

Meal options meet client's changing needs

59-year-old David has encountered one health challenge after another over the past couple of decades. For the last several years, YMOW's Under-60 program has provided David with proper nutrition to battle more than a dozen health conditions. But recently, David feared he would have to give up his meals from YMOW.

Years ago, David received chemotherapy in his battle against Hodgkin's lymphoma. Recently, the effects of those drugs destroyed David's teeth, leaving him in need of dentures.

"I thought I was going to have to put Meals on Wheels on hold until I got my teeth," said David, who no longer could chew.

Instead, David found a new source of nutrition in YMOW's pureed and mechanical meals - a new option that began in 2023 for clients who have trouble chewing or swallowing.

"Last night I had spaghetti with meat sauce, creamed spinach, and broccoli, all without the need to chew," David said.

Along with the relief of learning that YMOW could meet his changing needs, David said he felt financial relief. "That's five dinners that I don't have to pay for," said David, whose grocery budget is just \$168 per month.



"For more than three years YMOW has met my changing needs," David said. And when he turns 60 this September, he knows YMOW will still be there to provide him with nutrition and support.



Care on Wheels

2023 saw the official launch of Care on Wheels, a program designed to help seniors live safely at home while supporting their family caregivers.

Care on Wheels combines the best parts of Johns Hopkins School of Nursing's CAPABLE program (Community Aging in Place - Advancing Better Living for Elders) with the unique needs of the Ypsilanti community and respite for caregivers. The burden of need can create strain on the relationship between an aging adult and their caregiver, many of whom are balancing jobs, children and grandchildren with caring for their aging loved one. Care on Wheels is intended to decrease caregiver stress while helping the client age safely in place.

We provided Care on Wheels interventions to 36 clients during 2023, including 10 intensive interventions that included occupational therapy consultation, nursing education, case management, home modification services, adaptive equipment, and chore and laundry support. The average length of a Care on Wheels intervention was 6 months, with some clients requiring shorter or longer periods of support.

Care on Wheels clients benefited from 234 hours of occupational therapist consultation, 67 hours of nursing education, and 171 hours of case management support in 2023, all provided by YMOW's clinical staff.

Diane and her daughters-in-law, Laura and Verdie, are among those who benefited from Care on Wheels in 2023. Laura said Diane gained confidence through Care on Wheels to do more things on her own, in turn decreasing the time required of family. Care on Wheels also provided Diane with assistive devices to enhance her independence.

"Our whole family feels blessed. Thank you for enhancing older people's lives," one of Diane's daughters-in-law said.

Program evaluation using the Quality Aging Matrix showed improvement in at least one area of concern

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2023: a year of new beginnings & eyes on the future

When Alison Foreman became the first full-time executive director of Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels in 2013, she was hired not only to lead the program, but to save it. Over the next decade Alison would nurture a struggling organization into a healthy, vibrant and trusted part of the Ypsilanti community.

Soon after celebrating her 10-year anniversary, Alison announced her plan to leave YMOW. She joined Mobile Meals of Toledo as President/CEO in late 2023. The fact that YMOW and the Ypsilanti community are stronger because of the 10 years Alison spent here is undeniable. She left us with a thriving organization that is respected as a trusted resource for older adults. We thank Alison for her leadership, her vision, and her dedication to YMOW and Ypsilanti.

2023 also was marked with significant steps back to our pre-COVID definition of normal. After more than three years of three-day delivery, we saw the return of five-day meal delivery in September. Clients once again have access to Monday-Friday delivery, expanding the variety of meals available.

Through an agreement with Mobile Meals of Toledo, YMOW clients also gained access to pureed and mechanical meals in 2023 (See story on page 1). Those with dental issues or trouble swallowing, or who have problems cutting food, now can request meals that better suit their physical needs.

YMOW's Care on Wheels program helps older adults live more safely in their homes while providing support and respite for family caregivers like Laura. You can read more about her family's experience with Care on Wheels on page 1.

2023 included a look to the future, as well, as we searched for our next leader and planned for the growing needs of our community. In 2024, more Americans will turn 65 than in any other year in history. By 2030, 24% of Michiganders will be 60 and older. By 2040, the number of Washtenaw County seniors living in poverty is expected to more than double. We see the needs on the horizon and began preparing for them in 2023, by carefully designing the "Give More to Feed



Dieter Otto
Board Chair/President

More" project. Launched on Jan. 1, 2024, "Give More to Feed More" aims to raise enough capital to fund an additional one million meals over the next five years.

Leading us in this charge is YMOW's new President/CEO Barbara Niess-May. She has over 30 years of experience building strong resources to support the Ypsilanti community.

Prior to joining YMOW, Barbara served as Development Manager at The King Center and as Executive Director of SafeHouse Center in Ann Arbor. Barbara transformed the organization into a progressive service provider supporting survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence.

I, the rest of the YMOW board, and the YMOW staff are confident in Barbara's ability to lead us as we enter YMOW's second half century and prepare to meet the needs ahead.

