

# THE MEAL TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF MEALS ON WHEELS CENTRAL TEXAS



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MEALS ON WHEELS  
CENTRAL TEXAS



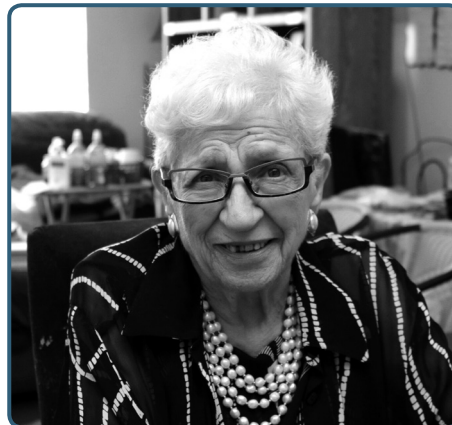
## “I am so Thankful for Meals on Wheels”

“I’m a jack of all trades,” says 84-year-old Linda Richards, before quickly adding, “and master of none.”

Ask the Santa Fe, New Mexico native about the jobs she held as a younger woman, and she’ll list occupations long since replaced by automation – telephone operator - and those that, decades later, still require a living, breathing human being - card shill for a Las Vegas casino (more on that Vegas vocation in a bit).

Ms. Richards began her working life with Southwestern Bell in the 1950’s, back when folks needed operators to place long distance calls or look up telephone numbers. “You had to get that number for them. If they didn’t know how to spell the name, you figured it out and got that number. Once, this woman called and asked me ‘operator, can you give me the number of

Mary who lives by the big oak tree?’ I’m not exaggerating,” Ms. Richards recalls with a laugh.



*MOWCTX client Linda Richards  
in her East Austin apartment*

Other jobs included stints as a manicurist, an assistant to a podiatrist, a home-health care aide, and that aforementioned position in Nevada. “I worked as a shill. [The casino] gives you chips and you play because nobody wants to go to a table where nobody is gambling. I had to go to work at three in the morning. That’s a different kind

of living,” she explains with a shake of her head.

Major health issues, including a broken hip, also forced a different kind of living on her. Physically unable to work, and homebound and alone in her East Austin apartment, she relies on Meals on Wheels Central Texas to nourish her body and spirit. She appreciates the nutritious food our volunteers deliver to her door. “That takes care of lunch and that’s a big deal. That’s kind of the main meal,” she says.

But as much as she loves the healthy food, she treasures the daily visits from the folks who bring her lunch, and credits them with vastly improving her outlook on life. “More than the meals are the [volunteers] who come here. They’re so friendly and kind and loving. They have that spirit about them. They make you feel important. They make you feel like you’re a queen,” she says.

*(Continued on back page)*

# Empty Bowl Project Fills Important Need

It's called the Austin Empty Bowl Project, but the bowls don't stay empty very long - not when there's plenty of delicious, piping hot soup to pour into them.



*Soup lovers search for just the right locally crafted bowl*

As part of the event, which began in 1997, local potters donate bowls of every shape, size, and color to the cause. Then, every year on the Sunday before Thanksgiving, soup lovers

with good hearts line up outside the Central Texas Food Bank, pay \$20 to purchase one of the bowls and fill it with soups made by dozens of local restaurants, including our very own Meals on Wheels Chef Ruben Burnett, and bread from several nearby bakeries. Attendees also enjoy live music performed by talented Central Texas artists.

Best of all, the immensely popular event raises money for the Food Bank's Kid's Cafe program and our Meals for Kids (MFK) program, which provides nutritious snacks and lessons on healthy eating habits to children who live in public housing communities and attend after school programs run by our dedicated partners at Communities in Schools.

The totals for this year's event are still being tallied - but the Empty Bowl Project has raised almost \$200,000 for MFK over the past few years! We thank the organizers of this wonderful holiday tradition for their continued support of Meals for Kids!



