



Summer 2023

YMOW makes Mondays the best day of the week

Caregiver explains how husband's meals make her life better

A loaf of bread doesn't seem like much to most of us. But it can change the whole day for Maureen.

"It's hard to get to the grocery store," said Maureen, who is the primary caregiver for her husband, Carl. Carl, 80, has Parkinson's disease and relies on his wife for some of his basic needs, like food. But at 78, Maureen has her own medical issues and limitations. A leg issue makes it difficult to stand, and once-simple tasks like stopping at the store for bread now are far more taxing.

Maureen said Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels makes everything easier for her and Carl.

"I especially like Mondays," said Maureen. That's when donations from Food Gatherers are delivered along with Carl's meals. Bread is often part of the delivery, along with fresh fruits and vegetables.

"I get to make a sandwich because they brought bread," Maureen said.

Maureen isn't a Meals on Wheels client, but she said she reaps many benefits from Carl's deliveries. An outgoing person who enjoys people, spending so much time at home can be hard for Maureen. Visits from YMOW staff and volunteers give her the chance to socialize just a bit.

"I've never met a bad person who brings the meals," she said.

Maureen also enjoys peace of mind knowing that Carl always has something to eat.

"When we go to the fridge, there's always something there," she said. "It's really wonderful."

Hear more from Maureen at ymow.org/news-events/videos.

YMOW client, Carl and his wife Maureen



Volunteering is a team effort for the Englebergs

As is the case for most recent retirees, Suzy and Cary Engleberg's decision to end their work careers came with the gift of more time – a gift that they are eager to share with their community and with Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels.

Each Wednesday the couple arrives at YMOW to load up meals for delivery to the Lynden Park apartments, where they bring food to about a dozen Meals on Wheels clients. Suzy said she and Cary work as a team to ensure each person gets the meals they are expecting, as well as the care and attention they need.

“Four eyes are better than two eyes,” Suzy said.

“I always said when I retired I would have more time to do volunteer work,” Suzy said. That time came during the pandemic, when she made the decision to join Cary's post-career lifestyle. But the couple found few opportunities to work together, as many organizations remained under restrictions due to COVID-19.

YMOW, however, welcomed their help.

Suzy said it didn't take long for her to realize that the job of YMOW volunteer isn't just about dropping off a meal.

“Once you get to know the people, it's wonderful to come back to the same people,” she said. “Being a friend is wonderful.”

And like any good friend, Suzy said she and Cary listen to their clients' needs, relaying them back to the YMOW staff.

Cary said the people he and Suzy have met don't fit into a single category.

“It's a broad swath of people, with various needs,” he said, and rich histories and stories to tell.

“We enjoy it very much,” Cary said. But as much as he enjoys getting to know the clients at Lynden Park, Cary said he also likes knowing that every Wednesday, he'll spend a few hours working with his wife of 45 years.

“The people on our route just love seeing us together,” Suzy said.

Chris Brown, supportive services manager at YMOW, said there's no doubt Suzy and Cary are deserving of the honor of YMOW volunteers of the quarter.

“Suzy and Cary really take the time to get to know the people they serve, and genuinely care about our clients,” Chris said. “They truly understand what we mean when we say we deliver ‘more than a meal.’ ”



YMOW volunteers Cary and Suzy Engleberg

Want to be like Suzy and Cary?

YMOW is in need of more people like the Englebergs! All it takes is an hour or two to provide meals and a friendly visit to your homebound neighbors.

Volunteers can ride along with one of our client care associates or use their own vehicle. Volunteers also are needed to help prepare meals for delivery.

Visit ymow.org/volunteer to learn more, or send an email to Supportive Services Manager Chris Brown at chris@ymow.org.

Return to daily delivery increases need for support, volunteers

After more than 3 years, Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels will return to daily meal delivery on Monday, September 11.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, YMOW clients received meals every Monday through Saturday, with a Sunday meal included in the weekend delivery. That all changed in March 2020, when a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule was adopted to limit exposure between clients and YMOW staff and volunteers.

On September 11, clients will once again have access to deliveries Monday through Friday. Each delivery will include a hot meal to enjoy right away, and a chilled meal for later in the day. Weekend delivery is expected to resume in early 2024.

“We are excited to once again offer our clients a hot, fresh meal every day. But perhaps even more, we are happy to provide them with daily visits that both relieve isolation and serve as a safety and wellness check,” said Alison Foreman, YMOW president and CEO.

What it means for YMOW:

- Our need for meal prep and delivery volunteers will double.
- We will need to hire additional Client Care Associates.
- Our labor, fuel and food costs will increase.
- We will need a large-format delivery van for pickups and drop-offs at the Michigan Medicine kitchen.
- Additional coolers, ice packs and heating packs will be purchased using American Rescue Plan Act funds.

What it means for our homebound neighbors:

- A wider variety of meals.
- Fresher food.
- More wellness checks.
- More friendly visits and opportunities to interact with volunteers and staff.



What it means for our community, volunteers, and donors:

- Michigan Medicine’s Patient Food & Nutrition Services will increase their efforts to support Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels. We’re grateful for their support.
- Volunteers will be needed Monday through Friday to prepare and deliver meals.
- Increased costs mean an increased need for the support of our community, volunteers and donors.
- We project a 20% increase in demand for meals in 2024, and we expect demand to continue to grow by double digits each year at least through 2030.



Want a job that makes a difference?

As a YMOW Client Care Associate, you will make a difference in someone’s life every time you come to work. We are searching for compassionate, reliable people to provide meal delivery and wellness checks for seniors throughout the Ypsilanti area.

CCAs are key members of the YMOW team and in our clients’ lives. As a member of the YMOW team you will receive a competitive hourly wage, matching 403B contributions, short- and long-term disability coverage, access to dental and vision benefits, paid holidays and a phone stipend.

A clean driving record, valid license and clear background check are required. Visit ymow.org/news-events/job-openings for a full job description.

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.

Happy Birthday to Us!

Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels is celebrating a big birthday in 2024! January 14, 2024, will mark 50 years since YMOW delivered its first meals to homebound neighbors.

Plans are in the works to celebrate this remarkable milestone with a community event in May, and we hope you will join us! Stand by for details and opportunities to get involved.



Help us stay top-rated!

YMOW is proud to be on the Great Nonprofits list of top-rated organizations, but we need your help to stay that way! To retain our status for the next year, we need 10 people to leave 4+ star reviews of our organization by October 31.

Writing a review takes just a few minutes! Just visit <https://greatnonprofits.org/reviews/write/ypsilanti-meals-on-wheels> and tell the world why YMOW is a non-profit worth supporting.

We thank you in advance!



Save the Date

Join YMOW at the Riverside Arts Center from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Saturday November 11 for Wonderland Breakfast. This new fundraiser includes a pancake breakfast and memorable characters, from Wonderland. Stay for carnival games and an animal experience that will be fun for the whole family.



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