

Neighbor Spotlight: Lunch with a Friend



Meals on Wheels Recipient Herb Reed and Volunteer Margaret Steppe.

Herb Reed's home is the sixth stop on volunteer Margaret Steppe's Friday Meals on Wheels route.

One recent day, she brought the famed former Red Bank Regional football and track coach a sympathy card with his hot lunch because Herb, now 90 years old, had just lost his son, Kevin, to illness the week before.

They talked quietly for a while, after which Herb shared that he enjoys and appreciates Margaret's company. In fact, Margaret and Coach have become good friends as a result of our senior meal program.

There's a tremendous bravery, combined with kindness and good humor, on Interfaith Neighbors' Meals on Wheels routes as meal recipients face illness, a financial situation, and aging but also have a strong will to keep going through life's many challenges.

Margaret Steppe is part of that daily life. The retired NYC Staten Island special education teacher says she gets so much back from her volunteer job of the past six years. Her own husband died in 2006, and she has two grown daughters.

"You meet new friends delivering meals and they give you an outlook on what life is ahead," she said. "My mom got Meals on Wheels, and I kind

of thought it was payback time for what they did for her. The hardest part is when you get attached to people on your route, and then, because of circumstances, they may go into different living arrangements."

And, while often a delivery means just that, handing the noonday meal to the recipient at the door, Margaret and many others also can be found inside visiting and seeing how the last few days have been. One man had just lost his mother. A woman, now 85, lives with her husband in the home he built 60 years ago. She told Margaret her husband had just been hospitalized because of a stroke. When a couple did not answer the door, Margaret said she would circle back after her other deliveries to try again and see if they were home, and if not, she'd have the office follow up to check on their health and safety.

Red Bank Site director Margaret McGinn says most volunteers deliver once a week and routes usually take about an hour. Margaret Steppe took on a long route with 13 stops that can be two hours or longer and includes homes in Red Bank, Little Silver, Fair Haven and Rumson.

Margaret is one of the 50 volunteers who deliver meals from Interfaith's site at the Red Bank Senior Center where longtime worker Ann Bacon and volunteers get the meals ready to go. There are 8 delivery routes out of Red Bank serving 68 senior citizens. Across Monmouth County, Interfaith Neighbors can call on a loyal cadre of over 500 volunteers to help deliver over 1,000 meals a day to seniors throughout the county.

MEALS ON WHEELS OF MONMOUTH COUNTY

provided by Interfaith Neighbors
WE DELIVER!

Become a Meals on Wheels Community Champion

Meals on Wheels of Monmouth County, operated by Interfaith Neighbors, has launched a new community engagement and support initiative - **Meals on Wheels Community Champions**. By making a gift today, you can show your support of Monmouth County senior citizens and your investment in their health and wellness.

Community Champions who make a gift at the \$250 level or greater will receive a plaque they can proudly display in their place of business or home that demonstrates their support for Monmouth County senior citizens.

Gifts of any size are gratefully accepted.

Gifts at the following levels will receive a plaque to proudly display your support:

- \$1,000 - Community Champion Gold
- \$500 - Community Champion Silver
- \$250 - Community Champion Bronze

To receive your plaque, please contact Stephanie A. Ferrier at Interfaith Neighbors, Inc. at 732.775.0525, ext. 220 or via email at stephanief@interfaithneighbors.org.

Want to get involved at Interfaith Neighbors?

There are lots of ways you can help!

GIVE • LEARN • VOLUNTEER

To learn more about the community issues we address or for more information about volunteering, joining our team, or ways to give, visit: www.interfaithneighbors.org or call 732.775.0525



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Direct from the Director "We are neighbors helping neighbors..."

I've just finished reading an advance copy of this month's newsletter, focusing on our Senior Meal Program and the many people who devote their time, energy and amazing, boundless levels of compassion to care for our senior neighbors throughout the County. I hope that you, too, will take the time to read these wonderful stories and join me in a quiet prayer of thanksgiving for all those volunteers, staff members, donors and emergency contacts who help us operate this program – we couldn't do it without you!! A special "shout out!" to the Monmouth County Office on Aging, Disabilities & Veteran's Services which advocates throughout the year for our seniors and veterans in need.

I hope that some of you will also be moved to join our generous Interfaith Neighbors staff in becoming Meals on Wheels Community Champions – a Community Champions Gold Plaque will soon be adorning wall space in our office courtesy of generous staff donations!

And "in other news," please know that we continue to help families prevent homelessness, we continue to provide meaningful job training opportunities for young adults and area residents, and we'll soon start our next affordable housing construction project on the West Side of Asbury Park. In other words, no lack of things to do here at Interfaith Neighbors!

- Paul McEvily, Executive Director

Neighbor Spotlight: Deserving of a Standing Ovation



Retirees Dolores Drobny, Grace Yanick, Ronnie Bacharde, Sandi Silber, Sally Maloney (L-R)

Please join all of us here at Interfaith Neighbors as we celebrate the service of five members of our team, who after decades of service, will be retiring and taking some well-deserved personal time.

