



## Precautions cause peak in demand for help

**A**ccess to food was difficult for Ken even before COVID-19. But with the added risks caused by the virus, his occasional trek to the corner store wasn't just cumbersome and expensive, it became dangerous.

When Ken called Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels for help, he was told he would have to wait for a space to open up before he could begin receiving meals. He was one of a few dozen people on the waiting list – the first that YMOW had seen in several years.

But thanks to the donation of a van by Toyota Motors North America and grant assistance from Meals on Wheels America, Ken's wait, and the wait of others, was shorter than expected. Ken now has meals delivered to his door – meals that do much more than fill his stomach. Ken said that knock on his door each Monday, Wednesday and Friday lifts his spirits. "I actually feel a little vibrant. Like I don't have to worry too much," he said.

As Ken continued to shelter in place, Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels provided him with toilet paper, deodorant, a face mask and a toothbrush and toothpaste. Those things would have taken a chunk out of his limited budget if purchased at the corner store – his only accessible shopping option. Meals and support from YMOW have allowed Ken to save some money for other necessities, and the food is better and healthier than anything he could prepare himself, Ken said.



**Ken, YMOW client**

### Save a bag, feed a senior

Use your reusable bags at either Ann Arbor Whole Foods Market and earn 10 cents per bag for YMOW. No bag? Ask to round up your purchase.

**October 1 to December 31**

**WHOLE  
FOODS  
MARKET**

Ken describes himself as a social person, so sheltering in place has been hard. He enjoys his walks to the corner to pick up a few necessities. But until it's safe to venture out, he's grateful to have food and other items delivered to his door by the friendly staff and volunteers of YMOW.

He also looks forward to his weekly chats with a YMOW volunteer. "I was in a very bad rut when the pandemic first hit," Ken said.

The weekly calls he receives from YMOW's Only a Ring Away program have helped to replace the human contact that he's missing.

"It gives me a lift," he said. And reminds him that while he continues to self-isolate for his own safety, YMOW is there to make it all a little easier.

# FOOD *for* THOUGHT

## Help comes in many forms as YMOW faces COVID-19

**F**rom the way we deliver meals to how we pay for them, everything changed in March 2020.

Knowing that our clients are among the most vulnerable and not knowing what the future would hold, YMOW took immediate steps to ensure that every client would have the food they need, no matter what the future held.

In the days following Michigan's first cases of COVID-19, every YMOW client received frozen, shelf-stable and liquid meals to provide food for three weeks.

**By the end of March, YMOW and Michigan Medicine had pivoted to a new delivery schedule that would cut in half our need to visit their homes. Rather than six days a week, clients would receive meals on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, with each delivery containing food for two days.**

The YMOW staff was divided into two teams. While one team worked to deliver meals, the other sheltered at home, ensuring a healthy backup team should the first team become ill. Thanks to the generosity of local organizations and individuals, YMOW quickly equipped staff with PPE and initiated new protocols for delivering meals safely without client interaction. Staff would no longer enter clients' homes. After placing food at the door, client care associates would step back six feet, where they would

wait to confirm the delivery had been made.

Meanwhile, members of the YMOW team began searching for sources of funding that would see us through the uncertain months ahead. We successfully applied for dozens of grants and reached out to the public. From large corporations to local businesses and individual neighbors, people responded to the needs of their homebound neighbors with generosity and compassion.

Food continued to be delivered without interruption, but the smiles that clients looked forward to each day now were shared from behind masks and face shields. Greetings were cut short as clients and YMOW staff took extra care to stay apart and stay healthy.

**In our ongoing commitment to deliver more than a meal to our homebound neighbors, YMOW staff and volunteers initiated a wellness call program in the weeks following the start of the pandemic. The Only a Ring Away program continues to provide every YMOW client with calls that assess their physical and mental well-being and their unmet needs while also helping to fight isolation with a friendly chat.**

As people took steps to shelter in place, YMOW saw demand for service grow. Thanks to the generous donation of a van and money from Toyota Motors of North America, YMOW was able to eliminate its wait list for service in the midst of the pandemic. With additional support from the CARES Act, we will



**With stores running low on hand sanitizer, Development Manager Sally Ruterbusch prepares a homemade version to help YMOW clients protect themselves from COVID-19.**

eliminate the wait list for under-60 clients by the end of 2020.

"YMOW is proud to have provided uninterrupted service to Ypsilanti's homebound population throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We could not have done it without the support of our community," said Executive Director Alison Foreman.

Our sincere thanks to Toyota, Food Gatherers, Whole Foods, MAIZ Mexican Cantina, Blue Llama, Terry Bakery, Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department, Michigan Medicine, Pet Supplies Plus, Meals on Wheels America and the countless other organizations and individuals who supported us, and continue to support us, through these unprecedented times.

For a more thorough list of everyone who helped us to navigate the events of 2020, please visit <https://ymow.org/about/covid-19-response-and-support/>.



**In homage to the icon's Ypsilanti roots, "Rosie the Deliverer" is the name chosen for our new Toyota Sienna.**



## YMOW goes virtual with Holidays at Home event

The annual holiday fundraiser for Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels will look a little different this year, but it promises to hold all of the fun that supporters have come to expect from our winter event.

