Strategic Plan

2016 – 2020

History of Meals on Wheels

From the first "Meals On Wheels" delivered in canteens to British servicemen during World War II; to the first formal Meals On Wheels program in America, serving Philadelphia in the 1950s; to today’s vast network of local home-delivered and congregate meal programs that serve millions of seniors and others across the country, Meals On Wheels has been a long-standing, highly-regarded organization; dedicated to providing nutritious meals to those who otherwise might have to do without.

Meals on Wheels for Buffalo and Erie County was founded in 1969; on April 9 of that year, the agency served its first meals to 25 residents of the west side of Buffalo.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the program grew by leaps and bounds. Between 1980 and 1999, the number of service routes nearly tripled (61 in 1980, 171 in 1999), the daily number of recipients being served doubled (from 691 to 1,456) and the annual number of meals delivered grew from 353,000 to 803,000.

The agency relocated to a new facility, opening its new service center at 100 James E Casey Drive in 2000. Just three years later, the organization hit an all-time high in meals served; preparing and delivering more than 911,000 meals along 199 different service routes. In August 2006, the organization changed its name to Meals on Wheels for Western New York, Inc., and in December of that year, the agency prepared and served its 20 millionth meal.

In 2008, Meals on Wheels for WNY delivered 865,000 meals to nearly 3,400 homebound elderly and special needs clients through the service of 2,000 volunteers. Between 2006 and 2008, the agency saw an increase in clients and meals served; delivering an additional 90,000 meals throughout WNY.
A State-Of-The-Art Commissary was built in 2009. The commissary is:

- A $7.5 million facility, containing $2 million of modern cooking equipment, including cook/chill technology; to increase production capabilities, improve quality and reduce costs.
- An efficient centralized meal production facility providing meals for Meals on Wheels, Erie County Stay Fit Dining Program and other nutrition programs in WNY.
- A disaster-ready facility that has the ability to prepare meals for emergency personnel, shelters and warming centers, working in partnership with the American Red Cross and the Food Bank of WNY, as well as its food vendor.
- A training facility for area college students enrolled in nutrition/hospitality/food service programs.
- A multifunctional center, containing a public space (Community Center) for educational seminars, community meetings and special events.

**Current Program**

Our agency acts as a valuable lifeline between homebound hungry and the community around them. Our staff often links individuals to other programs that may be of benefit to them, while our volunteers are trained to monitor recipients, acting as another set of watchful eyes for families.

*The Meals on Wheels Organization Currently:*

**Home delivered meals:**

- Delivers about 903,000 home delivered meals annually; about 3,600 home delivered meals on a daily basis. Serves more than 3,600 homebound elderly and disabled persons each year through 25 home delivered satellite sites across Erie County.
- Provide service to nearly 1,000 square miles, all of Erie County except Alden, Amherst and Ken-Ton.
- Has an active volunteer force of approximately 1,500.
- Saves taxpayers thousands of dollars; the average nursing home costs $100,000 annually, while providing two meals a day to a homebound senior or disabled neighbor costs $2,900 annually.
- Delivers our meal recipients a hot midday meal and a cold supper that provide fully 2/3 of each individual's daily nutritional requirements. Each meal is carefully designed by our staff of registered dieticians to provide a product that is not only healthy, but is appetizing. To meet
the needs of those we serve; a wide variety of special diets are accommodated, including calorie controlled, diabetic, ground, renal, and bland.

- Enable our participants to maintain the highest level of independence possible.
- Offer weekend meals, emergency food kits, nutritional supplements and Ani-meals to those in need.
- Serve all seniors and disabled individuals (18 and older) in need of a nutritious meal.
- The home delivered clients include those served under the traditional program, private pay and 12 different managed long term care contracts.

While Meals on Wheels delivers warm food, many overlook the importance of the warm smile that accompanies each meal; the smile that inevitably lights up the face of each meal recipient when they look out their window to see a Meals-on-Wheels volunteer approaching. For many of the homebound people we serve; human contact, conversations, and laughs may be all too infrequent. In fact, some program participants do not see another human being other than a MOW volunteer all week. The importance of the daily visit is, quite simply, immeasurable.

**Congregate Meals:**

- Delivers about 260,000 meals annually, an average of 1,000 meals daily. Serves approximately 6,000 mobile seniors (60 and older and their spouses) each year.
- Provide one meal per day at 45 mobile dining sites throughout 1,300 square miles of Erie County. These sites are located in senior centers, community centers, churches and fire halls.
- According to the Erie County Department of Senior Services 58% of congregate diners self report that this is their only meal of the day. For another 20%, it is one of only two meals each day.

