

# THE MEAL TIMES

MAY 2016  
Volume 41, Issue 2



Meals on Wheels and More

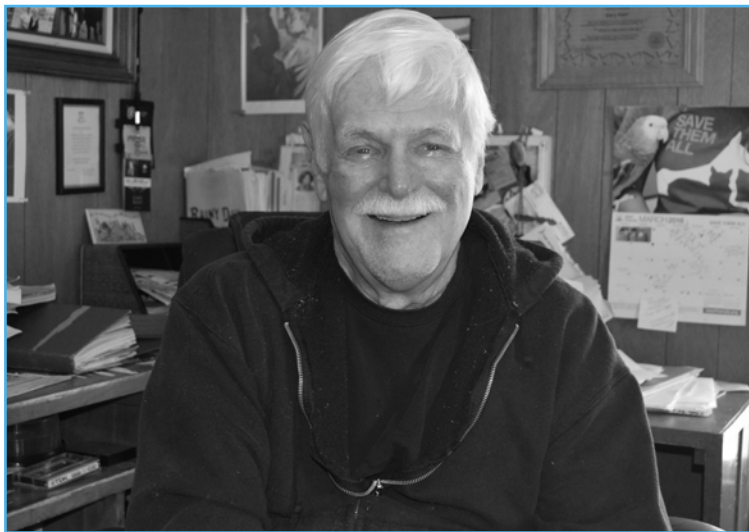
newsletter of meals on wheels and more

## Former **Hollywood Stuntman** “Grateful” for **MOWAM**

Gary Kent made a career falling off galloping horses and speeding motorcycles, jumping out of tall buildings, getting into fistfights, and wrecking cars. That’s life on the job for a Hollywood stuntman, a role he played for 40 years.

These days, chronic back and hip issues serve as daily reminders of the rough and tumble life he led. The pain makes it tough for him to stand for very long. He spends much of his time in the front room of his South Austin home, the walls covered with photos and movie posters. When asked what made him risk life and limb, he credits the films he saw as a child.

“I always identified with guys like



MOWAM client Gary Kent in his South Austin home

Errol Flynn, the guys who were doing all the sword fights. That’s what I wanted to do was all that action stuff. I rode my tricycle, at the age of three, down the cellar stairs and broke my arm. That was probably my first stunt,” he recalls.

Mr. Kent went on to earn a degree in Journalism from the University of Washington. He then joined the U.S.

Navy and soon became the public information officer for the Blue Angels, the Navy’s famous flight demonstration squadron. Later, Mr. Kent worked in radio - first as a news reporter and then as an announcer. It was during this time, while he was living in Houston, that he began acting at the city’s famed Alley Theatre. He enjoyed being a stage actor, but after seeing the film “On the Waterfront”, he decided Hollywood was where he needed to be. “So I took a Greyhound bus to L.A. to try my hand at show business and see what would happen,” he says.

Once there, he made ends meet by working at a local TV station as a stage manager. One day, during his

*(continued on back page)*

# March for Meals **RAISES AWARENESS**

March for Meals is an annual community-by-community nationwide celebration of the Meals on Wheels programs that keep our older, homebound neighbors happier and healthier.

Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott and Austin Mayor Steve Adler were among the familiar faces who took part in this year's event.



Cecilia Abbott has been a MOWAM volunteer for several years. Pictured here with MOWAM President & CEO Dan Pruett, Ms. Abbott was also the keynote speaker at Meals on Wheels Texas' recent state conference in Waco.



Addie Broyles knows a thing or two about food; she writes about it for a living. Addie's been a MOWAM volunteer since 2013.



Judy Maggio spent more than 30 years delivering the news in Austin. Since 2011, she's delivered our nutritious meals to homebound Central Texans.



This is Mayor Steve Adler's second year in a row to participate in March for Meals. He's pictured here with MOWAM client Salvador Gonzales and his wife, Feliz Gonzales.