Twenty-seven years ago, Interfaith Neighbors took over the operations of the county's senior nutrition program and at the same time gained a dedicated team of Monmouth County Meals on Wheels employees. And, that core group has been with us ever since.

Sandi Silber, Sally Maloney, Ronnie Bacharde and Meg Flores transferred with the program from the county in 1991. Sandi, Sally and Ronnie will be retiring. Meg, who is still at Interfaith, eventually took on coordinating our Youth Corps program and now manages the Kula Café training program.

Joining the three retiring are Grace Yanick, a 25-year employee and director at the Middletown Meals on Wheels site, and Dolores Drobny, a 25-year employee who started out in nutrition but spent most of her years as administrative secretary to Founder and Executive Director Emeritus Joe Marmora.

"It's always difficult to say goodbye to valued colleagues who have worked for so long with great passion, boundless energy and ready good humor to help fulfill the mission of Interfaith

Neighbors," said Interfaith's Executive Director Paul McEvily. "And now we have to bid adieu to Sandi, Sally, Ronnie, Grace and Dolores who, collectively, have given over 131 years of dedicated service to our neighbors in need. Their absence will be sorely felt by all but we will smile at the thought of them each now having the time to spend with family and friends while still having the energy to explore new things!"

While we are losing long-time members of our staff, we are also pleased to announce that most of these positions will be filled from within our team. Dante Agresti has been promoted to Director of Senior Nutrition. Linetta Wall has been promoted to Kitchen Supervisor. Brandon Terry will continue as a Meals on Wheels driver, but has also been promoted to Transportation Coordinator. Mary Anthopoulos has been promoted to Site Supervisor for the Middletown Meals on Wheels site. And, Dolores Drobny has returned after her retirement as a volunteer!

Program Spotlight: Come Join Us on the March for Meals!

Statistics warning of the consequences of malnutrition on the lives of America's seniors are very real and sometimes overwhelming.

Our country's senior population is set to double from 58 million to 114 million over the next four decades, outpacing current resources that serve



1 IN 5 AMERICANS
is 60 or older

vulnerable older adults. Here in New Jersey, 21% of our residents are seniors.

Nine million seniors face the threat of hunger now. And 6.9 million elders live in poverty, creating a reality that after paying for housing, utilities and medical expenses, leaves very little money for food. There are 237,839 New Jersey seniors threatened by hunger.

Each March, the national advocacy organization Meals on Wheels America shines a light on both the need for funding and also the great work that community-based Meals on Wheels organizations are doing to address that risk of hunger and isolation for

America's seniors through the **March for Meals Advocacy Campaign.**

"People need help, and not everyone can do it for themselves. That's what we're here to do," says Dante Agresti, the new director of Interfaith's Meals on Wheels program.

According to Meals on Wheels America, local programs "have delivered more than just nutritious meals to homebound seniors in virtually every community across the country... The staff and volunteers delivering those meals provide a vital lifeline and connection to the community which are sometimes all it takes to keep our senior neighbors at home where they want to be."

1 YEAR of Meals on Wheels = **1 DAY** in the hospital = **10 DAYS** in a nursing home

Meals on Wheels can provide a senior citizen meals for one year for roughly the same cost as spending one day in the hospital or 10 days in a nursing home.

Approximately 300,000 meals are prepared and delivered by Interfaith Neighbors to seniors and disabled persons annually, preparing approximately 1,100 meals each day.

We operate 70 routes to deliver hot lunches and, for some participants, their breakfasts. Each day, our kitchen staff, our paid drivers and those of the approximately 500 volunteers who have a shift that day make our program work.

No one is required to pay for their lunches,



1 IN 4 SENIORS LIVES ALONE
1 IN 5 FEELS LONELY

but donations of \$2.50 a meal or \$12.50 a week are gratefully appreciated. And, although impoverished recipients are especially susceptible to not getting the nutrition they need, income level is not a factor in the requirements for receiving Meals on Wheels. Rather, one needs to be at least 60 years old, not able to cook or shop, and basically be homebound.

MARCH FOR MEALS - JOIN US!

- Volunteer - give an hour and change a life.
- Make a Donation - help underwrite meals and transportation
- Advocate - speak up for our senior citizens!

Interfaith's program is funded by Monmouth County, U.S. Department of Agriculture, donations from meal participants, and generous donors.

We welcome new volunteers who typically deliver one day a week on stops that take about an hour. "Often volunteers sign up because they've known someone who received meals," says Margaret McGinn, site manager at the Red Bank Senior Center.

"The people we deliver to let us into their lives in a kind of personal way," she said. "We see them on days when they're struggling and days when they're good." One trait of volunteers McGinn especially admires is being flexible with the weather.



"I've had volunteers who come back soaking wet, or bundled up from the cold, or so hot from the heat of summer," she said. "But

almost always they put their hands up and say: 'I'm happy—everyone's fed.'"