**Private Contracts:**

- In addition to the 12 managed long term contracts referenced above in the home delivered program, the agency also holds two service contracts. These are with People Inc. and Evergreen Health Services.
- The Foundation holds one service contract with Buffalo City Mission, serving the City Mission and Cornerstone.
In addition, our food vendor Bateman Community Living holds three additional contacts, two in PA and one in Livingston County, New York.

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to enrich lives; and to promote independent healthy living by offering nutritious food and a friendly visit.

Vision, Values and Core Beliefs:

Vision

Our vision is that every member of our community will receive a meal that meets their nutritional needs.

Values

Service- Our goal is to help homebound members of our community and their families, primarily through the goodwill of volunteers.

Compassion- We care for the physical, emotional and social well-being of our program participants.

Teamwork- We support a one team-one way environment.

Responsibility- We pursue excellence and efficiency in all we do.

Core Beliefs

We believe our services enhance the quality of life of our participants, and strengthens families and communities.

Challenges Facing the Organization

Agency

➢ The cost of our services has increased, as a result of rising supply, production and distribution costs.

➢ There has been a decline in our average client contribution; however, we continue to serve homebound individuals regardless of their ability to pay for meals.
Challenges in finding volunteers, specifically in the City of Buffalo and the most rural sections of the Southtowns.

Food service vendor struggles with consistency and on time delivery due to staff turnover and call offs.

**Foundation**

- Debt on the Commissary
- Still working to maximize the true potential of the commissary
- Cook/Chill not yet fully executed
- Competitiveness for philanthropic dollars

**The Future**

This is a critical time for the future of Meals on Wheels. Demographics indicate that the demand for meal-delivery services will significantly increase as the elderly population continues to grow.

In 2050, the population aged 65 and over is projected to be 83.7 million, almost double its estimated population of 43.1 million in 2012. The baby boomers are largely responsible for this increase in the older population, as they began turning 65 in 2011. By 2050, the surviving baby boomers will be over the age of 85. In 2012, 62.8 percent of the U.S. population was aged 18 to 64. By 2030, as the baby boomers age, the proportions in these working ages will drop to 57.3 percent.

Senior hunger in America is a monumental problem. Today, there are more than 9.3 million seniors in the United States facing the threat of hunger, 14.8 million who are isolated and 17.6 million who have difficulty paying for basic living needs. Looking at the numbers and the decrease in government funding, it is easy to become discouraged. Looking at the people whom the numbers represent, however, impels us to action and helps develop our plan.

Senior Statistics in Erie County:

- Erie County's population is aging - almost 1 of every 4 residents is 60+.
- 85+ is the fastest growing segment of the population.
- Despite the vitality of most older adults, 50% of all persons age 75+ have one or more disabilities

The core mission of Meals on Wheels remains the same; we strive to allow our clients the highest level of independence for the longest time by providing proper nutrition and friendly contact. Our belief is
that by doing so, our clients will experience a higher quality of life, and our community benefits by reducing the demand on institutional living.

Meals on Wheels for WNY expects’ to become known as one of the leading charitable organizations in Western NY, as well as a model for Meals on Wheels across the USA. Meals on Wheels will be a desired organization to work for, and the benefit we provide to the community will cause people to want to donate their time, their resources and their money to further our cause. Meals on Wheels will become financially diversified and significantly reduce its reliance on public monies for the programs we provide. Our employees are and will continue to be empowered to be creative and their drive for our cause will be infectious with everyone they contact.
Meals on Wheels Strategic Plan Priorities

1. **Financial Success and Sustainability:**
   Continue to grow our reputation and our financial stability to ensure long term sustainability.

2. **Mission Consistency:**
   Develop programming and human resources to ensure long term provision of core mission services.

3. **Community Awareness and Funding the Future:**
   Build on the established foundation of brand and community awareness to further leverage organizational assets to serve the Western New York community.
1. Financial Success and Sustainability

To survive in the future and to meet the growing needs of our recipients and the organization, Meals on Wheels must continue to grow our reputation and our financial stability to ensure long term sustainability.

