



MEALS on WHEELS
NORTHWEST INDIANA

GENERATIONS

2023 Winter Newsletter



The mission of Meals on Wheels of Northwest Indiana is to deliver nutrition to those in need with the support of community volunteers. Each day, we deliver nearly 2,000 meals with a wellness check and visit in Lake, Porter, Newton, Starke, Pulaski, and Jasper counties in northwest Indiana, and prepare the meals for the LaPorte County program.

THE ART OF AGING



There is always something interesting to learn about the people we serve. For instance, meet Michael Grucza. Raised from humble beginnings in Cleveland, Ohio by working class parents, Mike was always the guy who could figure things out.

They didn't have much growing up, but one thing that they did know is that Mike had talent and tenacity. After high school he was accepted to the Cleveland Institute of Art where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Art in sculpture. To pay his way through college, he took a job at the school as a janitor and worked as a tech assistant, parking attendant, and interned with sculptor Carl Floyd.

After undergrad he made his way to the University of Iowa for graduate school, and soon thereafter moved to Chicago where he started building sculpture with Construct Gallery and taking jobs to establish himself in the industry. He learned that he had strong skill sets in materials which led him to restoration work, with his first job restoring Frank Lloyd Wright Arts & Crafts furniture. He eventually became one of the best in the restoration business, masterfully restoring artifacts to their rightful magnificence. Pieces that he restored are in permanent collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Seattle Art Museum, and LACMA the Los Angeles Museum of Art.



As a young adult in Chicago, Mike made plenty of friends. They worked hard but also played hard. He traveled all over the world taking on restoration jobs and creating and installing his own work. As an artist, he worked to incorporate humor and a sense of play and wonder in his work. He eventually married and had a son, building a life in Chicago working with groups such as the Chicago Sculpture International to exhibit his sculpture work through their public art program.

Mike's career took him to many exciting places, but the profession was comprised of a lot of travel, long days, and backbreaking work. It wasn't uncommon for him to get banged up here and there. Grucza comments, "I wore out my body, more than a professional athlete, but I've had fun." Today, Mike lives in Northwest Indiana and enjoys time with his dog Mac. Some of his work is currently on exhibit on the campus of Purdue University Northwest Westville and in downtown Michigan City.

Shopping and cooking aren't always something he has the energy to do. "I really like receiving Meals on Wheels, the food is fresh and tasty, and I know that my meal will be delivered by a friendly volunteer, which is a nice feature of the program. Unlike receiving food delivered in a box on my doorstep."

We all know that it isn't easy growing older. But having access to community resources, like Meals on Wheel of Northwest Indiana, whose mission is to not only deliver nutritious meals, but to make sure its clients are safe and well, makes the journey much easier.



POWERED BY COMMUNITY SUPPORT



Meals on Wheels is very appreciative to the businesses and organizations that serve as our community meal distribution sites. Throughout the year, Monday through Friday, these community partners welcome us to drop off our coolers filled with client meals so our volunteers can pick up and deliver to those who live in their neighborhoods.

THANK YOU to Centier Bank (Miller), Crown Point Methodist Church, Schererville Town Hall, St. James the Less Catholic Church (Highland), Salvation Army (Munster), Cedar Creek Health Campus (Lowell), Boys & Girls Clubs of NWI (Hammond), Sacred Heart Church (Whiting), OccuMed PrimaryCare (Whiting), and the Portage Township YMCA.

MOWNWI VOLUNTEER RECOGNIZED BY CITY OF HAMMOND

This fall, volunteer meal delivery driver Don Bachmann was presented with the Frank Van Til Lifetime Achievement Award by Mayor Tom McDermott at the City of Hammond's 36th Annual Volunteer Breakfast. In addition to his service to Meals on Wheels, Don is also one of the founding members of CAASH Charities (Clark Alumni / Athletics Sports Heroes), a nonprofit organization, comprised of retired Clark High School coaches and alumni who are



dedicated to raising funds to provide unrestricted gifts to community based organizations and individuals who are experiencing hard times and to ease the burden that has been placed on them through no fault of their own.



illness, as well as family and economic loss.

