



## YOUNG MEALS ON WHEELS HERO STEPS UP TO HELP

**While the majority of Meals on Wheels volunteers are over 55 years old, there's a new generation of young people stepping up to make a difference.**

When Asaiah Edwards entered college back in 2016, it was widely known that funding for Meals on Wheels was at-risk.

*"It got me thinking about the senior population because I had never really thought too much about it until Meals on Wheels. We don't do a good job of helping them," said Edwards.*

So, Asaiah doubled down on his efforts to serve this vulnerable population and become the change he wanted to see in the world.

Upon his graduation, Asaiah looked back on his many hours of delivering meals as some of his best and most meaningful college memories. "It's about more than delivering meals."

Have you ever wondered about becoming a Meals on Wheels volunteer? With more than 5,000 local programs, you can most likely find one near you. Find out how you can volunteer at [AmericaLetsDoLunch.org](http://AmericaLetsDoLunch.org).

→ **JOIN US!**

## I WOULD GO HUNGRY IF IT WASN'T FOR MEALS ON WHEELS

**Even before the pandemic, Shirley was one of the millions of seniors who relied on Meals on Wheels as a vital lifeline.**

Shirley loves being surrounded by the people she cares about. She has four children and twenty-two grandchildren, and she typically relied on her family for assistance and company. However, COVID-19's safety pre-cautions mean they can't come around as much.

That is why, now more than ever, she depends on Meals on Wheels to bring her the nutritious meals she needs to stay healthy.

*"I've been staying in and trying to be safe during COVID-19. And, Meals on Wheels has been bringing me food. I depend on my Meals on Wheels!" -Shirley, 77-year-old Meals on Wheels client*

Meals on Wheels also provides a way for Shirley to stay connected during the pandemic. Too many older Americans are feeling lonelier than ever before. Even a friendly wave from their door to a delivery driver who drops off their food can make all the difference.

Your generosity supports local Meals on Wheels programs, like Shirley's, to keep seniors safe, healthy and connected nationwide.



## DELIVERING KINDNESS

YOUR MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA SUPPORTER NEWSLETTER // FALL 2020

## YOUR SUPPORT MEANS MORE THAN EVER BEFORE

As our nation responds to the enormous threat of COVID-19 – which poses a significant health risk for every single senior – you are helping in ways that none of us ever imagined would be necessary.

Your support has enabled Meals on Wheels to safely deliver more food and hope to millions of older Americans nationwide during this crisis. And, on behalf of the 5,000 community-based Meals on Wheels programs in America, thank you for your amazing

generosity which has enabled us to respond boldly at both the national and local levels during an unprecedented time of need.

Because of you, millions of America's seniors are able to isolate at home and stay safe from the life-threatening impacts of this pandemic, knowing that they are not forgotten or alone.

With heartfelt thanks and our sincerest wishes for your continued health and safety,



*Ellen Hollander*

President and CEO

## YOUR GIFT IS ENABLING SENIORS TO SHELTER AT HOME

Meals on Wheels programs are on the front lines every day, committed to keeping older Americans safe and nourished in communities across the country.

You are making a difference for seniors sheltering at home. With your help, our programs are able to step up to meet the extraordinary increase in demand for Meals on Wheels services.

### YOUR SUPPORT IS SAVING LIVES

Keeping older Americans safe during the pandemic placed a financial burden on local programs, whose budgets were already stretched thin.

We fought for (and won) legislation that provided a combined \$750 million in emergency federal funding for programs like Meals on Wheels. While a substantial victory for our network, it still falls very short in meeting the staggering increase in demand across the country.

That is why support to the Meals on Wheels COVID-19 Response Fund is so critical. Thanks to your generosity, we have already sent more than \$28 million in funding directly to 610 frontline community providers that serve as a lifeline to the millions of seniors who depend on them.



These funds replenished food and safety supplies, expanded meal production and storage capacity, and even enabled telephone check-ins to let seniors know that someone cares.

### SINCE THE COVID-19 CRISIS BEGAN



PROGRAMS SCALED TO SERVE AN AVERAGE OF **77% MORE MEALS**

Source: <https://www.mealsonwheels.org/newsroom/press-releases/2020/07/23/new-survey-data-meals-on-wheels-reveals-continued-to-face-representative-demand-and-aging-careers-due-to-covid-19>

### YOU ARE HELPING US MEET AN EXPLODING NEED

To meet the rapid increase in need, local programs have found creative solutions to ramp up food delivery quickly and safely. Collectively, they have already increased meal deliveries by 77% since the pandemic started.

The rural area of Welch, West Virginia, is home to the oldest population in the country. The local Meals on Wheels program in that area has seen demand rise dramatically.

With funding from the COVID-19 Response Fund, the program was able to hire a paid driver who delivered an additional 2,000 meals to seniors outside of its traditional service area.

One Meals on Wheels program in Grandville, Michigan, saw demand for its services jump by over 300 percent, practically overnight.

Additionally, it was faced with the loss of most of its volunteer drivers, who were older themselves, at risk and needing to shelter at home. Funds from the Meals on Wheels COVID-19 Response Fund were used to cover additional staff time and replenish food supplies to fill emergency boxes.

As the program was also no longer able to depend on volunteer vehicles for delivery, they used money from the Response Fund to help with the transportation costs associated with making sure its new and existing routes were covered.

### SENIORS LIKE OLLIE THANK YOU!

And seniors like Ollie, who rely on Meals on Wheels, are so grateful. At 83 years old, Ollie is one of the millions of seniors at increased risk during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*"The meals they bring are great; I'm thankful. If it wasn't for that, I wouldn't know what I would do," she says.*

Knowing that Meals on Wheels is there for her "feels real good."



The Meals on Wheels COVID-19 Response Fund was created at a time of intense and immediate need. By establishing this Fund on behalf of its nationwide network, Meals on Wheels America has enabled local programs to stay focused on what is and continues to be most essential: meeting the urgent and emergent needs of seniors within their communities.