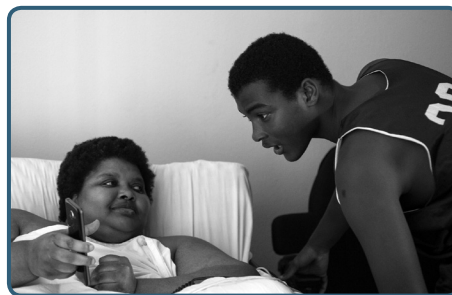
*MOWCTX Head Chef Ruben Burnett and Fox 7 News anchors Rebecca Thomas and Mike Warren take a break from serving up bowlfuls of Chef Ruben's Frosty the Snowman chicken soup.*

# Statesman's Season for Caring Helps MOWCTX Client

In spite of a series of strokes that have left her bed-bound and partially blind, Bertha Foster is determined to walk again.

Ms. Foster, a 42-year-old MOWCTX client, and her 15-year-old son, Donovan, are one of the families featured in this year's Austin American Statesman's Season for Caring campaign. The event is a partnership between the newspaper's Editorial and Community Development departments and introduces readers to families in need and the nonprofit agencies providing services to them.

Our nutritious home-delivered



*MOWCTX client Bertha Foster and her son, Donovan, are part of the 2017 Austin American-Statesman's Season for Caring campaign*

*Photo courtesy of: Ana Ramirez/  
American-Statesman*

meals help Ms. Foster maintain her independence as she tries to regain her health. But she and Donovan need assistance in other ways. Ms. Foster worked as a nursing assistant before becoming

disabled. She and Donovan live on her \$1490 monthly Social Security Disability check, most of which goes towards rent and utilities on their small one-bedroom apartment. Not only is money tight - so are their living quarters. Ms. Foster admits "we just need more room."

To find out how you can help the Foster family this holiday season, please visit [community.statestman.com](http://community.statestman.com) and click on "Season for Caring".

**Follow us:**



# First Family of Texas and Others Deliver Meals and Holiday Cheer

Texas Governor Greg Abbott, First Lady Cecilia Abbott, and their daughter, Audrey, were among the 150 or so volunteers who delivered delicious meals and much-welcomed holiday cheer to hundreds of our homebound clients on Thanksgiving Day.



*Texas Governor Greg Abbott (r) and First Lady Cecilia Abbott with MOWCTX President/CEO Adam Hauser*

Our dedicated kitchen crew arrived in the wee hours that Thursday to prepare 105 lbs. of roast turkey, 125 lbs. of cornbread dressing, 96 lbs. of peas and carrots, and enough spiced pumpkin cake for each of the 486 clients who received

the holiday meals to get a slice. Later that morning, volunteers, including the Abbott family, began lining up around 10:15. Ms. Abbott is a seasoned pro at delivering our nutritious lunches considering she's volunteered for MOWCTX since 2010.

By 11:30 a.m., all of the Thanksgiving meals were out the door of our Central Kitchen and on their way to people who would not have otherwise enjoyed a holiday meal. And, for many of our clients, the community-minded people delivering their lunch were



*Texas Governor Greg Abbott greets volunteers waiting to pick up their Thanksgiving Day meal deliveries*

the only human interaction they had that holiday—underscoring the fact that our volunteers do indeed deliver much more than a meal.



*Our wonderful partners at H-E-B generously underwrote the cost of nearly 500 Thanksgiving Day meals*

This is the 12th year MOWCTX has provided a Thanksgiving Day lunch to our most vulnerable clients. Many thanks to the volunteers who took time out from their family gatherings to help our neighbors in need. We also deeply appreciate our wonderful partner in community service, H-E-B, for underwriting the entire cost of our Thanksgiving Day meals.

## Sound Fiscal Management

As you consider your year-end charitable giving contributions, keep in mind that Meals on Wheels Central Texas has been recognized by Charity Navigator with its highly coveted 4-star rating for sound fiscal management and commitment to accountability and transparency.



Charity Navigator is the nation's largest independent charity evaluator.

## MOWCTX and Austin Subaru Share the Love

Did you know that Subaru will donate \$250 to the customer's choice of participating charities for every new vehicle sold or leased now through January 2, 2018? If you're in the market for a new Subaru, please choose Meals on Wheels as your charity of choice!