In the past six years, CAASH Charity has provided contributions to organizations such as, Meals on Wheels, Calumet College of St. Joseph, Haven House, Clark High School Angels Closet, Nazareth Home, Boys and Girls Club of Northwest Indiana, 1st Baptist Food Pantry, and individuals who are experiencing severe

**VOLUNTEERS
ARE NEEDED
IN YOUR
COMMUNITY!**

Kitchen Support,
Meal Delivery, Office
Support - To discover
which opportunity is
right for you, contact
Volunteer Manager
Angelina Torres Solik at
219.756.3663 or
angelina@mownwi.org

GIFTING YOUR RETIREMENT ASSETS TO CHARITY

As you plan to include your retirement assets in charitable donations, in some cases it can be more advantageous to name the charity as a beneficiary of your retirement account, rather than gifting the assets during your lifetime. Under this option, the charity—not you—will be treated as receiving the distribution; therefore, neither you nor your estate will owe income taxes on the amount.

While the amount will be included in your estate, your estate will receive a deduction for the amount inherited by the charity, resulting in a reduction in the amount subject to the estate tax and thus add a reduction in the taxes due on a taxable estate. Charities and tax-exempt nonprofit organizations are excluded from paying income tax, so it may be more beneficial from a tax perspective to leave retirement assets to them.



One suggestion is to name a charity or non-profit of your choice as the beneficiary of your retirement account or you can roll an amount from an existing retirement account into a new IRA and name the charity or non-profit as the beneficiary.

If you are thinking about making such a gift, be sure to check with your tax professional. You'll want to make sure that the charity is a qualified organization for tax purposes under CODE Section 501 (c) 3.

Source: Tuovila, 2023, <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/retirement/05/giftingtocharity.asp>

YOU TOO CAN BE A MEAL HERO

We are truly grateful for the amazing individuals who support our mission through a monthly gift. By doing this you can help to provide stable support to help us provide nutrition support all year long! To become a Meal Hero, visit mownwi.org and choose recurring donation or contact Paul Vaclavik at paul@mownwi.org or 219.756.3663.

Many thanks to our current Meal Heroes:

*Rosario Frampton * Michael Griffin * Corey Hecht * Hattie Hunter*

*Richard Kutcek * Rose Magiera * Catherine Miles * Bill Modrak*

*Sue Modrak * Debra Muenich * Jaymee & Keith Penrose * Joan Petris*

*Meridee Randall * Dian Reyome * Joann Rohaley * Barbara Sejda * Robert Sivulich * Beverly Stanislawski*

*Kathleen Szot * Penny Tokoly * Jason Urbaniak * Rachael Wright * Shellie Zaberdac Dell*





SPINNING SPOKES FEEDING FOLKS



Our Spinning Spokes Feeding Folks bike ride fundraiser was lots of good healthy fun and a great success! Thank you to Friends with Bikes for their help with coordinating the ride and all our incredible riders, sponsors, board members, volunteers, and Meals on Wheels of Northwest Indiana team members who made the event so wonderful!



This year's sponsors included: Get Getting, Vidimos, Inc., CAASH Charities, Pete & Sons Auto Repair, Inc., Puntillo & Crane, Float Sixty, Harbour Trust, Meats by Linz, Swartz Retson & Co, P.C., Tech Credit Union, Performance Plus, Foundations of East Chicago, Oliver, Korellis Roofing, Mike Anderson Chevrolet, Pleasant View Dairy, Anthony Hirschenberger, DDS, Calumet Supply Company, Amex Nooter, Kawa's Family Hair Care, JustBe Coffee Roasters, US Foods, Amada Senior Care, Walt's Food Store, Strack & Van Til Food Market, Family Express, and Prairie Farms. The event raised nearly \$14,000 in support of the vital services Meals on Wheels provides to the Northwest Indiana community.

THANK YOU
TO OUR PRESENTING &
PARTICIPATING LEVEL
SPONSORS!



SECOND STEP FOUNDATION MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Meals on Wheels is proud to be the recipient of a \$10,000 gift from the Second Step Foundation. The charitable success of The Second Step Foundation is partnered by the employees at Interstate Companies, Inc. Their hard work at dozens of branches in communities across 14 states fuels the success of this privately held company. Each year, a portion of Interstate's profits are donated to the foundation to help meet the needs of the communities where they operate.



The company's ongoing success gives back to the places where their employees live. Interstate Power Systems nominate organizations that they believe are doing good work in their community. Meals on Wheels is grateful to be nominated once again by interstate Power Systems (Gary) employee, Bill Pallick, whose father-in-law was a long-time MOWNWI volunteer. Bill will never forget the heartfelt stories that his father-in-law shared with their family. Thank you so much for your faith in our mission!

