

ROCKY RIVER LAKEWOOD MEALS ON WHEELS September 2020 Newsletter

So much has happened at our MOW kitchen since our last newsletter in March and the onset of the COVID 19 crisis. We have successfully met all the challenges that have come our way – thanks to you!

We continue to implement safe practices and sanitation procedures to ensure that we are not acquiring and spreading the virus among ourselves or to our recipients. And to date, none of our volunteers, staff or recipients have contracted the virus.

Our service is more important than ever to those in our community who have difficulty purchasing and preparing their own food. The number of participants and meals we serve weekly has continued to increase since March, and we have received an outpouring of support from benefactors and volunteers along the way. Thank you for making all that possible!

We hope you will take a few minutes to read this newsletter about what our organization has been doing and how you can continue to help us fulfill our mission.

ARRIVALS . . .

We are thrilled to announce that Board member **Laurie Rokakis** has been elected as our kitchen's Board Chairperson. Rocky River residents may already know Laurie from her role serving as the Senior Center's social worker until her retirement in June 2020. She brings us years of experience working with the elderly, local governments, social service agencies and non-profits – all of which will contribute to our organization's success as she leads us into the future.

In July, our Board was excited to welcome new member **Tom Esposito**, who has been a dedicated volunteer with us in a variety of capacities, including working in the kitchen, delivering meals and substituting for Bob Burns. We look forward to tapping Tom's experience!

MOW's greatest asset by far is our dedicated group of volunteers. We are indeed fortunate to welcome the many new volunteers who have been critical in helping us continue our service since the pandemic took hold: **Joe & Pam Bancsi, Kathy Blackwell, Andrea Bortner, Paul Gedeon, Tucker Handley, Robin Hardy, Rick Hatala, Lillian Hobrath, Susanna Hobrath, David Kaizer, John Keller, Beth Kelly, Aaron Kirkpatrick, Keith Kleinsmith, Kristen LePrevost, Laurel Lindsay, John & Jennifer Lorek, Kenneth Misener, Melissa Nautiyal, Yesenia Ortega, Joan Parks, Gregory Poplin, Kathryn Rieg, Mimi Verdone and Tom Stacy.**

. . . AND DEPARTURES

We honor the dedicated service of **Ann Rich**, who retired from our Board after many years working to ensure our meal-delivery program continued to meet its mission at a high standard. As a Board member, Ann contributed countless hours and valuable ideas to a variety of

projects. Though we will certainly miss her participation on the Board, Ann continues to volunteer at the kitchen and to support us in other projects as they arise. Thank you, Ann!

We extend our deep gratitude to our long-serving volunteers who are currently unable to volunteer because of the risks posed by COVID 19. Please know that we miss you and hope that you are staying healthy during these challenging times. Of course, we look forward to seeing you when you feel it is safe to resume volunteering with us. If you would like to help out from home, please contact Bob Burns to let him know.

HELP WANTED

KITCHEN AND DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS

We currently need more kitchen and delivery volunteers to work either on a regular weekly schedule or as substitutes. Kitchen volunteers work 8:30-11:30 M-F, while drivers work 11:30-12:30/1:00 M-F. Please contact Bob Burns for more information at bobb@mealsonwheelsrr.org or call the kitchen at (440) 333-6298.

TREASURER POSITION

West Shore Meals on Wheels (the parent organization of our Rocky River Lakewood MOW and Fairview Park MOW) is seeking to fill the Executive Board position of Treasurer. Interested applicants will have knowledge of standard bookkeeping practices and record keeping, and be able to work in QuickBooks. Estimated work hours average around 20 hours per month. The job pays \$200 per month with some benefits. If you are interested (or you know someone who is), the full job description is available online at <http://bit.ly/treasjobdesc>. Those who qualify and want further information may email Bill Ridmann at wridmann@hotmail.com.

WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA/DATABASE SUPPORT VOLUNTEER

If you are experienced in creating websites, managing social-media accounts and/or working with donor database software and Mail Chimp, RRLW MOW could use your help! Please contact Deb Denney at rhoneyeditorial@yahoo.com if you would like to volunteer as a consultant, helping to answer questions and resolve issues on an occasional basis.

LET'S SUPPORT SARITA!