## Austin Vet Cares for CLIENTS' CRITTERS

“God bless you for thinking about our little pets. I love and adore my kitty more than anything on earth. I couldn’t live a day without him.” That quote from one of our clients shows just how deep the bond can be between a home-bound older adult and his or her pet.

That’s why we started our PALS program several years ago. PALS, which stands for Pets Assisting the Lives of Seniors, provides assistance with dog or cat food and basic preventative veterinary care for our clients’ four-legged friends. These services are made possible by our wonderful partners at Emancipet and the Texas Veterinary Medical Foundation.

Dr. T.J. Palvino is one of several Central Texas veterinarians who donate



Dr. T.J. Palvino with PALS pet Chucky

their time and talent to make sure our clients’ pets are fit as a fiddle. Dr. Palvino is owner and Medical Director of Austin Vet Hospital, and he knows firsthand how much the people we serve care for their animals. “It’s almost the same bond you see between a parent and a child,” he says.

One of his favorite PALS stories involves a dog named Princess. When he first saw her, her hair was falling out in patches and she could barely hold her head up. After doing blood work on Princess, he determined she had a pretty severe thyroid condition. He prescribed some supplements and says the next time he saw Princess: “I had to do a double take and ask ‘is this the same dog’. I mean it was night and day, because you could see the results. So that was pretty cool.

“To actually know that I’m helping someone who may be isolated, might not have a whole lot of interaction other than the companionship they get from their pet, if we can make that pet healthier, I like to think we’re helping that person as well. What’s not to like about that?”

## Glass Art Event to Benefit MOWAM

Some of the most talented glass artists in the state will be on hand for the 4th annual Armadillo Art Glass Initiative Festival. Proceeds from the popular event will benefit Meals on Wheels and More.

Armadillo Art Glass Initiative (AAGI) is an organization of glass artists dedicated to helping Central Texans in need. The festival, which spotlights more than 50 artists from across the Lone Star State, features live glass blowing demonstrations, a silent auction, music, and food. Since the festival began in 2013, AAGI has raised more than \$85,000 for our agency!

This year’s event will be held on Saturday & Sunday, May 21-22, at St. Elmo’s Fire (510 E St Elmo Rd #A, Austin TX 78745). Visit [www.armadilloartglassinitiative.com](http://www.armadilloartglassinitiative.com) for more information.



Proceeds from AAGI’s festival on May 21-22 will benefit MOWAM.

Dear Friends

To paraphrase a famous question from Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet", if you change your name, do you also change who you are?

I bring up the Bard's "what's in a name" line because I want to tell you some news we haven't shared with anyone. We're changing our name from Meals on Wheels and More to Meals on Wheels Central Texas.

The reason for the transition is our region's rapidly growing population and the expansion of our service area to keep up with that growth. When our agency started 44 years ago, eight volunteers delivered meals to 29 homebound clients, all of whom lived in Austin. These days, we have 8,000 volunteers, and we help 5,000 clients over a seven county region. We want our name to reflect the fact that we serve and will continue to serve folks all over Central Texas.

But the transition doesn't mean our vital "and More" programs, such as Home Repair, Veteran Services, and PALS are going away. In fact, our vision is to increase the number of services we provide and the number of people we help.

So, we may be changing our name, but by no means are we changing who we are or what we do.



P.S. We'll be phasing in our new name and logo over the next few months, but wanted you, our loyal supporters, to be the first to know.