FROZEN MEAL EXPANSION

In partnership with Northwest Indiana Community Action (NWICA), Meals on Wheels is expanding its reach to rural areas with a special award received through the American Rescue Plan Act to be used to support older adult services in Northwest Indiana.

Through this grant Meals on Wheels of Northwest Indiana will make frozen meal home delivery available to individuals living in small rural towns in Jasper, Newton, Starke, Pulaski, and Porter counties. Meals on Wheels was one of 10 non-profits to receive funding from NWICA. The organizations provide a range of services to seniors in the area, including meal delivery, transportation assistance, housing support, and more.

“We are thrilled to be able to provide these grants to such deserving organizations. These non-profits are doing incredible work to support older adults in our community, and we are proud to be able to help them continue their important work.”

Jennifer Trowbridge, President and CEO of Northwest Indiana Community Action



PHILANTHROPY AT WORK ~ NEW OVEN CELEBRATION



L to R: Chef Keith Peffers, MOW Director of Development, Jen Okamura, Town of Merrillville Council President, Rick Bella, MOW CEO, Sandy Noe, Frist Financial Bank, Misty DeLaCruz, First Financial Bank, Mimi Heung, Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana, Claudia Jones, Town of Merrillville Town Council, Matt Lake, and Individual donor Carolyn Lisek.

Since 2020, Meals on Wheels has doubled the number of meals we prepare each day. Currently, we produce and deliver 10,000 meals a week. As a result, many items in our kitchen are nearing the end of life and need replacement. Due to the generosity of our incredible supporters, we were able to purchase and install a new combination oven. With the help of the **Town of Merrillville, Hard Rock Casino Northern Indiana, First Financial Bank, JustBe Coffee Roasters,** and several individual donors, \$34,000 was raised to help us meet the need. We invited representatives from each organization to come for a visit to see what their gift helped to make possible. One representative, Matt Lake Executive Director of Merrillville Stormwater Management described his experience best by stating, “Not only will this new oven warm our food, but this experience has also warmed our hearts.”



Welcome!

MEALS ON WHEELS OF NWI NEW TALENT!

Now serving individuals in seven counties throughout Northwest Indiana, our staff is growing to help meet the needs of our program expansion. Meet some of our new MOWNWI staff:



Mary Bosch, Client Services Manager

Mary oversees and supports our client services team. Client services is the first point of contact for many of our clients, in addition to serving as a resource for any questions they may have. Mary has worked in the healthcare field as a social worker for 35 years within nursing homes, home care agencies, and with adults/children with disabilities. She is a Certified American Heart Association CPR instructor and a Certified Dementia Practitioner.



Jennifer Fox, Head Chef

Jen has been part of the food services team for the past two years serving as one of our cooks. We are proud to announce that Jen has been promoted to Head Chef working in partnership with our Director of Food Services. Jen has more than 10 years of cooking and supervisory experience in the hospitality industry.



Mike Velez, Production Coordinator

As our production coordinator, Mike ensures the quantity and types of meals going out each day are accurate. He has a wealth of experience in customer service, data analysis and reporting, which makes him a great fit for this detail-oriented role.



Fritz Priller, Driver

Fritz has more than 20 years of driving experience, with companies such as Slater Furniture and Milen Supply. Known at the organization for always having a smile on his face, he is loved by his clients and respected by his colleagues.



Javier Ramirez, Food Services

As dishwasher, Javier has one of the most important jobs at Meals on Wheels. He has received training in culinary skills and has held various positions in food service.

CHANGE A LIFE BY SUPPORTING MEALS ON WHEELS

Your gift today enables so many individuals to receive regular healthy nutrition to remain independent. With your help, we'll deliver more than 400,000 meals this year and strengthen thousands of lives.

Donate today at www.mownwi.org



MEALS on WHEELS
NORTHWEST INDIANA
8446 Virginia Street
Merrillville, IN 46410

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE OF GENERATIONS:

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Save the Date!

MEALS on WHEELS NORTHWEST INDIANA
PRESENTS

DINE WITH THE CHEFS

AVALON MANOR
3550 E. US 30
MERRILLVILLE, IN 46410

MARCH 3, 2024
11 A.M.

Get Ready for the Magic of Dine with Chefs 2024!

SAVE THE DATE Sunday, March 3
Avalon Manor, Merrillville

Tickets only \$150 for a unique culinary experience. For more information on becoming a sponsor contact jen@mownwi.org and for registration melissa@mownwi.org or 219.756.3663

Stay informed daily by visiting us at:



www.mownwi.org