This is the perfect time to support our local businesses, especially those who have supported us! Our friends at **sarita, a restaurant** have been generously supporting us for years. If you are looking for fabulous food, great service and friendly staff, this is the place for you. Check out their menu at [facebook.com/Saritarestaurant](https://www.facebook.com/Saritarestaurant). Sarita has a beautiful patio and also does carry out, if you prefer that to their indoor dining option. Sarita is located at 14523 Madison Ave. in Lakewood, and is open Wed., Thur., Sun. 5- 9 p.m. and Fri., Sat. 5- 10 p.m. Phone (216) 226-5200. A big thank you to Sandy Smith and staff for their support!

SO MANY THANK-YOUS . . .

Our Head Cook **Andrea Dora-Molnar** and our Volunteer Coordinator **Bob Burns** deserve a huge round of applause for the many extra hours and efforts they have devoted in responding to the challenges posed by COVID 19. They have certainly worked above and beyond their job

descriptions in adjusting our procedures, training new volunteers, implementing safe practices, responding to inquiries, making helpful suggestions, and so much more. Thank you, Andrea and Bob!

In August, we received a \$1,250 gift from the **Mr. and Mrs. William R. Oatey Fund**, distributed through the **Community West Foundation**. We are truly fortunate to be supported by those organizations and many others in our community, including **Lakewood/Rocky River Rotary Club**, **Rocky River Women's Club** and **Pilgrim St. Paul Agency Fund**. We are grateful for their ongoing generosity.

We extend deep appreciation to the leadership of **Good Soil Lutheran Ministries**, who have done everything possible to accommodate our needs during the pandemic, including allowing us to exclusively use the community space for our meal packing operations.

Many thanks to **Elmwood Bakery** in Lakewood, which has been donating a wide variety of delicious baked goods to our kitchen every week. We are able to receive these goodies because volunteers **Lou and Donna Baleau** pick them up and deliver them right to our kitchen!

We are grateful for the gorgeous fresh vegetables we receive from **Rocky River's Community Garden** thanks to **Ann and Tom Rich**, who bring them to us regularly.

Kathy Blackwell and Kathryn Rieg, above and beyond their usual hours working in the kitchen, pick up and deliver food donations from **Whole Foods** in Rocky River every Thursday. Your extra effort is most appreciated!

Thanks also to **Beth Kelly**, who is volunteering as our new Marc's shopper, in addition to delivering meals every week.

The Woods Restaurant & Lounge in Rocky River deserves our thanks for bringing us many dozens of delicious focaccia rolls, complete with whipped butter and serving cups for our recipients!

We appreciate the donations of homemade masks from **Grace Czerniawski** and the delicious chocolate hearts from **Gwen Rosenberg**, owner of **Popped!** in Kent.

Special thanks to **all our regular bakers!** They use their own ingredients and drop baked goods at our door, usually prepackaged and ready to serve. In addition to baking at the kitchen, **Barb McGraw** sews our small cooler dividers, repairs torn coolers, and has donated homemade masks. **Agents of Howard Hanna** deserve our appreciation both for bringing us baked goods and volunteering to deliver meals.

We are indebted to Board member **Linda Lewis**, who has recently volunteered to handle scheduling of kitchen volunteers – a demanding and important task that ensures our efficient operations.

At the beginning of the COVID crisis, we provided a variety of non-perishable foods for our recipients free of charge. We thank **Heinen's** of Rocky River for donating bags to the effort. We are especially grateful to our Friday drivers, who arrived for their regular delivery routes to find they were also delivering 35-pound bags of groceries to each of their recipients – which they did cheerfully. Thanks to: **Susan Hobrath, Michael DeHaan, Ann Rich, Clark Lipton, Kevin Becker, Joellen Ionni, Bob Glass and Mike McCue.**

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

Our Facebook page is a great way to find out what's happening in our kitchen from week to week. Enjoy pictures of our delicious meals and see some of the people working behind the scenes (also behind the masks)! Our page is listed as Rocky River Meals on Wheels.

IN THE NEWS

On August 2, **Cleveland.com** published a lengthy article about our kitchen, written by volunteer **Linda Gandee**, entitled, "Rocky River-Lakewood Meals on Wheels amps up services during coronavirus pandemic." The article reminded readers that our service is still available during the current pandemic, when so many community residents are isolated or have difficulty shopping. It also described the precautions our kitchen is taking to protect our volunteers and recipients. Check it out here: <https://bit.ly/3irZQ1q>