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MEALS ON WHEELS
CENTRAL TEXAS



“It’s a Bright Spot in Your Life When Somebody Knocks on Your Door”

“I’m kind of blind and I’m kind of deaf, and I’m kind of uneasy on my feet. So I’ve got a cane I use—usually just to fight the women off.”

While Malcolm Caldwell’s sense of sight and sense of hearing may have diminished over his 97 years of life, his sense of humor remains just as sharp as ever. He just doesn’t get to employ it as often as he used to—because, these days, Mr. Caldwell lives alone in the South Austin home he and his wife, Bernice, bought 35 years ago.

The two met in a youth fellowship program and got married in 1943. Five months later, he joined the military and spent two years in the Army Air Corps. After World War II, Mr. Caldwell returned to Austin and went into the family business, Caldwell Variety Store on South Lamar. He later manufactured aluminum awnings before finally settling in the field

of heating and air conditioning—and spent the last 17 years of his working life on the University of Texas campus, helping to keep UT’s 3,000-ton refrigeration

Nowadays, Mr. Caldwell relies on Meals on Wheels Central Texas to help him remain independent. “Meals on Wheels sees to it that once a day, [I] get meals that



Every Tuesday, MOWCTX client Malcolm Caldwell receives lunch and a friendly visit from MOWCTX volunteer Jenny Holm.

units, called chillers, operational. On the home front, he and his wife raised three daughters and were both very active in their church—volunteering their time to help others in need. In April 2011, 68 years after they got married, Ms. Caldwell passed away.

are well prepared, nutritious and filling. I look forward to it,” he says. He also looks forward to the daily visits he receives from our dedicated volunteers: “It’s a bright spot in your life when somebody knocks on your door and comes in and says a word or

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“Delivering for Meals on Wheels is Quick and Easy”

It takes a lot to rattle Meals on Wheels Central Texas volunteer Deb O’Keefe. As one-half of “The Morning X with Jason and Deb” on local radio station 101.5 KROX-FM, nothing seems to faze her during the fast-paced, unscripted, four-hour show that draws thousands of listeners every morning.

But Deb does admit to being a bit uneasy on her very first meal delivery a couple of years ago. “Knocking on that door, I was like ‘what do I say’ even though I had been given all of this instruction at Meals on Wheels (during volunteer orientation); it all went out the window and I was actually nervous. And I wanted to do a good job and I wanted these people to like me, and I thought ‘ooh, I’m going to say the wrong thing’. But then I just knocked on the door and said ‘Meals on Wheels’ and that was it. That began my journey,” she says.

Two-and-a-half years later, that journey continues. Deb delivers our hot, nutritious meals every Tuesday to homebound older adults in East Austin, and also serves as a substitute driver on other days when her schedule permits. As fans of her radio show can attest, Deb is a passionate advocate for the elderly and animals. In fact, her dog, Blue, accompanies her on her routes. “I’m a citizen of the world and it is ours to take care of the people and things that can’t take care of themselves,” she says.

One of her favorite Meals on Wheels memories happened a few months ago. Deb, who is from England, normally travels home for the holidays, but stayed in Austin this past December. “One of the reasons is I wanted to visit one of my clients and just bring her some holiday cheer, a couple of little presents, and just hang out with her for a little bit. And

that was amazing, that I had sort of this adoptive grandmother who wouldn’t have had anyone else who would have popped around,” she recalls.



In addition to being co-host of “The Morning X with Jason and Deb” on local radio station 101.5 KROX-FM, Deb O’Keefe is also a MOWCTX volunteer. In this photo, she delivers one of our nutritious lunchtime meals to client Estella Cannon.

When she shares her volunteer experiences with 101X listeners, she’s quick to stress the simplicity of the experience and the impact that it has: “delivering meals for Meals on Wheels is quick and easy. It’s quick and easy and yet it leaves such a mark.”

“It’s a Bright Spot in Your Life When Somebody Knocks on Your Door” (cont.)

two, they always greet me with great affection. It’s easy for me to love people with Meals on Wheels because they’re doing God’s work.”

MOWCTX volunteer Jenny Holm delivers his lunch every Tuesday and she relishes those visits with Mr. Caldwell, whom she calls by his nickname, Micky. “One of my favorite things about Micky is I can count on every time I see



Mr. Caldwell served in the Army Air Corps during World War II.

him he will open that door with a smile and a hug. My Tuesdays with Micky are an absolute day brightener,” she says.

When asked how he maintains such a sunny disposition, Mr. Caldwell credits the message on a birthday balloon a friend gave him when Mr. Caldwell turned 50: “It said ‘it’s not your age, it’s your attitude’. I liked that. So I try to keep a good attitude.”