



News On Wheels

July 2011

Simmering Summer

It may have been said before, but for the record there is no such thing as a summer lull. Things are no quieter at Meals on Wheels during June, July and August then they are the rest of the year.

After this past winter (we won't speak of it again) and the spring, people just shook off the remnants of cabin fever, only to be struck by "Avid Fever". Not to be confused with Avian Flu. This fever requires no extra precautions.

Golf season is in full swing and "Avid Fever" has hit the golfers in our ranks. Adding to those affected we have the cottage owners, the baby sitters, the day trippers, the boaters and the summer theatre buffs. Why, it's pretty near an epidemic.

Thank goodness you are flexible. If you're suddenly active Monday, Wednesday and Friday, you tell us to book you on a Tuesday or Thursday. Whatever time you can share, we'll make it fit.

What is going on over the next months:

- **Pauline Schmidt** our staff accountant for the past 25 years has retired. Her last day at Meals on Wheels was June 28th. Staff, Board, and people who worked with Pauline over the years dropped in to an open house to wish her well. She'll be missed and we wish her the best.
- Meal delivery volunteers your **Annual Survey** was part of this mailing. Thank you for filling it out. When completed, bring it back to the depot or mail it in to our office.
- Transportation volunteers please take part in our annual **telephone survey**. Staff member Lenore McGuire will be making the phone calls. It's quick and won't take more than 5 minutes.
- **New Intake Coordinator** Ashley Snively took over this position mid May and has been on the phone registering clients ever since. We're very happy to have her on staff.
- **Happy Fridays** start on Friday, June 24th and continue through to Friday, September 2nd. The office closes at 2:00 p.m.

- A committee of the Board will spend some time in July & August investigating the **possible purchase of a building**. This building would house Meals on Wheels administration staff, a reheating depot and the frozen meal program.
 - Why consider a move? We are looking for accessible space and reduction of monthly costs. If we could share the space with others, this might be a source of additional income.
 - The goal of this committee is to explore options. There may be nothing on the market suited to our needs. We'll keep you posted.
- **Meals on Wheels Annual Meeting** was held on June 23rd. Recognition was extended to retiring Board members Sarah Burner, Sherene Davidson, Alan Johnston and Ted Williams. Staff members were recognized for years of service: 5 years, Peter Van den Hogen; 10 years, Laura Christie and Lenore McGuire; 20 years, Sophia Heimpel and 25 years Pauline Schmidt.
- **Stat Holidays** hope everyone had a great Canada Day. The next holiday office closure will be the Civic Holiday on **Monday, August 1st** and then Labour Day on **Monday, September 5th**. No meal delivery or transportation service on these dates.
- **Staff holidays** throughout July and August. There doesn't appear to be any week during these months when one or two staff members are not away. This is when we cover for each other.
- **Reimbursement** cheques or donation receipts are being processed. You will receive your mailing later in July. This covers the period from January to June 2011.

RED ALERT - RED ALERT - RED ALERT

Thursday, October 6, 2011 from 2:00 to 4:00

Volunteer Awards & Recognition Event

More Information to Come!

Open Hearts & Open Minds

POVERTY: The living conditions of several clients has been described as below standard. Compounded by personal health issues, rooms don't get cleaned, home repairs are not done, and laundry piles up. Pride and a fierce sense of independence will prevent clients from connecting with community services. Others may have help for certain activities of daily living, but not all.

For those who qualify, a subsidy is available from Meals on Wheels for both our standard and frozen meals. 30% of our clients benefit from reduced rates. Also during a typical month, 113 clients receive meals paid for by Veterans Affairs Canada, as these men and women are war veterans.

It is distressing to witness someone struggling. Quality Manager, Debbie Meagher, can be reached at 519-660-1430 ext. 228 if there is a client situation you would like to discuss.