## BOARD of directors

**Rick Yeomans, Board Chair**

*Graves, Dougherty, Hearon and Moody, PC*

**Ben Hanson, Chair-Elect**

*Senior Care Centers, LLC*

**Norine Yukon, Second Vice-Chair**

*Former CEO, United Healthcare Community Plan*

**Meg Youngblood, Treasurer**

*Maxwell Locke & Ritter, LLP*

**Adam Hauser, Member at Large**

*Husch Blackwell, LLP*

**Michael C. 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 — San Marcos*

**Rosie L. Johnson**

*Retired Clergy  
Wesley United Methodist*

**Brian Tuerff**

*BBVA Compass Bank*

**Allen E. Wise**

*International Bank of Commerce*

**Stewart Whitehead**

*Winstead*

**Dan Pruett**

*President/CEO  
Meals on Wheels and More*

**MANAGEMENT team**

**Dan Pruett**

*President & CEO*

**Larry Cosper, C.P.A.**

*Executive Vice-President & CFO*

**Michael Wilson**

*Sr. Vice-President & COO*

**Theresa Medlin**

*Vice-President for Volunteer Services  
and Distribution*

**Demereal Owens**

*Vice-President for Client Services*

**Marsha Wier**

*Vice-President for Human Resources*

**Charles Cloutman**

*Vice President for Home Repair*

**Nicole Sarkar**

*Vice-President for Development*

**Thad Rosenfeld**

*Vice-President for Communications*



# Volunteer Turns Meal Route into **FAMILY AFFAIR**

Mary Gordon Spence describes herself as a ‘humorosopher’. For anyone who knows her, it’s an apt description. The Brownwood, Texas native is a professional speaker, writer, and commentator. She’s also a Meals on Wheels and More volunteer.



MOWAM volunteer Mary Gordon Spence

When asked why she signed up a few years back to deliver meals for us, she says “my uncle delivered for Meals on Wheels in Odessa for 25 years, and he was a curmudgeon. I thought ‘I’ll be friendly and I can do it in Austin’”.

She volunteers every Monday and also serves as a substitute driver one to three other days each week. She picks up the meals at our Holy Cross Lutheran Church distribution site in South Austin. “I’ll tell you why I love

it; number one, it (her route) is in my neighborhood. It has allowed me to know my neighborhood. I’ve been on streets I’ve never ever been on. I also know how important it is for people who can’t get out to have somebody come in,” she says.

Mary Gordon often has company on her route. “I’ve taken my oldest three

grandchildren with me at different times and sometimes all three of them at the same time,” she explains. Those experiences inspired her grandson, William, when he turned 10 recently. “He had a bowling party and in lieu of gifts, he decided he wanted his friends to contribute to Meals on Wheels. He raised about \$125,” says his beaming grandmother.

As she teaches her grandkids the importance of public service, Mary Gordon also remembers the relative who inspired her to volunteer: “I think of my Uncle Walter every Monday morning and how long he delivered. When he died, all of the memorial contributions in Odessa went to Meals on Wheels. I honor what Meals on Wheels and More does and how they do it”

## GRATITUDE

AMD for supporting Meals on Wheels  
Austin American-Statesman for supporting Season for Caring  
Austin Empty Bowl for supporting Meals for Kids  
Austin Grand Prix for supporting Meals on Wheels and More  
Boomerang’s Pies for supporting Meals on Wheels and More  
CACI International, Inc. for supporting Meals on Wheels and More  
Carl C. Anderson, Sr. & Marie Jo Anderson Charitable Foundation for supporting general operations at MOWAM and our services in Williamson County  
Clayton Foundation for Research for supporting Meals on Wheels and More  
Continental Auto Group: Austin Infiniti, Austin Subaru and Mercedes-Benz of Austin for supporting Meals on Wheels and More

Emerson Process Management for supporting Meals on Wheels  
Graves, Dougherty, Hearon and Moody for supporting Meals on Wheels and More  
Hill Country Region of the Porsche Club of America for supporting Meals on Wheels and More  
Joni Templeton Charitable Trust for supporting PALS  
Kruger’s Jewelers for supporting Meals on Wheels and More  
Opal Divine’s Penn Field for supporting Meals on Wheels and More  
PayPal and Lyft Campaign for supporting Meals on Wheels and More  
Subaru of America, Inc. for supporting the Share the Love campaign  
St. David’s Foundation for providing new kitchen equipment, technology upgrades and supporting MOWAM’s Amplify Austin campaign

