



Social work team delivers solutions for YMOW clients

Anyone familiar with the work of Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels knows that we offer many services beyond meal delivery, and at the heart of those services is our social work team.

YMOW recently expanded the social work team to include two full-time social workers, as well as the organization's first certified community health worker. Together this trio identifies client needs and connects the client with the services required to continue living safely and independently at home.

Lauren Halter, LLMSW, said her own mother's experience, and the help of her local Meals on Wheels program, influenced her decision to enter social work, and ultimately, to join team YMOW.

"YMOW's mission really resonated with me personally," said Lauren, who joined YMOW in July.

Lauren said meeting the individual, holistic needs of each client is key to the work of the YMOW social work team.

Cat Fernando-Rizzo, LLMSW, said she knew YMOW was a perfect fit for her even before she learned of its need for a social worker. When a search of the website revealed an opening on the social work team, Cat said she knew she had found the job she was looking for.

"I just align with this mission so much," said Cat. "My goal is to use each client's strengths to keep them living as autonomously as possible for as long as they can."

The social work team's job starts with listening to a client and noting each client's needs.

"When we hear of a need, we then go and dig around for a resource that will work with a client's strengths," Cat said.

"The systems we interact with each day can be confusing and overwhelming, and

I'm happy to support our clients in navigating towards what they need to both be secure and to thrive," Lauren said.

The job of the YMOW social work team isn't only to help, but to empower. In finding a solution to any situation or problem, the client is always engaged in the process, often learning how to solve future problems on their own or with less intervention.

Community Health Worker Traci Bibins supports Cat and Lauren by making **(continued on page 3)**



YMOW's social work team, from left: Traci Bibins, Lauren Halter and Cat Fernando-Rizzo

Longtime volunteer honored with Cathy Day memorial award

Longtime YMOW volunteer Mary Fayad was honored at our Meals on Heels event Saturday, Sept. 24, with the Step Up to the Plate award. Created in honor and memory of former YMOW Board President and supporter Cathy Day, the award is given annually to someone who exemplifies Cathy's commitment to YMOW and can-do attitude.



Like Cathy, Mary has helped YMOW in countless ways, from serving as a tour guide during

our Holiday Home Tour to delivering meals to our homebound clients. While our volunteer pool dwindled during COVID, Mary continued her service, finding projects that allowed her to socially distance herself while also helping the work of YMOW.

In accepting her award, Mary said she often thinks of Cathy as she continues the work that she enjoyed for more than eight years at YMOW.

"As I prepare meals for delivery, organize the personal care pantry or knock on a client's door, I sometimes stop to think 'What would Cathy do?' The answer is, she would do whatever needed to be done, and she would do it with a smile," Mary said.

Read more about Mary and her award at ymow.org/step-up-to-the-plate.

Honored volunteer believes in helping her community

It isn't enough for Linda Mealing to live in her community. As a resident of Ypsilanti, she works to make it a better place for everyone nearly every day.

Linda is a member of First Baptist Church, the former president of the New West Willow Neighborhood Association, and has been a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity for several years. And every Wednesday, Linda delivers meals to clients of Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels.

"Helping people is just part of who I am," said Linda, YMOW's volunteer of the third quarter, 2022.

"I want to help out everywhere I can," she said.

YMOW Volunteer Manager Chris Brown said Linda deserves to be recognized not only for her work at YMOW, but throughout Ypsilanti.

Read more about Linda and her work at YMOW at ymow.org/linda.



New Volunteer Manager has long history helping community

Volunteers are key to the work of YMOW, and YMOW's new volunteer manager is dedicated to making the most of this valuable community resource.

Chris Brown joined YMOW in August after several years as a member of the local Habitat for Humanity team.

"Volunteers are critical to carrying out the mission of any non-profit. Without the time and effort that volunteers generously give, non-profits can't reach their full potential to serve the community," he said.

Chris said that while building a service-centered career, he wants to get to know the people that YMOW serves and the people who give their time to the organization.