# "I Still Do This in Honor of Him"

Longtime Meals on Wheels Central Texas volunteer Billy Gray credits a U.S. president with igniting the spark that prompted him to volunteer for us. But it's someone with a much less lofty station in life who keeps that spark burning all these years later.



*Volunteer Billy Gray not only delivers lunches to our homebound clients, he also serves as a Meal Manager at our Prince of Peace distribution site.*

"I'm a Democrat who answered George W. Bush's call for volunteerism," Mr. Gray says of his 2002 decision to donate his time to MOWCTX. Coincidentally, on his first day as a new volunteer, he met the man who to this day inspires him to serve neighbors in need. Bill Sturdevant was Meal Manager at our Holy Cross Lutheran Church distribution site where Mr. Gray picked up meals for his route. "He became my inspiration, he had spent his life

in service, first in the Air Force, and then volunteering for Meals on Wheels," says Mr. Gray.

Before long, Mr. Gray was delivering two routes per week. One of his routes has since changed, but the other is the one he's had since that very first day in 2002. He still delivers lunch to a few of the same folks he did back then. When asked what those longtime clients mean to him, he says, "it's hard to put in words." He pauses and then adds "family." He says of the time he spends delivering meals and companionship, "it enriches your life and takes very little of your time."

Speaking of time, his flexible schedule as a realtor allows him to also volunteer a third day a week. Every Monday, he serves as Meal Manager at our Prince of Peace Lutheran Church distribution site, which gives him a chance to meet other MOW volunteers. It's the same type of job once held by his friend, Mr. Sturdevant, the man he believes defines volunteerism. "He died a few years ago," says Mr. Gray. "He was a great guy and he gave me new insight. I still do this in honor of him."

## GRATITUDE

- St. David's Foundation for supporting In-Home Care
- Austin Empty Bowl for supporting Meals for Kids
- GoMedigap for supporting Christmas Day meal delivery
- Carl C. Anderson, Sr. & Marie Jo Anderson Charitable Foundation for supporting Meals on Wheels Central Texas
- Mac N Cheese fest by Austin Food Magazine for supporting Meals on Wheels Central Texas
- Planet K for supporting Hurricane Harvey relief efforts
- Tacodeli for supporting Meals on Wheels Central Texas
- Greater Texas Federal Credit Union for Supporting Meals on Wheels Central Texas
- Austin Dog Rescue – Support for Emancipet Services for our clients' pets.
- Texas Veterinary Medical Foundation – Partnership in providing Private Veterinary care for hundreds of our clients' pets

## Giving Tuesday Donations Help Homebound Seniors

Hundreds of Central Texans donated to MOWCTX on Giving Tuesday, the global day of online philanthropy, which is celebrated in the U.S. on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving. Thanks to their generosity and



that of an anonymous donor who pledged to match donations up to \$30,000, we raised a grand total of \$67,000 in just 24 hours! Thank you to all those who gave to MOWCTX on this special day!

# Adam's Corner

Dear Friends,

I know it might sound odd, but I'm still celebrating Thanksgiving. No, the turkey day leftovers are history. I'm just not ready to quit celebrating the spirit behind the fourth Thursday in November - giving thanks.

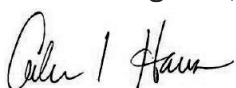
This year, I have an abundance of things for which to be thankful. First of all, I am deeply thankful for the incredible people who work here; a forward-thinking, compassionate board of directors; and 7,500+ dedicated volunteers, all of whom make Meals on Wheels Central Texas the most impactful Meals on Wheels organization in America. I give thanks for these great people because they never lose sight of our mission to nourish and enrich the lives of our most vulnerable neighbors.

