

## APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER

### Rocky River-Lakewood Kitchen West Shore Meals On Wheels

#### WELCOME TO OUR NEW ONLINE HOME!

We're thrilled to announce the launch of the new West Shore Meals On Wheels website – [www.westshoremow.org](http://www.westshoremow.org). West Shore MOW is the official 501(c)(3) parent organization that oversees the operation of our RRLW Kitchen and the Fairview Park Kitchen. This new website replaces the former website that focused on RRLW alone.

Our new website came about thanks to volunteer **Mary Conway**, who pitched our organization to her employer, **INSIGHT2PROFIT**, as a candidate for the company's mission-driven client efforts. INSIGHT2PROFIT volunteer **Jenny Rice** and our own board member **Deb Denney** did the heavy lifting to create a beautiful, easy-to-navigate site that gives prospective clients, volunteers, and donors information about our mission and services.

INSIGHT2PROFIT, a consulting firm with offices in Cleveland and Chicago, offers pricing and profit strategies, change management, and technology solutions to public and private organizations nationwide. The firm also strives to have a positive social impact by donating their skills, knowledge, and financial resources so that their team members and the community at large can learn, grow, and achieve their goals.

We are deeply grateful to Mary and INSIGHT2PROFIT for their contribution to our mission. What's more, we now have a team of professionals who have volunteered to continue helping us improve our service to people in need within our communities.

Take a few minutes to check out our new site and bookmark it so you can return often to read regular blog posts about our current events, activities, and needs.

#### NEW EMAIL ADDRESS

Along with our new website, our Administrative & Volunteer Coordinator Kathy Blackwell has a new email address: [rrlwcoordinator@westshoremow.org](mailto:rrlwcoordinator@westshoremow.org). Please add her address to your contact list.

#### LETTER FROM LAURIE

*Grateful. Thankful. Hopeful. This is how I feel about our Meals On Wheels program when very little else has been functioning normally in our lives. Our MOW continues to be a bright spot on the horizon, despite the challenges the virus has presented us with. Our kitchen has actually seen an increase in the number of meals we serve! This is in no small part due to our dedicated staff and kitchen volunteers, who continue to provide nutritious and delicious meals that are then delivered faithfully by our volunteer drivers. I am so fortunate to have a board that supports all these efforts. I am so grateful for all of you!*

*In addition, I would like to give a shout out to all the donors that give so generously to support our organization. Besides our generous individual donors, we have been fortunate to receive support from the community at large. **Community West Foundation** and the **Lakewood-Rocky River Rotary Foundation** have awarded MOW generous grants that help us pay for our operations and subsidize our meals for those that can't afford them. **Whole Foods** and **Elmwood Bakery** donate food every week. Our volunteers provide support for us regularly: lovely new curtains for the kitchen, stocking our blizzard packs, making minor repairs – the list goes on.*

*How can I thank you enough? The answer is in the smile on a resident's face when they receive our food and knowing that MOW has provided sustenance for our neighbors who can't provide it for themselves.*

*Going forward, I hope everyone enjoys the promise of better weather and a return to normalcy. Take care!*

*Laurie Rokakis  
Chairperson, RRLW MOW*

### ARRIVALS . . .

Welcome new volunteers! Since December, we've been joined by new drivers **Susan Fisher, Colin Meyer, Paul Murphy, Conner Schliffka, and Jim Walsh**; and new kitchen volunteers **George Andrews, Suzanne Cooper, Terry Noll, Margaret Rhynard, and Stacey Robinson**. Welcome *back* to the kitchen **Louann Buckley, Frank Grey, Carol Poley, and Sharon Waffan!**

We are also very fortunate to welcome volunteers **Cheri Gardiner** and **Wendy Summers**, who came forward in December to share our volunteer Biller position. In addition, Cheri has graciously agreed to serve on our RRLW Kitchen Board.

### AND DEPARTURES . . .

After many years of service, we thank **Bill Ridmann** for his wise counsel and dedicated efforts as a member of our RRLW Board. Bill also devoted many patient hours to handling the responsibilities of our Biller position, always keeping us up to date on our financial position and offering us valuable advice as challenges emerged.

Although we will certainly miss Bill's delightful personality, expertise, and insights, we are comforted in knowing that he remains active in our organization as the Treasurer for West Shore MOW and as a member of its Executive Board. Thank you, Bill!

#### **STAFF SPOTLIGHT: ANDREA MOLNAR**

Our head cook, **Andrea Molar**, has been the heart of our RRLW Meals On Wheels kitchen for more than 20 years. Andrea's first food-related job was preparing cold meals for the former MOW program that served Lakewood. Several years and several jobs later, she came to our Rocky River kitchen to fill in for our regular cook. Lucky for us, her position permanent, and she has been with us ever since.

In addition to preparing delicious, nutritious meals, Andrea does all the menu planning and ordering. She is always looking for new recipes and manages to make each meal a treat for the eyes as well as the taste buds. She is a wiz at using all our food donations in creative ways, a challenging job when perishables come through our doors ready-to-use.