MENTAL HEALTH: Statistics show that one in five Canadians will have a mental health illness at some point in their lives. It comes as no surprise then, that there are Meals on Wheels clients receiving meals and using our transportation service who are living with a mental health issue. Courtesy of the Canadian Mental Health Association, let's dispel some myths with the following information:

- ***People with mental illness are violent and dangerous:*** The truth is that, as a group, mentally ill people are no more violent than any other group.
- ***People with mental illness are poor and/or less intelligent:*** Many studies show that most mentally ill people have average or above average intelligence.
- ***Mental illness is caused by a personal weakness:*** A mental illness is not a character flaw. It is an illness, and it has nothing to do with being weak or lacking will-power.

All of us can help the way people think about mental illness. Start with yourself. Be careful about your own choice of words. Use accurate and sensitive words not ones that belittle and offend people with mental health problems.

MOBILITY: Most of the senior clients we register will say they have limited mobility. It could be that their gait is slowed, or they make use of a cane or a walker. Information addressing limited mobility is passed along to volunteers in the note section on the route sheet. Meal clients may take longer to get to their door. If it is any help to the client, volunteers may be directed to bring the meal right to where a client is sitting or put the meal in the refrigerator.

If a client is on our transportation service, volunteers are alerted to the use of a walker or cane. Certain types of vehicles may be requested by a client due to ease of access. There are such a variety of walkers available and the over-sized ones can be an awkward fit for some vehicle trunks and back seats. We do our best to provide you with up-to-date information, but as client situations evolve, you may be the one to alert us to changes in mobility aids or the increased need for assistance.

DEMENTIA/ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: Transportation volunteers are taking a new set of clients to programs at the Alzheimer Society. In the early stages of memory loss, clients are travelling on their own with a volunteer to these sessions. They include the monthly "Food for Thought" and "Gardening Therapy" as well as weekly support group meetings. Even though you've called to confirm your pick up time with the client the night before, it doesn't hurt to place a call a couple of hours before your scheduled arrival.

A great many clients with Dementia receive meals. To address specific client situations we provide you with suggestions, often made by the family, to aid in a successful delivery. Refer to notes under the client's name on your route sheet.

COMMUNITY CARE: It is such a relief to a client's loved ones to know that volunteers are aware and an integral part of the client's care plan. As we have stated before, while awaiting for placement in a LTC Facility, community agencies, family members, Meals on Wheels and you, our volunteers work together to keep clients supported. You encounter a great many situations while performing your role.

We are proud to have you looking after the clients who receive our services. Thank you.

Easy Street

We talk about our volunteer Route Coordinators, but are you aware of how much work they do?

- There is the daily confirmation of meal delivery drivers
- The search for spares. From April 1 to June 8 they found 220 spare volunteers to fill in on routes
- Communication takes place between the Volunteer Services Manager and the Route Coordinators daily. Discussions about volunteer vacations, health issues, route combinations, small routes, all the things that help make our daily meal program run efficiently



Route Coordinators do such a good job it does seem like we're driving Easy Street. You keep things running smoothly by letting them know about time off from your route. The more notice you give, the better. We can then book someone to take over while you're away. This is especially helpful in the summer. Our spares are wonderful, but they are not sitting by the phone waiting to be called when they can be enjoying other pursuits. If you know you need a specific day off, call the week before or a few days prior. All of our Route Coordinators have answering machines:

- East Depot (Elias Street -Red Door): Trudy Ferwerda @ 519-451-0878
- West Depot (McCormick Home): Pat Mooney @ 519-473-9011
- South Depot (Leathorne Street): Dorothy Mitz @ 519-667-4929
- Central Depot (Queens Avenue): Dorothy Sim @ 519-672-1533
- Volunteer Service Manager & Frozen Meals (Queens Avenue): Laura Christie @ 519-660-1430, ext. 224.

Office Hot Line(s)

One would think that with a 4-line phone system (the 5th line goes directly to our voice mail system) there would be a free line when you call. This is not always the case. Most of us still prefer people to voice mail, but compared to many agencies and companies, our system is very simple to use.

