



MARCH 2022 NEWSLETTER

WELCOME!



Our Rocky River-Lakewood Kitchen is fortunate to have a team of enthusiastic volunteers who regularly prepare and deliver our meals to recipients. Without their many contributions of time and effort, we would be unable to serve our neighbors in need.

Since our last newsletter in October, new volunteers **Tony Duna**, **Ken Hanzel**, **Deb Hanzel**, **Jodi Kopp**, **Michael Nienstedt** and **Elizabeth Price** have signed on as drivers, while David Garrity, **Amanda McRobie**, **Karrie Simm** and **Carol Wilson** have joined our kitchen crew. Thank you for adopting our mission as your own!

ROUTE DRIVERS NEEDED!

If you can spare a little time mid-day, once a week, please consider becoming a volunteer driver. You can even bring a friend to help! You will be amply rewarded by the gratitude of our recipients with each delivery you make.

We have routes available on Tuesdays and Fridays. Drivers pick up meals at our kitchen around 11:30 and usually finish deliveries in under an hour, returning to the kitchen to drop off their transport coolers. If you are occasionally unable to make deliveries on your assigned day, we can arrange for a substitute driver to fill in for you. To find out more, contact Kathy Blackwell at (440) 333-6298.

*"No one is useless who lightens
the burden of another."
Charles Dickens*

FREE MEALS DO EXIST

Generous donations to our Meals On Wheels program allowed us to provide all our recipients with a free Thanksgiving meal in November and a free holiday meal in late December. Think about your favorite holiday dishes and you'll know what our head cook **Andrea Molnar** and her helpers prepared for recipients. The Thanksgiving meal included turkey and gravy, stuffing, sweet potatoes and apples, green bean casserole, cranberry relish, turkey soup and pecan pie. The holiday meal included ham, mushroom rice, homemade applesauce, butternut squash, hashbrowns, cornbread, clam chowder and New York-style cheesecake.



Going forward – and again thanks to generous donations from our supporters – we will be able to reduce costs for all our recipients by providing them with a free meal in the months of February, April, June, September, in addition to the free Thanksgiving and December holiday meals.

GREAT GIVING TUESDAY!

Our November 30 Giving Tuesday Food Drive was a smashing success thanks to many generous donors and the organizational efforts of our head cook **Andrea Molnar** and our volunteer and outreach coordinator **Kathy Blackwell**. Dozens of people dropped off requested non-perishables and supplies amounting to more than \$1,000 worth of goods. We also received cash and grocery-store gift cards worth \$945.

The enthusiastic support of our food drive is especially appreciated in this time of higher food costs. Every donation helps stretch our budget to produce nutritious daily meals for our recipients. Many thanks to all who made Giving Tuesday a real bonanza for our mission.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Kathy and Linda McConaughy

One thing our recipients really look forward to in their daily deliveries is dessert. **Kathy McConaughy** and her sister **Linda McConaughy** are responsible for some of the most scrumptious sweet treats we serve.



In addition to regular desserts, Kathy and Linda bake specialty items such as Christmas cookies for the holidays. “Their desserts are not only delicious and varied, but simply beautiful,” says our head cook Andrea Molnar.

Kathy started volunteering her baking talents about five years ago, after retiring from her job as a Creative Vice President with American Greetings. Her sister Linda joined the effort about three years ago, upon moving back to the area after retirement from a career as an art teacher and administrator in the Baltimore area.

“We both love making things, and baking is another creative activity that we both enjoy,” explains Kathy. “It’s always fun to figure out what we can bake with the somewhat serendipitous assortment of donated ingredients. We both feel lucky to be able

to do what we enjoy to help our community.”

Our kitchen and its recipients are certainly thankful for the yummy contributions – and all the effort that goes into them – from Kathy and Linda.

IN SYMPATHY

We are saddened by the passing of **Thomas M. Victory** on March 5. Tom volunteered with us for many years as a driver, delivering meals to our recipients in Lakewood. His sweet personality, dependability and dedication were much appreciated by his fellow volunteers as well as our recipients. We extend our deepest sympathies to his family and friends.

HEARTFELT THANKS TO . . .

Student volunteers from Rocky River Middle School, Transition Services Program, led by coordinator **Diane Boylan**. Four hard-working students have been volunteering with us two days a week since the end of January, accomplishing numerous cleaning chores, making Blizzard Packs, date-stamping food trays, taking out trash and so much more. Job well done!

Volunteer cookie bakers who brought us hundreds of homemade holiday cookies that we included with our holiday gift bags for recipients. The quantity and variety of cookies was impressive!

Quilters Legacy of Lakewood and members **Chris Rehark, Bev Fawcett** and **Becky Jonke**, who donated 77 beautiful handmade quilted placemats. We distributed them to our recipients in December as part of a special holiday gift bag. Our recipients loved them!

Elmwood Bakery, a beloved Lakewood establishment owned by **Andy Rerko**, for generous weekly contributions of delicious pastries, cookies and cakes.

Andrea and Tom Molnar for locating and cleaning up a used institutional-grade storage rack for canned goods. The much-needed rack conserves storage space while allowing easier access to and rotation of canned food.

Our substitute drivers and kitchen helpers, who have filled in numerous times over the winter while our regular volunteers have been ill or on vacation. Though we may not call upon you often, your willingness to pitch in when we do call is so very important to our service delivery.

Barb McGraw for making and donating dozens of quilted insulating pads, used to separate our cold and hot meals. Barb is also a frequent and highly skilled baker for our kitchen.

Whole Foods, Rocky River, for a wealth of food donations to our kitchen every week. These donations both lower our food costs and expand the variety of foods we provide our recipients.



NEW GRANTS FROM LONG-TIME SUPPORTERS



We are extremely grateful for the continued support and generosity of **Community West Foundation** and **Lakewood Rocky River Rotary**.

Community West Foundation, a long-time supporter, continues to be an amazing advocate for our organization. Our Rocky River-Lakewood Kitchen received a \$10,000 grant from Community West in December as well as an additional \$2,600 in unrestricted funds. These funds will be used for food, supplies and kitchen equipment, including the new freezer we recently purchased.

Community West Foundation also awarded a \$10,000 grant to our parent organization West Shore Meals On Wheels, which will be used to benefit recipients in Rocky River, Lakewood and Fairview Park. In addition, West Shore MOW received \$3,800 from the Mr. and Mrs. William R. Oatey Fund, the Oatey Foundation and others who support Community West's Community Impact Fund.

Another long-time supporter of our program is Lakewood Rocky River Rotary, which awarded our kitchen a \$3,000 grant this year. The funding will help pay for supplies and equipment and will cover the cost of our Zippy Meals computer program, used for scheduling volunteers and meal deliveries.

Our program continues to benefit from the generosity of these wonderful organizations.

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