Holidays at Home will take place virtually from 6-8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5. The night will include delicious appetizers from Simply Scrumptious, a live demonstration of how to prepare two of the appetizers, live music by local duo Adam Labeaux and Sara Gibson, an auction of donated items as well as handmade items from YMOW clients, and messages from EMU president Jim Smith, Congresswoman Debbie Dingell and YMOW clients.

Guests can choose between regular and vegetarian food packages, which can be delivered to homes in Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor and Dexter. Snack boxes can be shipped anywhere for an additional charge.

Guests also will have the option to participate in a wine tasting event set to follow the regular program.

"We are excited to offer this safe but fun event to celebrate YMOW and to support the vital services we provide for the homebound people of Ypsilanti," said Sally Ruterbusch, YMOW Development Manager. "We hope everyone who looks forward to our Holiday Home Tour will join us as we all spend a little extra time at home this year."

Cost for each household, including appetizers for two and access to the virtual event, is \$150. The wine tasting, which includes sample-sized bottles of five different wines from Lake Michigan Vintners, costs \$50.

Tickets can purchased at [ymow.org/holidays-at-home](https://ymow.org/holidays-at-home).

See auction items as they become available at [ymow.org/donate/storefront](https://ymow.org/donate/storefront).

You can help make this event a success by becoming a sponsor! Contact Sally Ruterbusch at [giving@ymow.org](mailto:giving@ymow.org) for more information.

YMOW welcomed a familiar face to the team in September, when former Board President Kelly Schwartz was chosen as the organization's first operations director.

As operations director Kelly oversees the day-to-day operations of YMOW, including handling and delivery of meals. Under her leadership YMOW stands to become an even larger and stronger resource for the homebound residents of the Ypsilanti area.



## GET YOUR 2020 holiday ornament

**And the 2020 YMOW ornament is ... Carry Dairy!**

Once home to the city's milk depot, the long-standing convenience store is known for the giant cow that sits atop its roof on Ecorse Road. Locals say the cow was placed there in the 1950s. Today, it remains an iconic image to all who have ever called Ypsi home. Own your own replica of this Ypsilanti landmark for \$30. Profits benefit YMOW.

Ornaments are available by appointment at Nelson Amos Studio. Call 734-484-2787 or 734-604-2088.

Cash or check only. This, all past ornaments and more can be purchased at [ymow.org/donate/storefront](https://ymow.org/donate/storefront). Shipping costs apply. Questions? Send an email to [giving@ymow.org](mailto:giving@ymow.org).

## Want to go paperless?

If you would prefer to receive *Food for Thought* via email, please send a note to [sandy@ymow.org](mailto:sandy@ymow.org)



# FOOD *for* THOUGHT

*Food for Thought* is published by Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels. For comments or questions, contact Sandy Bosch at [sandy@ymow.org](mailto:sandy@ymow.org), or 734-487-9669, Ext. 6

## Executive Director

Alison Foreman

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## Our Mission

To provide nutritious meals and social contact for the homebound elderly, ill and disabled in eastern Washtenaw County, enabling them to live healthier, safer and more independent lives.

## Our Vision:

A community where every senior feels nourished, valued and supported.

Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels  
1110 West Cross St.  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Non-profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Ypsilanti, MI  
Permit No. 720

## Upcoming events

### • October 1 – December 31

Dime at a Time: Bring your reusable bag when you shop at Whole Foods in Ann Arbor. YMOW will receive 10 cents for every bag used.

### • November 7 – 9

Watch your mailbox for the YMOW holiday appeal.

### • November 21 – 23

Watch your mailbox for a followup to the YMOW holiday appeal.

### • December 5

Holidays at Home virtual fundraiser for YMOW

[ymow.org/holidays-at-home](http://ymow.org/holidays-at-home)

Auction site:

[ymow.org/donate/storefront](http://ymow.org/donate/storefront)

### • December 12

Shop at Kendra Scott. 20% of purchases benefits YMOW. In store or <https://www.kendrascott.com>

### • February 27

Cornman Farms dinner and virtual cooking demonstration. Details coming soon!

## Help us continue to weather the storm

Over the next several months, those who depend on YMOW for food and support will continue to shelter in place not only against COVID-19, but from the cold winter ahead.

You can help make their winter a little warmer by contributing to YMOW in one or more of these ways!

- Give a cash donation! Every \$7 donation provides a day of meals for a homebound neighbor. Visit [ymow.org/donate](http://ymow.org/donate).
- Make greeting cards! We will deliver them throughout the holiday season.
- Donate gifts! Help us provide holiday gifts for every client again this year.
- Stock our personal care pantry! Donate items to help clients care for themselves and their homes.
- Shop at our ebay store. [ymow.org/donate/storefront](http://ymow.org/donate/storefront)
- Purchase something from our Amazon Wish List!
- Attend a virtual fundraiser, listed to the left. Visit <https://ymow.org/news-events/> for details.
- Volunteer to deliver meals or make friendly calls. Email [volunteer@ymow.org](mailto:volunteer@ymow.org) for more information.
- Be sure to visit [ymow.org/about/covid-19-response-and-support](http://ymow.org/about/covid-19-response-and-support) for updates on how YMOW is navigating the ongoing pandemic with help from people like you.

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