Volunteers enjoy working in the kitchen because of the friendly atmosphere Andrea creates. Andrea's organizing skills, training methods, and attention to detail ensure that the kitchen runs smoothly. She also plans our volunteer appreciation luncheons, assists in fundraising activities, organizes food drives, and plans special holiday meals for our recipients.

Andrea lives in North Olmsted with her husband Tom, their 15-year-old son Matthew, and dogs Luke and Leo. In her free time, she enjoys baking, gardening, reading, and traveling. This year, Andrea is looking forward to exploring with her family in their new RV.

We deeply appreciate Andrea's many years of dedication to Meals On Wheels and look forward to many more!

## THANK YOU!

We were privileged and grateful to receive substantial grants in December from two community organizations that have also generously supported us over the years.

**Community West Foundation** awarded us \$10,000 to fund our new administrative support position. **Kathy Blackwell** has filled that role and has done an amazing job reorganizing and updating our operations. Our client numbers have increased, routes have been streamlined for maximum efficiency, and volunteers are recruited and assigned in a timely manner. The grant from Community West made all of Kathy's success possible.

**Lakewood-Rocky River Rotary Foundation** supported us with a \$4,000 grant for a variety of needs. Of the total, \$1,700 was used to purchase our Zippy Meals computer program, which has saved many hours in tracking and scheduling our volunteers and meal deliveries; \$1,500 was earmarked for food and kitchen supplies; and the remaining \$800 will be used for our Blizzard-pack fund.

Special thanks to volunteers **George and Beth Shiekh** of **Cleveland Kitchen and Design**, who generously gave their time, materials, and talents to repair and improve various aspects of our kitchen. We appreciate the much-needed updates!

Our Blizzard Packs were assembled this winter thanks to the efforts of **Sister Curle, Sister Butler, and Sister Steed**, who cheerfully worked together packing non-perishables for our recipients. Thank you, Sisters!

We appreciate **Sharon Hosek** for all her volunteer efforts, including her creation of the thank-you card that was delivered to our volunteers during the December holiday season. Her husband **John Hosek** has been instrumental in promoting our efforts through **St. Christopher Parish** in Rocky River, most recently organizing a gift-card donation campaign during a week in Lent. Thank you to the Hoseks and the generous parishioners of St. Chris.

## COVID UPDATE

It has been a long and challenging year since COVID-19 arrived in our lives. Fortunately, we have only needed to close our kitchen for a few days in order to ensure the safety of our recipients, volunteers, and staff.

Most of those who work with us and those we serve have already received their COVID-19 vaccinations. Even so, we continue to vigilantly implement the health and safety practices recommended to prevent spread of the virus. We look forward to the time – hopefully soon – when we can once again resume daily chats with our recipients.

## LETTER FROM KATHY

*To Andrea Molnar, Kathryn Rieg, Tom Esposito, Aaron Kirkpatrick, and kitchen volunteers and drivers:*

*The month of January brought its challenges with me gone for the month. I couldn't have taken that time away if it were not for Andrea, Kathryn, Tom, and Aaron. The four of you worked together to keep Meals On Wheels going while I was away. I truly appreciate all you did for me during my absence. It is because of people like you that our organization is such an amazing place to work! Thank you for everything you did while I was away and all you continue to do for Meals On Wheels.*

*To all the volunteers in the kitchen and our drivers, thank you for the warm welcome back and for the many condolences and heartfelt sympathies. To those who donated to Hospice of the Lowcountry in memory of my father, THANK YOU!!*

*Kathy Blackwell  
Volunteer Coordinator*

## **VOLUNTEER NEEDS**

**Photographer/Videographer.** If you would like to occasionally volunteer your skills in photography and/or videography, we could use your help. Your first project would be taking high-resolution photos of our volunteers at work.

**Website Manager Support.** Though we do have a website manager in Deb Denney, we are looking for someone who could volunteer as a back-up site manager in the event we need one. Ideally, you would have experience in the WIX design platform, or similar software.

To volunteer for these or any other volunteer roles, please email [rrlwcoordinator@westshoremow.org](mailto:rrlwcoordinator@westshoremow.org)

## **RRLW BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021**

Laurie Rokakis  
*Chairperson*

Andrea Dora-Molnar  
*Head Cook*

Mary Haggard  
*Board Member*

Louann Buckley  
*Vice Chairperson*

Kathy Blackwell  
*Volunteer & Administrative  
Coordinator*

Linda Lewis  
*Board Member*

Steve Jurak  
*Recording Secretary*

Deb Denney  
*Board Member*

Kathryn Rieg  
*Board Member*

Tom Esposito  
*Executive  
Board Representative*

Frank Grey  
*Board Member*

Candace Vincent  
*Board Member*

Cheri Gardiner  
*Biller*

Lauren Walsh  
*Board Member*