

Meals of Joy Platter Chatter

A Newsletter for Supporters of Meals of Joy Home-Delivery Meal Service

SPRING 2023



FOUNDER'S LETTER

Serving More Meals than Ever

Larry Cervarich, *Founder/Public Relations*

Since its inception, the goal of Meals of Joy has been to provide a simple method for seniors to obtain nutritious meals. Our clients report that our meal deliveries make up at least half of their meals for the day.

What makes our program unique? Not only do we provide delicious food, but Meals of Joy also helps our clients from having to seek out safety checks or visits from social services to ensure their well-being. In addition to providing freshly prepared meals, our trained staff and volunteers perform wellness checks while visiting our clients. This is a vital asset that allows our clients to feel more independent — and they look forward to visiting with our volunteers. Meals of Joy also assists individuals recovering from illness or surgery, and allows homebound seniors to reside longer in the comfort of their home.

Also, while they may enjoy preparing a special meal from time to time, as seniors get older cooking can become a burden. Those living alone generally don't derive the same satisfaction from making a meal as when cooking with family or friends. Meals of Joy can help them maintain a healthy diet without having to cook.

Thanks to our many donors we have been able to provide nutritious meals to our seniors at little to no cost for those that qualify. Meals of Joy is funded through a variety of sources including grants, local community events, and individual tax credit donations. More than 75% of our annual budget comes from community contributions. Your donations continue to support our mission to keep our seniors safe and living independently.

We are proud to serve within nine local cities in the West Valley. If we do not deliver in your area, we would be happy to place your information on our list for future service.

Questions? Call (623) 594-9588. Our staff will be happy to assist you.

Board of Directors

FOUNDER:

Larry Cervarich

INTERIM PRESIDENT:

Jim Frey

VICE PRESIDENT:

Armin Iranshahr

SECRETARY:

Jaime Ryum

TREASURER:

John Pugsley

MEMBERS:

Jeannette Barsky

Brian Day

Jim Frey

Ken Kelley

Bill Kinney

Cynthia Knaut

Mike McNally

Serving most
West Valley cities,
Monday-Friday.

For information or to begin meal service:

(623) 594-9588

info@mealsofjoy.org

Online application for meal service:

mealsofjoy.org

Chef's Corner

Chef Jack, *Meals of Joy*



Inflation has impacted us all! When food shopping, it may mean buying less red meat and more chicken or going to a farmers market for produce instead of the grocery store. Sometimes, it means using coupons and comparison shopping. The kitchen staff does this by reviewing weekly food ads from food and supply stores as well as online. If you are over 55, many of the stores where you shop offer senior discounts of 10-15% during the first week of the month — often the first Wednesday. Reward or loyalty cards can not only save 1-5% off your purchases, but also offer savings on fuel purchases or exchange rewards for free food and or products offered by the various programs.

In the last edition of *Platter Chatter*, I wrote about how my staff shops an average of 4-8 locations for food supplies in our preparation of Meals of Joy meals. This happens for many reasons. One, is to save money and keep our pricing to our senior clients down. We save anywhere from 10-25% off food costs by doing this. Secondly, it enables us to inspect the produce, meat, and fruit we purchase to insure freshness and quality. And, we shop for the next week while we are still the current week to ensure availability of food products and supplies for the next week. Shopping for food supplies and products can be difficult due to ever-changing daily customer orders, but that is why Meals of Joy is unique — we want to please our clients and their palates!

RECIPE TIME! *A quick and easy recipe to make on the days between Meals of Joy meal deliveries:*

SHRIMP AND VEGETABLE PASTA

with Marinara Sauce or Garlic Olive Oil

Heat a pat of butter and one tablespoon olive oil in a saucepan. Add chopped fresh herbs, garlic and a handful of shrimp. Toss and cook until shrimp is done. Place on a bed of cooked pasta and top with chopped and sautéed tomatoes, green peppers, peas, carrots, and mushrooms. For added flavor, stir in marinara sauce, or for a lighter dish, add olive oil mixed with garlic.

Preparation time: approximately 15 minutes.