Originally from Ohio, Chris moved to Ypsilanti in 2011 and grew to love the character and quirkiness of the city. He holds a master's degree in historic preservation from Eastern Michigan University. Chris now lives in Monroe with his partner and their cat. He loves cooking, gardening and Michigan history.



Help us spread some holiday cheer

Have you started your holiday shopping? Don't forget to include your homebound neighbors on your list! You can help us provide holiday gifts to each and every YMOW client this year. Just bring your unwrapped items to 1110 W. Cross St., Ypsilanti, by Friday, December 9.

Some of the most frequently requested items include:

- Blankets
- Shawls
- Walker bags
- Pet toys
- Non-slip socks, sizes medium and large
- Gloves, sizes medium and large
- Word search and puzzle books
- Notepads and pens/pencils
- Coloring books and crayons/colored pencils
- Handheld electronic games
- Hair accessories, combs and brushes
- Small purses or pouches

Gifts will be wrapped and distributed by YMOW staff and volunteers. Thank you for your generosity and for helping to make the season bright for our clients again this year.



2022 holiday ornaments on sale now!

Each year YMOW creates a one-of-a-kind ornament depicting a beloved Ypsilanti landmark. This year, that landmark is the Peninsular Paper Company!

Ornaments are available at Nelson Amos Studio, 23 E. Cross St., and via YMOW's **online store!**

<https://www.ebay.com/itm/255663004351>

Each ornament costs \$30 and provides food and support for the homebound neighbors served by YMOW. Shipping is available, along with all past ornaments.



Winter volunteers needed

Demand for home-delivered meals tends to increase as the weather grows colder. Unfortunately, this also is the time when volunteer help is most difficult to find.

Please consider helping by becoming a YMOW volunteer! Many options are available. Contact Volunteer Manager Chris Brown at (734) 217-4450 or chris@ymow.org for more information.

You can also visit ymow.org/volunteer to learn more.



YMOW social work team (continued from page 1)

home visits and connecting clients to resources available at YMOW and throughout the community. A former Client Care Associate at YMOW, Traci earned her CHW certification from Henry Ford Community College in August.

YMOW President and CEO Alison Foreman said the expansion of the social work team and the promotion of Traci from CCA to CHW are big steps toward providing homebound neighbors in Ypsilanti with the wraparound support they need to age in place.



Want to go paperless?

If you would prefer to receive *Food for Thought* via email, please send a note to 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, or 734-217-4578.

President/CEO

Alison Foreman

Operations Director

Kelly Schwartz

YMOW Board of Directors

Paula Dykstra,

Board Chair - President

Dieter Otto, *Vice President*

Christine Laing, *Treasurer*

Lou Maskill, *Secretary*

Knox Cameron Brent Kolb, DDS

Dan Carleton Tim Kowaleski

Scott Godbold Cyndi Shepard

Susan Gregory Tara Truax

Adam Karibian

Our fall appeal is on the way

Fall is upon us, and that means it's time once again for our annual direct mail fundraising campaign. Please watch your mailboxes in the coming weeks for your chance to support Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels as we prepare to support our homebound neighbors through the coldest months. Be sure to include a personalized message on the enclosed placemat, which will be delivered to our clients with their holiday meals!



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

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

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.

ElliQ helps YMOW clients feel less alone

Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels (YMOW) has a new partner in our mission to support our homebound neighbors, and her name is ElliQ.

ElliQ is a proactive companion robot created by Intuition Robotics to help older adults remain active, engaged, and independent. Designed for seniors who spend most of their day alone, ElliQ fights the damaging effects of loneliness and empowers seniors to take control of their physical, mental, and social health, all from the safety and comfort of home.

ElliQ assists with various activities, including physical and mental exercises, medication reminders, and wellness goal setting and tracking. ElliQ can engage in daily conversation, tell jokes, provide news updates, send and receive text and video messages, and much more.

YMOW has secured funding from Toyota Motor North America and Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation to provide ElliQ devices and internet service to as many as 25 YMOW clients. The first three units are already at work enhancing the lives of our homebound neighbors.

Read more about ElliQ at ymow.org/elliq.