Joining me on the YMOW Executive Committee are vice president Tara Truax of the Trinity Health IHA Medical Group, Treasurer Steve Smith of Vibe Credit Union in Novi, and Secretary Scott Godbold of Audigent.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dieter Otto".

Care on Wheels

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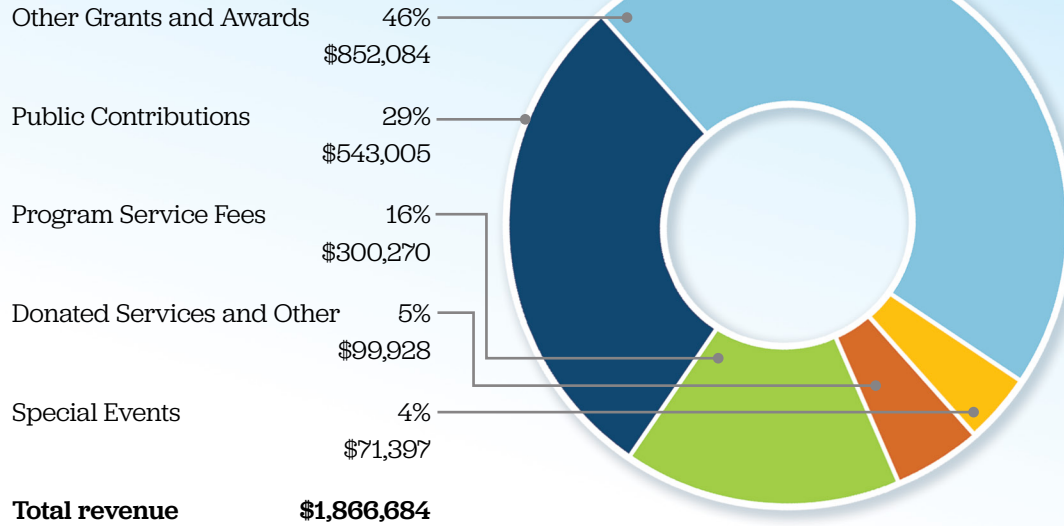
for all Care on Wheels clients. Two-thirds saw an improvement of 40% or more in their safety. The largest improvement was an overall increase from a score of 2.5 to 4.5 out of 5 for physical health. Clients also showed significant improvements overall in daily functioning, social connectedness, and access to needed services.

We are grateful to Exhale - The Family Caregiver Initiative for its financial support of Care on Wheels. Since 2019, the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, Health Foundation for Western and Central New York, and the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation have partnered to support family caregivers throughout western New York and Washtenaw County through innovative solutions such as Care on Wheels.

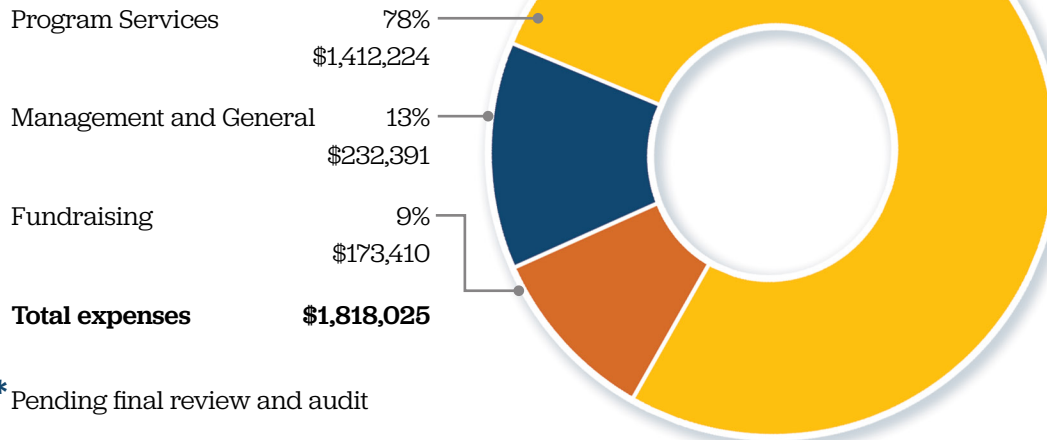
Financial summary

2023 by the numbers

2023 Revenue*



2023 Expenses*



* Pending final review and audit

234
hours of occupational therapy provided

3,643
pantry requests fulfilled

125,152
meals delivered*

36
clients empowered through Care on Wheels

100%
Care on Wheels clients who reported improvement in at least one area of concern

171
hours of case management support

80
pets supported
35% increase over 2022

463
neighbors served
5.2% increase

9,500
pounds of pet food provided
22% increase

* Slight decrease due to mandated switch from 3-day delivery (12 meals per week) to 5-day (10 meals per week)

YMOW sponsors

Board of Directors

Thank you to our \$5,000+ Supporters

- Meals on Wheels America
- DTE Energy Services
- Charter Township of Ypsilanti
- Helen McCalla Trust Foundation
- Charter Township of Superior
- Lake Trust
- Bonisteel Foundation
- Old National Bank
- Martin Family Foundation

Thank you to our \$25,000+ Funders



TOYOTA

As of March 2024:

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Kelly Schwartz - *Director of Operations*
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