Taco Deli for supporting Meals on Wheels and More  
Texas Capital Bank for supporting Meals on Wheels and Share the Love  
The Fifth Age of Man Foundation for supporting Meals on Wheels and More  
The Home Depot Foundation for supporting Home Repair for veterans  
The Topfer Family Foundation for supporting Meals on Wheels  
Theodore P. Davis Charitable Trust for supporting Meals on Wheels and More  
TMF Health Quality Institute for supporting Meals on Wheels  
Trademark Media for supporting Meals on Wheels and More  
UFCU for supporting MOWAM’s Amplify Austin campaign

# AMPLIFY AUSTIN 2016 Raises Funds and Awareness

The Central Texas non-profit world's annual version of March Madness has come and gone and MOWAM was a big winner.

Amplify Austin, the 24-hour online giving campaign, took place the first week in March. Overall, the event raised more than \$8.5 million for approximately 600 local charities. Our agency received \$96,295 in designated donations, enough to land us in 11th place for most money contributed.

Then our great friends at the St. David's Foundation and University Federal Credit Union pushed that donation figure even higher! St. David's Foundation gave us

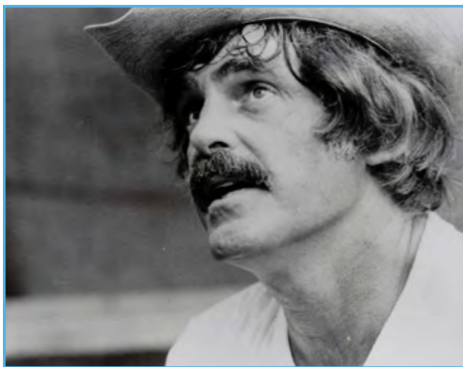
\$29,923 in matching funds, while UFCU contributed another \$10,000. That pushed our total to \$136,218!

These funds will go a long way towards helping us reduce the number of folks on the waiting list for our services. Many thanks to everyone who participated in Amplify Austin



## STUNTMAN (cont.)

time off from his job, he saw something that changed his life forever. “Frank Sinatra was filming a movie on Gower Street in Hollywood. I was watching them shoot,” says Mr. Kent.



Gary Kent in 1973 during his time as a Hollywood stuntman

He quickly took notice of the stuntmen working on the film. “These guys, they looked like gladiators to me,” he recalls with a chuckle. “I thought ‘that’s what I want to do’. So, I started finding out about stuntmen but I didn’t know how to get on a picture.”

He got his first big break in the mid-1960’s when a friend mentioned that Jack Nicholson was looking for a stuntman for a film called “The Shooting”. Mr. Kent landed the job. “I didn’t know anything about stunts, so I was falling off horses without any pads,” he says. In spite of his inexperience, he soon was working regularly and receiving invaluable on-the-job training. He went on to be Nicholson’s body double in “Hells Angels on Wheels”, ditto for Robert Vaughn in the 1960’s TV series, “The Man from U.N.C.L.E”, and Bruce Willis in 1994’s “Color of Night”. His last stunt credit was on the 2002 cult-classic “Bubba-Ho-Tep”; he broke his leg in two places during filming of the picture. He was 72 at the time.

Since then, he’s had open-heart surgery and survived two types of cancer. He has trouble standing long enough to cook and wash dishes. It

wasn’t uncommon for him to skip meals rather than endure the pain of trying to fix something to eat. Six months ago, a concerned friend recommended Meals on Wheels and More. Soon he was receiving our hot, nutritious lunches, hand-delivered to his home by our dedicated volunteers. He’s also a client of our Second Meals program which provides a weekly supply of healthy breakfasts. Mr. Kent credits our food with improving his health. But he says there are other benefits as well. “Not only does it give me a chance to actually have a meal where I don’t have to fix it myself, but to meet the people that come by to deliver it. They’re just such delightful people. They just bring this sunshine along with the meal. I’m grateful, very grateful.”

MOWAM and our volunteers are happy to serve you, Mr. Kent. It’s as easy as falling off a horse.