Agency:

- Work with food vendor toward the goal of becoming a USDA facility
  - Add second/third shift
- Better utilize cook/chill technology
- Continue to improve and strengthen County relationship – 1.) Build foundation for successful 2017 and 2018 contract renewals, 2.) Prepare for successful RFP submission in 2018. 3.) Work to ensure that in all future contracts reimbursement rates are as high as the funding streams will allow, HDM and congregate meal counts are being accurately forecasted and budgeted for and that client contribution goals reflect actual prior year-end results.
- Increase alternatively funded programs -1.) Continue to expand fee-for-service program, Meals Express. 2.) Launch fully funded private pay gourmet meal program. 3.) Ensure future contracting with all appropriate Managed Long Term Care Programs. 4.) Work with other non-profits, for-profits and food vendor affiliates to secure additional new business opportunities.
- Collaborate with other Meals On Wheels programs
- Work toward goal of 100% volunteer driven meal delivery
- Continue to leverage federal, state and local relationships to stay abreast of and be prepared for regulatory changes
- Work in partnership with the Foundation to secure requisite large commissary equipment, small wares, ovens and other food production and delivery equipment needs.
- Work toward goal of next stage contract needs with Bateman to include performance based contract provisions.
Foundation:

- **Continue to increase fundraising results** - 1.) Implementation of planned and major gifts program 2.) Growth of Hunger and Hope Program and Plate Expectations 3.) New and expanded third-party fundraising partnerships.

- **Decrease debt** – Eliminate the $2.65 M debt on the Commissary and manage Bank of America balloon payments by 2019.

- **Establish a sinking fund** to provide for physical facility, new and replacement equipment needs, facility utilization improvements, etc.

- **Develop and launch capital campaign** for commissary expansion and augmentation needs as driven by transition to USDA facility

- **Optimize commissary capacity** – 1.) Continue to grow use of Community Center. 2.) Increase freezer/cooler/dry good storage capacity

- **Investigate non-profit status** as it relates to executing strategic plan

- **Work in partnership with the Agency** to secure funding for requisite large commissary equipment, small wares, ovens and other food production and delivery equipment needs.

- **Work in tandem with Agency and food vendor** to ensure that all new equipment and physical plant expansions are funded with new dollars

- **Work toward goal of next stage contract needs with Bateman** to potentially include equipment lease vs. equipment purchased, etc.
2. Mission Consistency

Develop programming and human resources to ensure long term provision of core mission services.

Agency:

Increase number of clients and client satisfaction

1) Maximize our use of technology to enhance customer service (i.e. robo call etc.)
2) Work with food vendor to reduce/eliminate late meals and product inconsistencies
3) Diet diversification i.e. more whole grains, fish, stir-fry etc., lactose free, made without gluten, allergen sensitive
4) Investigate future potential for one vs. two meals a day as well as new delivery method for younger seniors such as chilled or frozen
5) Enhance outreach strategy for client acquisition to reduce number of un-served eligible members of the community.

Increase number of volunteers to reach 100% goal

1.) Adopt-A-Route
2.) Volunteer age diversification

Board governance

1. Board to focus on oversight and strategic vision for operational aspects of Meals on Wheels including social work, nutrition, site services, support services and volunteers, as well as appropriate fiduciary responsibilities and maintaining basic comprehension of government regulations
2. Board to commit to annual review of bylaws and certificate of incorporation to ensure good governance and to prevent mission creep
3. Board Members to serve as ambassadors and support the Foundation Board in its fundraising efforts

Foundation:

Board governance

1. Board to focus on oversight and strategic vision for fundraising as well as foundation physical and financial resources and associated fiduciary responsibilities including alignment of business growth, i.e. UBIT.
2. Board to commit to annual review of bylaws and certificate of incorporation to ensure good governance
3. Board Members to serve as ambassadors and maintain thorough comprehension of key fundraising priorities i.e. “pots”
Agency and Foundation:

Human resources

1. Continue to offer training to staff at all levels; provide professional development opportunities.
2. Expand and enhance employee appreciation and wellness programs
3. Strive to be employer of choice in Western New York
3. Community Awareness and Funding the Future

Build on the established foundation of brand and community awareness to further leverage organizational assets to serve the Western New York community.

**Agency**
- **Project and plan for operational equipment and physical asset needs and work with foundation to plan for funding**
- **Deepen community awareness through expanded communication channels such as e-newsletters, robust email program, blog features, more videos and more testimonials**
- **Further develop marketing and brand differentiation through increased collaborations and focus on younger MOW family members (clients, volunteers, caregivers, etc.)**
- **More fully develop differentiation from other programs and continue to leverage the true “shocking” stories of clients and caregivers**
- **Strive for goal of comprehensive caregiver and client information in ServTracker**

**Foundation**
- **Expansion of fundraising efforts to further leverage Meals on Wheels constituencies including clients, caregivers, volunteers and former Board and Committee Members**
- **Develop a “fundraising 101” curriculum to be offered to Board Members upon orientation and as a refresher by request from Board Members**
- **Build five year fundraising plan with short and long term goals to share with both Boards**
- **Build and implement strategy to become charity of choice for corporations, automobile industry and affiliates, professional sports teams, vendor partners, etc.**
- **Strive to create and implement the “it” event i.e. ice bucket challenge**