in Sacramento last week advocating to protect funding for Meals on Wheels and senior nutrition programs.

Critical funding is at risk—threatening fewer meals and growing waitlists for older adults who depend on this support.

Take action: contact your state legislators and urge them to protect and expand funding. Together, we can ensure no senior is left behind.

[FIND YOUR REPRESENTATIVE](#) [WATCH RAY'S TESTIMONY](#)

In the Press

Click the headlines below to read local and national news affecting county residents.

[Guest Commentary | Meals and Wheels: The beauty of a community showing up for its seniors](#)

[Get the Facts on SNAP and Senior Hunger](#)

[Santa Cruz County freezes hiring, travel as it faces down \\$23.2 million budget deficit](#)

moment of belonging. A familiar face becomes something to look forward to.

For many of the neighbors we serve, that visit is not just meaningful — it's essential.

And it starts with something small: Just one route. Just a few hours. Just one decision to show up.

That's the ripple.

This National Volunteer Month, we're inviting more community members to be part of our impact. With demand growing, we are especially seeking volunteer drivers to help ensure every older adult continues to receive the meals and connection they rely on so they can age with dignity in their home. With flexible driving schedules, we empower you to provide support when you can.

When you volunteer with Meals on Wheels, you're not just delivering food — you're helping someone remain safe at home, stay nourished, and feel seen and valued.

Start your ripple today and [sign up to volunteer](#) with Meals on Wheels.

Volunteer Today



Cool down with this watermelon cooler

A refreshing drink, this watermelon cooler has only two ingredients.

Yield: 3 cups

Prep time: 5 minutes

Ingredients

- 3 cups watermelon (cubed, seeds removed)
- 1/2 cup orange juice

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Rinse or scrub fresh fruits under running water before preparing.
3. Place watermelon and juice in blender. Blend until smooth and serve right away.
4. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Source: *Nutrition.gov*

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

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Our Contact Information

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