Bon Appetite! —Chef Jack

Meals of Joy Announces New Interim President



Jim Frey was elected interim MOJ President at the February board of directors meeting. Frey has been a volunteer driver with MOJ

for almost two years and has been on the board for over a year. When asked why he serves as both a volunteer driver and board member, he said, "I can remember both of my parents doing a number of volunteer activities when I was in high school, and I think that has rubbed off on me. It's heartwarming to see the joy in the clients when I deliver their meals."

Current Meals of Joy President Ken Kelley is stepping down as he and his family have relocated to Arkansas. Ken has been an active member of the MOJ board for the past six years.

Meals of Joy Founder Larry Cervarich said, "It has been my pleasure to work with Ken Kelley over the past 14 years. My first acquaintance with Ken was through the local Rotary Club. In time, I had the opportunity to develop the charity Homeless Youth Connection and invited Ken to become a board member there. Ken remained on that board until Meals of Joy became a reality. Obviously, I was delighted that Ken joined the Meals of Joy board of directors and later became its president. Our best wishes to Ken and his family."

Please join us in welcoming Jim to the MOJ of family. We look forward to his leadership.

Volunteer News: Become a Much-Needed Volunteer Driver

Mark your calendar for our next orientation session!

As our meal deliveries have been expanding in the West Valley the need for additional volunteers has increased as well. Our dedicated volunteers are what enable us to reach out to, and serve, the senior community. In June of 2022, we introduced our first Volunteer Orientation program. Since then, we have trained 49 new volunteers with an almost 90% retention rate.

Our training sessions are held twice each month. During the 2-hour orientation at the Meals of Joy office, new volunteers are given all the necessary tools and information to make their volunteer meal delivery experience successful and gratifying. Bringing a delicious warm meal along with a friendly visit is the mission of Meals of Joy.

The only things a volunteer must have are a vehicle, a GPS or phone to locate addresses, and an openhearted smile. All our volunteers can pick the day or days each month to volunteer (no minimum) and even choose the routes they want to deliver. Our volunteers include year-

round residents, snowbirds, and some who do it for 'volunteer time-off' from their job. Some are occasional, but all want to give back to their community — and the seniors who so critically need this essential nutrition and the wellness checks that are so important for continued at-home living.

The next orientation will be held at the Meals of Joy offices on May 18 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided. Please contact Pam at (623) 594-9588 or pam@mealsofjoy.org for more information. You can also fill out a volunteer application form on our website at mealsofjoy.org under the SUPPORT tab.

April was National Volunteer Month and April 16-22 National Volunteer Week.

"We celebrate the selfless individuals around our country who channel their civic virtues through volunteerism... devoted to a cause bigger than themselves... Volunteers help drive our country's progress, and day in and day out, they make extraordinary sacrifices to expand promise and possibility."

—BARACK OBAMA, PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION, 2016

Our sincere thanks to all current, past, and future volunteers.



Meals of Joy participated in the Surprise Care + Share Expo March 4 at the Surprise Aquatic Center parking lot. We were able to connect with many Surprise residents about our program. Brenda Ahrens of Surprise won our St. Patrick's Day themed door prize! Presenting it to her at our Meals of Joy office were Larry Cervarich and Pam Christy.



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Meals of Joy Kicks Off Senior Social Luncheons

Recently, Meals of Joy began a new luncheon program to give seniors the opportunity to gather for lunch and socialize with others.

MOJ Senior Social Luncheons will allow seniors who live alone to be able to meet friends within their church. This can create an atmosphere of friendliness and comfort within their familiar surroundings.

The first Senior Social Luncheon was a great success! More than 70 seniors enjoyed a freshly prepared lunch, and entertainment added to a joyful atmosphere. Thank you to all seniors who attended, and to Desert Palms Presbyterian Church and Deli Quench Catering for supporting this program. We are also grateful to Pastor Jim Crelin for believing in this mission.

Our hope is that local churches will join this effort and reach out to seniors who live alone within their parish. There is a great need to create a partnership within our church community.

