

DECEMBER 2014

Volume 39, Issue 6



Meals on Wheels and More

newsletter of meals on wheels and more

“Meals on Wheels Means **A LOT TO US!**”

Forty years after a rock shattered Manuela Alcantar’s life, floodwaters ravaged her world a second time.

Her son, Horacio Ochoa, was 12 years old on that day in 1973 when he offered to mow his grandmother’s yard. The mower ran over a stone and sent it hurtling towards Horacio, hitting him in the face. The tragic accident not only cost him the sight in one of his eyes, it also left him with permanent brain damage.

Ms. Alcantar’s husband of 27 years, Jose, helps care for his stepson these days. Mr. Alcantar is confined to a wheelchair and lost the use of one of his hands due to a series of strokes over the past 20 years. The family first began receiving free services from Meals on Wheels and More in 2005; hot, nutritious, meals delivered to their home by our wonder-



Manuela and Jose Alcantar in front of their Southeast Austin home.

ful volunteers, as well as pet food and veterinary care for their two dogs provided by our PALS (Pets Assisting the Lives of Seniors) Program. The Alcantars were grateful for the assistance. Then came their Halloween nightmare.

At 5:30 a.m. on October 31, 2013, the Alcantars were awakened by a neighbor calling to tell them their street was flooded. “I put my feet down on the floor and the water was already so high we couldn’t find our shoes,” Ms. Alcantar recalls. A few inches of water inside the house

quickly became four-and-a-half feet of water. The family was trapped in their own home. Soon, Mr. Alcantar, because he is unable to stand up, was having trouble keeping his head above water. “I told her ‘if they (emergency responders) don’t get here soon, we’re gone’. It was like a movie. You think it can never happen to you. But it does,” says Mr. Alcantar a year later. “I told God if it’s our time, at least we’re together,” Ms. Alcantar adds.

Fortunately, the floodwaters began to recede just as rapidly as they gushed in. Eventually, emergency crews were able to rescue the Alcantars and their two little dogs, Spanky and Lily. But the damage was done. The family had lost everything.

Except for a few nights in a motel and a week living with a relative,
(continued on back page)

Dear Friends,

I We have 5,000 reasons to be thankful this holiday season. That's how many people we're honored to provide with our life-sustaining services every year.

Whether it's hot, nutritious meals delivered by our small army of 8,000 smiling volunteers, specialized care for military veterans, home repair (both minor and major), respite care for people with Alzheimer's, or assistance with pet food and veterinarian care, our free programs help older adults all over Central Texas maintain their independence.

But there's also cause for concern. As the population in our region escalates, so does the demand for our services. In spite of keeping our operating costs as low as they can be while still delivering quality service to our clients, the increased demand along with

rising food costs have made this year particularly challenging. Quite frankly, we need your help now more than ever. Without that aid, many of those wonderful folks will wind up in assisted living facilities. Each time that happens, it could cost taxpayers, on average, \$37,000 per year. Given enough resources to eliminate our waiting list, we can provide those same older adults with services designed to keep them living at home where they want to be for less than 10% of the annual cost of a nursing home.

This holiday season, we are also thankful for you and your continued support of our mission. Without you, we would be unable to provide such wide-ranging assistance to our most vulnerable neighbors. We thank you for your generosity and your heartfelt desire to put compassion into action.



