

HEALTH AND LIVING

West Shore Meals On Wheels:

50 Years Of Service To West Shore Communities

by John Becker

In 1973, a group of churches got together to create a Meals on Wheels program on the west side. November 20 of that year was the first board meeting, featuring all women -- women with a mission. Originally available to Rocky River, Fairview Park, Bay Village, Westlake and North Olmsted recipients, they modeled the Lakewood Meals on Wheels program, which was already in existence, providing low-cost meals to seniors or those who could not shop or prepare meals for themselves. Some recipients were elderly; others were disabled or recovering from an illness. On Dec. 6, 1973, the organization was

officially incorporated as West Shore Meals on Wheels.

Fairview Baptist Church on Lorain Road originally provided space where the meals were prepared. The first meals were delivered on Jan. 7, 1974. There were 24 signed-on recipients as the first drivers pulled out of the church parking lot, delivering Monday through Friday for \$11 per week - a little over \$2 per meal - with the fresh, homemade meals made by the hands of the kitchen help.

Eventually, Fairview production moved production to City Hall, and the Rocky River Kitchen opened at Good Soil Church on Hilliard. Lakewood

Meals on Wheels merged with West Shore Meals on Wheels in 2017, and moved their daily production needs to the Rocky River Kitchen. Meals are made fresh, home cooked every day, and include lunch and dinner offered 5 days a week.

Today, the two facilities service over 100 recipients, crafting over 700 meals per week with the help of 100+ volunteers.

"That is a lot of people," states Lynda Kovach, director of West Shore Meals on Wheels. "You have people who don't get visitors, who maybe don't go out of their home or their apartment, and they don't interact with

people. The conversations that happen during delivery are sometimes more important than the meals," Kovach said.

Today's cost is \$4 per meal, with subsidies available for those with low income. The program is not exclusive to seniors and is available to any with need.

The program also benefits from donors of various sizes. "We have donors who give small amounts and some corporate donors give large amounts," said Kovach. "We have been very blessed in having wonderful donors."

The organization held a 50th Anniversary party on September 20 at Rocky River Civic Center, comprised of board members, volunteers, and donors to celebrate the many years of valuable service to the community.

West Shore Meals On Wheels is always looking for new volunteers and recipients. For more information, please visit www.westshoremow.org.

John Becker is retired from a career in fresh food manufacturing and is now a volunteer for West Shore Meals on Wheels.

Find Your Fit

by Jim O'Bryan

Many people understand that coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is available to those who don't have access to health insurance through an employer. Typically, these folks include members of the self-employed workforce, people who have no health insurance, and people whose employer doesn't provide health insurance. There have been some changes to the available ACA options for the coming year, says Carl Lishing, a licensed insurance agent with HealthMarkets Insurance Agency.

"New, affordable plans may be available. Plans and prices change every year. Your situation may have changed, too. You may find plans with coverage and features that better meet your

November 1, to Friday, December 15, which is the deadline to enroll to make sure you have coverage starting January 1, 2024. During that time, people can consider other plans that may be a better fit for their needs or opt to stay with the plan they had last year.

Subsidies May Play a Role:

For some people, a subsidy plays a role in which plan they choose and can provide financial assistance. So, what is a subsidy? A subsidy is essentially a premium tax credit the federal government provides to help lower premiums and out-of-pocket costs for eligible individuals and is based on household income. Individuals may qualify for enhanced subsidies that have been extended with the passing of

ance agent with HealthMarkets, I'm qualified to help you understand your options in an easy-to-digest format. I'll break it down so you can make the best choice for you and your family. And the best part is, my guidance is offered at no cost to you." Within the different ACA coverage levels there are numerous plans to choose from. "Simplify the process by putting my experience to work for you," he suggests. One of the biggest advantages to choosing coverage under the ACA is that you can pick a plan that does not require underwriting. "Preexisting conditions are allowed and there are preventative coverage benefits that may not be available in non-ACA plans," Carl says.

Closing the Gaps:

