



Spring 2022

PALS program serves up “more than a meal” to furry friends

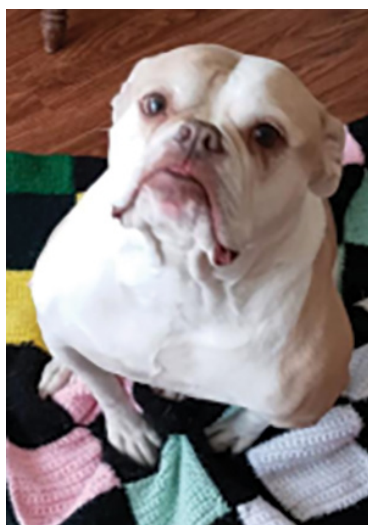
When Debora began receiving meals from Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels, she was relieved to know that nutritious food would be delivered right to her door. She was just as excited to learn that her American bulldog, Karma, could receive food, too.

YMOW’s Pets Assisting the Lives of Seniors (PALS) program offers food, cat litter, grooming and veterinary care for the furry friends of YMOW clients. In partnership with the Humane Society of Huron Valley, PALS provides care and transportation, which can be difficult if not impossible for a pet owner who no longer drives.

A requirement of the PALS program is that all pets are spayed or neutered. So before receiving meals, Karma needed a visit to the vet. That visit likely saved her life. Her initial examination revealed several conditions in need of attention, including heartworm, mammary tumors and several teeth that were cracked or broken.

“She’s doing much better,” Debora said of her beloved companion, who is now spayed and receiving treatment for heartworm. Karma also is receiving food, which leaves more money for Debora to care for herself as she continues cancer treatments.

Like so many seniors with pets, Debora said she was prepared to cut back on her own needs to care for Karma. A recent study by Meals on



Karma

Wheels America shows that nearly 30 percent of clients have sacrificed some form of personal care in order to provide for their pets.

In the past Debora has cashed in insurance policies to care for her beloved pets. But this time, she didn’t have to. “It has helped me financially, and it relieves stress,” she said of the support she receives from YMOW and HSHV.

Having her dog home with her and getting healthier each day makes everything a little better. She relies on Karma for companionship, affection and entertainment.

“She’s so comical,” Debora said. “She cracks me up.”

If laughter is the best medicine, Debora’s prescription is full, thanks to Karma and the care she receives through PALS.

Take a seat at our table

Want to use your time and talent to benefit your community? YMOW is in need of volunteers to serve on our Events and Fundraising Committee. This group will work closely with Development Manager Madison Montambault to brainstorm, organize and execute projects that will raise money to support our work and awareness in the community.

Want to learn more?

Email Madison at madison@ymow.org.

FOOD *for* THOUGHT

Carletta packages every meal with an extra helping of care

Carletta Richardson's job in the Michigan Medicine kitchen is about more than putting food on her table. It's about putting food on the tables of some of her most vulnerable senior neighbors.

"I care about every senior. I just care about other people," said Carletta.

A member of the Michigan Medicine team since 1988, Carletta has worked in nearly every part of the kitchen. When presented in 2016 with the opportunity to join the team responsible for preparing and packaging meals for Meals on Wheels, she took it.

"I didn't even have to hesitate," Carletta said.

In her current role, Carletta helps to portion and package meals for hundreds of seniors served by Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels. It means her days start early.

"I start work each day at 5 a.m.," she said.

Whether she's counting celery sticks or scooping up macaroni and cheese, Carletta said she prepares each and every tray and bag as if she's delivering it to her own family.



Carletta Richardson

"I really enjoy it because I'm doing it for other peoples' parents," she said. "I just want the people to be happy with what they're receiving."

Working with a great team makes what could be a tough job enjoyable, Carletta said.

"It's hard if you want to make it hard," she said. But Carletta said she chooses to find joy and purpose in everything she does, because she knows her work isn't just about her.

"It's all about the community, the people," she said.

Care on Wheels makes home more comfortable

Household tasks that once were simple can become difficult and even dangerous for older adults. Our Care on Wheels program, launched in 2021, is designed to keep seniors safe and their homes clean.