BOARD of directors

Rick Yeomans, Board Chair

Graves, Dougherty, Hearon and Moody, PC

Ben Hanson, Chair-Elect

Harden Healthcare, LLC

Nelson Robinson, First Vice Chair

Allstate Insurance

Norine Yukon, Second Vice-Chair

Former CEO, United Healthcare Community Plan

Meg Youngblood, Treasurer

Maxwell, Locke & Ritter LLP

Samuel Houston, Secretary

D.R. Horton Homes

Adam Hauser, Member at Large

Husch Blackwell LLP

Michael Brown, Immediate Past Chair

Texas Capital Bank

Namkee G. Choi, Ph.D

*School of Social Work
University of Texas at Austin*

B.J. Friedman, Ph.D

*Dept. of Family and Consumer Sciences
Texas State University*

Rosie L. Johnson

*Retired Clergy
Wesley United Methodist*

Chris Maher

Fosforus

Chris Taylor

Community Volunteer

Brian Tuerff

BBVA Compass Bank

Dan Pruett

*President/CEO
Meals on Wheels and More*

MANAGEMENT team

Dan Pruett

President & CEO

Larry Cosper

Executive Vice-President & CFO

Theresa Medlin

*Vice-President for Volunteer Services
and Distribution*

Mary Teeters

Vice-President for Client Services

Andrea Torres

Vice-President & Chief Program Officer

Marsha Wier

*Vice-President for Human Resources and
Customer Services*

Charles Cloutman

*Vice President
Home Repair*

Linda Perez

Assistant Vice-President for Client Services



Moms and Sons Deliver **COMPASSION**

The Tuesday before Thanksgiving, while most of his friends were enjoying a day off from school, 14-year-old Nathan Beasley and his mom, Agnes, delivered our hot, nutritious meals to some of the people we serve.

The Beasleys are just one of several mother-son duos volunteering for Meals and Wheels and More through the Young Men's Service League (YMSL), a national non-profit organization that encourages young men and their mothers to pursue philanthropic involvement in their community. Nathan and his mom are part of the 4 Points chapter at Vandegrift High School.

"Nathan's grandfather in another city had gotten Meals on Wheels delivered," says Agnes. "He was elderly and couldn't drive anymore. His wife was younger, but had Parkinson's Disease. So they really depended on Meals on Wheels and that's what got us interested in volunteering."

Nathan admits he had his doubts initially. "At first I was a little hesitant to help Meals on Wheels because I didn't know what it would be like" Nathan explained, "But after I did it, I saw just how happy the people are when they get their meals!"



Nathan Beasley and his mom, Agnes, deliver a meal to MOWAM client Joe Bachicha.

Agnes and Nate deliver meals on school holidays and in the summertime. During the school year, the pair volunteers with our HOPE program which provides a monthly bag of groceries for clients who can still do some cooking on their own. The Beasleys also donate their time and talent performing minor repairs to our clients' homes as part of our Handy Wheel program. Agnes says volunteering provides a valuable learning tool and quality bonding time with her son.

"I want my son to have an appreciation that not everyone gets to live like we do. For me personally, it gives me extra time to spend with Nathan and we can give back to the community together," she says.

Radio Stations Raise **MONEY FOR VETERANS**

Several local radio stations devoted hours of their airtime on Veterans Day to raise money for both our Veterans Services Program and Honor Flight, another non-profit that helps those who served in the military.

The stations that took part in the campaign: KOKE-FM, The Fringe 105.3, The Horn 104.9, and The Word AM 1260, comprise the Austin Radio Network. On-air talent from all four stations spent the morning of November 11 talking about the importance of honoring veterans and urged listeners to donate to the cause. The message obviously resonated with those who tuned in. By the end of the campaign, donations topped the \$12,000 mark and the money was split

evenly between MOWAM and Honor Flight.

Many thanks to the Austin Radio Network and all of its listeners for paying tribute to Central Texas military veterans!



Together, we can end senior hunger in Central Texas.

Big Bash Helps **KEEP WHEELS MOVING!**



Austin Grand Prix's Kerri Olsen and NBC's Formula 1 Pit Reporter Will Buxton deliver a meal to MOWAM client Rosie Taylor.

Hundreds of racing fans packed Brazos Hall in downtown Austin the night before Halloween for a Formula 1-related fundraiser benefiting Meals on Wheels and More.

The annual Buxton's Big Time Bash is quickly becoming one of the most popular events associated with F1 weekend in Austin. This was the third year for the party which is

as a surprise visit from the legendary Mario Andretti.

The event raised more than \$5,500 at the door and the Ferrari Challenge drivers donated an additional \$19,000, bringing the grand total to \$24,537!

sponsored by the Austin Grand Prix and hosted by NBC Sports F1 Pit Reporter Will Buxton. For a \$5 suggested cover fee, fans were treated to appearances by several of the drivers who would be racing that weekend, as well

A few days later, Buxton joined Kerri Olsen from the Austin Grand Prix on Olsen's regular Monday Meals on Wheels route and he had a chance to visit with some of the sweet folks we are honored to serve.

We want to thank the Austin Grand Prix and Will Buxton for helping us keep the wheels moving!