I'm also thankful for the depth of our service platform, which continues to evolve as we strive to improve the health—both physical and emotional—of the needy in our community. For example, our In-Home Care program—now housed in our Central Kitchen headquarters on East 5th Street—features dedicated personal care attendants who provide life-sustaining assistance with daily living activities for the vulnerable people we serve. And, our technology-based programs—Telehealth and Connecting Seniors with Technology—both designed to enable isolated older adults to combat depression loneliness through computer-based connections with trained social workers or friends and family.

But I'm especially thankful for kind Central Texans, just like you, who believe in our innovative, holistic and nurturing approach to helping our older neighbors and those with disabilities age in their own homes safely and with dignity and independence. Your generous support of our mission is changing lives for the better—just like Linda Richards and Bertha Foster, whose stories you'll find elsewhere in this newsletter. On behalf of the 5,000 people we serve every year, thank you so much for your support of Meal on Wheels Central Texas.

**May 2018 bring you and yours peace and joy!**

In service together,



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# HAND Changes Name and Address

All of our vital, life-sustaining services are now available under one roof!



*Earl Maxwell (l), CEO of the St. David's Foundation, with Marsha Wier, Executive Director of Meals on Wheels Central Texas In-Home Care, and Adam Hauser, President/CEO of Meals on Wheels Central Texas*

As you know, last year, Helping the Aging, Needy and Disabled, Inc. (HAND), a 41-year-old non-profit that provides in-home care for low-income seniors and people with disabilities, became part of the Meals on Wheels

Central Texas family of services, an acquisition made possible by our friends at the St. David's Foundation. At the time, HAND continued to operate from its office on East 2nd Street.

But now, HAND has changed its address and its name. The new name is—"Meals on Wheels Central Texas In-Home Care"—and the renamed agency is now housed in our headquarters location at 3227 East 5th Street, where it can continue to offer its high quality of services to people who have functional limitations and need assistance with activities of daily living.

Having all of our programs under one roof means easier access for our neighbors in need to our wide continuum of holistic services. It

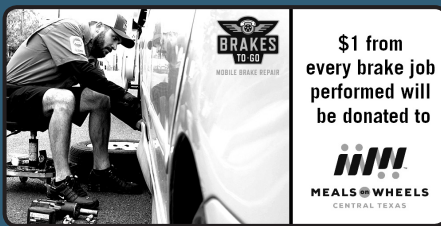


*The MOWCTX In-Home Care office team provides top notch assistance to the frail people we serve and to our dedicated attendants.*

also streamlines communication between our dedicated staff members, ensuring quick, informed assessments of the needs of the people we serve and prompt delivery of our services to homebound older adults and people with disabilities.

We thank the St. David's Foundation for its support in the acquisition and relocation of this important community service.

## Use Brakes To Go and Help Homebound Central Texans!

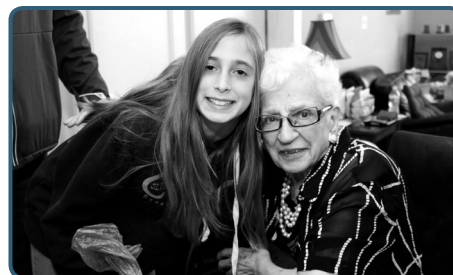


Getting your vehicle serviced by Brakes To Go, Austin's mobile brake repair business, not only saves you time, and protects you and your car; it also helps the homebound older adults we serve.

For every brake job they perform, Brakes To Go will donate \$1 to Meals on Wheels Central Texas to support our life-sustaining services. Learn more at [brakestogo.com](http://brakestogo.com)

## "I am so Thankful for Meals on Wheels" (cont.)

The fact that she needs assistance at all frustrates her. "I've been very independent all my life and I don't want to give that up," she says. "I have some major medical problems, but I'm working on dealing with them so that I can stay here (in her apartment) and take care of myself," she tells a visitor. In



*MOWCTX client Linda Richards with Lila Chirogianis, daughter of Meals on Wheels volunteer Jason Chirogianis*

the meantime, she's grateful for MOWCTX and our volunteers, "You realize how good people are when something like this happens. I can truly say that good has come out of all of it. It's given me a great opportunity to become a better person. I am so thankful for Meals on Wheels."