Through a partnership with Seniors Helping Seniors of Ypsilanti, we are currently providing 10 seniors with light housekeeping and have provided more than 115 hours of assistance as of February 11.

A hidden benefit of this service is the socialization it provides. Many clients report that they enjoy their visits from their Seniors Helping Seniors caregiver just as much as they enjoy their clean home.

Care on Wheels was funded through an innovations grant from United Way of Washtenaw County and has been awarded a planning grant from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation's Aging Justice program.

YMOW staff is working hard to secure funding to continue this important service, and to offer it to more of our homebound senior neighbors.



Want to go paperless?

If you would prefer to receive *Food for Thought* via email, please send a note to sandy@ymow.org

Upcoming Events

Enjoy 5 wines, provide 5 meals

Join us as we partner once again with Hickory Creek Winery for a virtual wine tasting event!

Winemaker extraordinaire Adam McBride will guide participants as we sample five varieties, all produced at the Hickory Creek Winery in Buchanan, Michigan.

When: 7 - 8:30 p.m. Thursday, April 28

Tickets: purchase tickets by 5 p.m. Thursday, April 14, at ymow.org.

Each kit includes:

- five wine samples
- palate-cleansing crackers
- a tasting glass
- details for how to prepare for your tasting
- a Zoom link to attend the event.

Delivery: Kits will be mailed to the participant's home. Someone 21 or older must sign for the delivery. Delivery is available to addresses in Michigan, Illinois and Indiana

Cost: \$55



Celebrate the '70s at Meals on Heels

Come enjoy a fantastically funky evening as we celebrate the '70s and raise money for Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels!

Meals on Heels is back Wednesday, May 18, with a fresh new look. Set for 6 p.m., this event will be held at the Ypsilanti Freighthouse, COVID permitting, or virtually if necessary.

Your evening will include:

- Craft beers by 734 Brewing Co., Ypsilanti
- Delicious hors d'oeuvres by Simply Scrumptious
- Live music by Funkwagon
- Dancing
- Cocktail demonstration by The Bar at 327 Braun Court
- Live macrame demonstration and take-home craft courtesy of Greenshields Macrame
- Prizes for best '70s outfit and shoes
- 1970s photo opps
- Silent auction

Tickets are \$125, available at ymow.org/moh.

Sponsorships available! Contact Madison at giving@ymow.org or visit ymow.org/moh.



Pi(e) & a Pint has a new home

Our annual Pi(e) Day celebration will be held at Corner Brewery, 720 Norris Street, Ypsilanti, from noon to 9 p.m. Monday, March 14.

Enjoy a slice of sweet or savory pie and a half liter of beer for \$10 and \$6 supports YMOW. Every liter of beer sold includes a \$6 donation to YMOW.

Terry Bakery, Achatz Pies, Ypsi Food Co-Op, Zingerman's and Maple Leaf Sugar Bakery of Milan will provide pies and other baked goods for sale.

Food for Thought is published by Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels. For comments or questions, contact Sandy Bosch at sandy@ymow.org, or 734-217-4578.

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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.

New drivers delivering more than a meal

Richele Taylor was new to the area and searching for her place in the community when she found Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels.

"I was called to it," said Richele, who started delivering meals in November 2021. Just weeks into her new job, Richele said she already has grown to know and care about the clients on her route. "I look forward to going to work," said Richele, who called her job at YMOW "the best job I've ever had."

"It's not just a food delivery service. It's a lifeline. It's about community. It's just about being there," she said.

Richele lives in Ann Arbor with her partner, Brent, and their blended family of four children. They have a German shepherd/Alaskan malamute named Penny and a cat named Batman.



Daniel Cichowlas' desire to serve his community was fulfilled the day he learned of YMOW's need for a client care associate.

"It's the highlight of my week," Dan said of the hours he spends delivering meals to YMOW clients.

Dan said he understands that food insecurity is a reality for many at one time or another, and he's proud to be part of the solution.

"It just feels good to be able to provide necessities," he said.

As the brother of YMOW Volunteer Manager Jessica Cichowlas, Dan was aware of the good work that YMOW was doing for the homebound residents of Ypsilanti.

Dan lives in Ypsilanti and works as a freelance video editor.