(l-r) MOWAM's Andrea Torres and the Austin Grand Prix's Kerri Olsen and Kevin Olsen.

A LOT TO US (cont.)

the three Alcantars lived in their garage for almost two months while their home was being rebuilt. Our Home Repair Program replaced the roof, installed windows and doors, and widened doorways so Mr. Alcantar could more easily maneuver his wheelchair. Of course, we continued to provide them with our Meals on Wheels and PALS services.

The Alcantars have been living in their restored home for several months now. The house contains very few furnishings since they can't afford to replace many of the

items lost in the flood. That's why the Alcantars were selected to be one of the families featured in this year's Austin American Statesman's Season for Caring holiday giving campaign. Asking for help comes hard to Mr. Alcantar. "I'm the kind of person who worked for a living. But I can't work anymore," he says quietly.

He and his wife appreciate the help provided by our agency. Ms. Alcantar says "there's no telling where we would be today if it wasn't for Meals on Wheels and More. Meals

on Wheels means a lot to us. They never left us. They've always been there for us."

Alcantar Family Wish List

- Refrigerator
- Stove
- Landscaping
- Pest control
- Dental care for Jose and Manuela
- Hearing exam for Jose

To see the Alcantar's complete wish list, please visit mealsonwheelsandmore.org

MOWAM Makes **TOP WORKPLACE** List

The Austin American Statesman recently named Meals on Wheels and More one of the best places to work in Central Texas.

It was the third time in the past four years that MOWAM's made the newspaper's annual list of top workplaces in the Austin area.

What makes the recognition even sweeter is the fact that

the Statesman picks its winners based upon employee feedback from each participating business.



MOWAM Thanksgiving Meal Delivery

What do you get when you mix 720 pounds of brisket, 215 pounds of rice, 80 pounds of veggies, 150 volunteers, and an Oscar-winning actor? The answer is a Thanksgiving Day to remember!

Matthew McConaughey, his wife Camila Alves, and their children were among the many volunteers who delivered hot, nutritious meals to 420 of our homebound

clients on Thanksgiving. Our annual Turkey Day meal delivery is made possible thanks to a generous donation by H-E-B.

Kudos to all those who took time out of their holiday celebration to put compassion into action and give all of our clients a wonderful Thanksgiving Day!



Camila Alves, MOWAM President/CEO Dan Pruett, and Matthew McConaughey



Matthew McConaughey with the MOWAM kitchen staff

GRATITUDE (September 10—November 18, 2014)

Austin Community Foundation for supporting Mike's Place
Advanced Micro Devices for supporting Meals on Wheels and for contributing a volunteer team

The Austin Grand Prix and Will Buxton for supporting Meals on Wheels and More

Barkitecture by Animal Lovers of Austin for supporting PALS
Joni Templeton Charitable Trust, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee for supporting PALS

H-E-B for supporting Meals on Wheels and More
Samsung Austin Semiconductor for supporting Meals on Wheels and More
Banfield Charitable Trust for supporting PALS
KLA-Tencor Foundation for supporting Meals on Wheels and More
Austin Empty Bowl Project for supporting Meals for Kids
Austin Radio Network for supporting the veterans program at Meals on Wheels and More

Austin Empty Bowl Project a **HUGE SUCCESS!**



Hundreds of soup lovers hungry to help children in need gathered the Sunday before Thanksgiving to attend the 18th Annual Austin Empty Bowl Project.

For a \$20 donation, folks could choose from thousands of locally-crafted ceramic bowls, have their bowl filled with gourmet soup, and enjoy great live music.

The tasty tradition, which is an effort by local potters to fight hunger, raised more than \$85,000 which will be divided between our Meals for Kids program and the Kids Café, a program run by our great friends at the Capital Area Food Bank.

Thank you, Austin Empty Bowl Project, for your continued support!

New Ecards Available!

Now you can give a gift that's meaningful in many ways, by donating in someone's honor to Meals on Wheels and More. Visit our website to donate today: www.mealsonwheelsandmore.org



VISIT OUR WEBSITE ON YOUR MOBILE PHONE and you will automatically be directed to our mobile site, or use your smartphone to scan the QR code below.

www.mealsonwheelsandmore.org



facebook

YouTube

twitter