When you call and ask for a specific staff member you are put through to their extension. They will either pick up if available or if they're on another call or retrieving messages, your call will go to voice mail. Don't hang up, this option does work well! Especially if you are calling back to the transportation staff to let them know you can take the ride you've been asked to do. All staff make every attempt to get back to you as promptly as they are able.

Meal delivery volunteers, any delivery issue you encounter while out on a route is best taken care of by Karen, our Administrative Assistant, or the office volunteer who picks up the phone. No need to ask for Laura Christie. Your question or concern should be addressed promptly and these are the best people for the task. They can quickly access the client's file, make the necessary contact and direct your next step. **Please forgive me if I use this opportunity to remind you to call while out on your route with any delivery problem, and not when you get home.**

Delayed for your route by a train, construction, or because you were distracted by the gloriousness of the day? Meals are heated in advance of your pick up time, so they are ready when you arrive. If you are more than 10 minutes late for your route, Depot Staff call the MOWL office. If you can't be reached at home, a spare driver is sought to fill in. You can pre-empt this flurry of activity by giving us a "heads up" that you intend to do your route but are late.

Monday continues to be the busiest telephone day of the week due to the 120+ clients who are placing their frozen meal orders. If you are unable to get through to us the first time, try again. We are sorry for any inconvenience.

Speaking of Sunshine

The warmth that was in the room when we gathered together for The Sunshine Café, gave the Meals on Wheels staff sunburns. 150 guests enjoyed good food, door prizes and each other. Many thanks to the following people and businesses.

Donors: Jim Anderson Flowers - Marilyn Casaubon - First St.-Andrew's United Church, Jeff, Jill, Rob Chapman of Sutton Group Realty - Laura Christie - Helen McLeod - Melrose Bakery - Christine Poier - The Little Red Roaster - Darlene Turner of PartyLite - Liz Vallance



Pre-Event Help: Mary Blasl - Valerie Hurst - Thelma Llewellyn - Helen McLeod - Barb Sinclair - Jane Sproule
Liz Vallance

Event Helpers: Gerry Casaubon - Marilyn Casaubon - Jill Chapman - Jacquie Downing - Leah Froats
Maddi Froats - Megan Froats - Nancy Miles - Beth Sinclair - Marianna Strutt - Shannon Van Grinsven - Sandy Wagter - Lynda Wilson - Loretta Windsor

Series of Events

Early - late - route delivered top to bottom - route delivered bottom to top - elevators - a visit at the door or trouble finding a location can result in a meal route taking longer to deliver. We do get calls from clients wondering where their meals are, but for the most part those on service are very patient. They have to be, because we never give a specific time of delivery, only a time range of 11:00 to 1:30. There are also route combinations and fluctuations in size, a route one day can take a full hour to deliver and the next day can be completed in half that time.

Always on our mind is the quality of the meal and food safety. Being kind hearted, sometimes you decide to go back to a client who wasn't home earlier. Keep in mind that the meals are heated in advance of your pick time. Let's take a route picked up at 11:30:

- The meals are heated at 11:15-11:20 and then packaged.
- You arrive at 11:35, the route takes you an hour to deliver.
- The meal will maintain at a safe temperature for an hour and be good to eat. If you finish your route and want to try back again that could add an additional 15 minutes.
- The meal has now been "sitting" for almost an hour and a half.

Bacteria grow most rapidly in the range of 40 degrees to 140 degrees F. Some can double in number in as little as 20 minutes. Pathogenic bacteria generally does not affect the taste, smell or appearance of food, but can make you ill. With this in mind, if you call in with such a situation, staff will probably tell you not to bother to attempt another delivery of a meal that was heated. Food safety is also why we remind you never to leave a meal for a client outside their door or on their porch. Who knows when they might be home?

Thanks to you our programs run smoothly, but that doesn't mean things don't get complicated.

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"News on Wheels" is written and produced by Laura Christie