Volunteering has been an important part of Pat Boje’s life since she had her daughter in 1991. For many years her church and daughter’s school were the sole recipients of her volunteered time and talents, but in 2014, Pat felt compelled to do more. She began to look for opportunities, and found that there was a need for a reception volunteer at our central office. Pat was very excited about the opportunity because she not only had professional secretarial experience, she also had a personal connection to Meals on Wheels. Pat became familiar with the organization many years ago when her father became ill. He received Meals on Wheels and was able to stay in his home much longer than he would have been able to without the service. Pat experienced the difference it made in his life first-hand, and feels deeply connected to the mission and vision of MOW. “What Meals on Wheels does for the community is just wonderful. I love that we are helping people. We all need to eat so this critical service is appreciated by so many, and I get to hear from those happy people when I answer the phones,” Pat said.

Pat encourages others to join Meals on Wheels. “Volunteer! Come and join the group. I know that a lot of people hesitate about the driving involved with meal delivery, especially in the winter. That was a concern for me as well, which is one of the reasons the office position was a great fit. However, from spending time here, I now realize that you never deliver by yourself, and the connections you make and number of lives you touch is incredible. Meals on Wheels is a phenomenal organization, so if you can volunteer some time, do it!”

Pat has been with us since September 2014, working two four-hour days per week, and more often when needed. She enjoys keeping busy at the office by answering phone calls, working on mailings, and helping with special projects that come up. This year, she also helped MOW at Plate Expectations, the organization’s largest fundraising event, and even recruited several friends and family members to help, mentioning that they all had a great time.

Not only does Pat support the Meals on Wheels mission and enjoy her duties, her favorite part of volunteering is the people at the office. “Everyone is just so nice! I come in and just feel happy. We have a great group of people who work hard, but we have fun and joke around too. Even my husband notices – I always come home with a smile on my face!”

If you’re interested in volunteering or know someone who is, please contact Lauren Gousy at 716-822-2002 ext. 21.

Food for Thought

WINTER 2015 NEWSLETTER

Volunteering at MOW: The Perfect Fit

Caregiver Corner

Prepare for the Winter Heating Season

HEATING SAFETY & EFFICIENCY

Have your heating system inspected by a qualified contractor every year before the heating season begins. The contractor should provide the following services:

- Check the heat exchangers for cracks, rust and corrosion.
- Clean and check the flue and vent pipes for any obstructions, corrosion or pipe separations.
- Check your heating system, or have it tested, for proper ventilation.
- Clean or replace all furnace filters.
- Check blower operation, clean and lubricate.
- Check and adjust any pilots and burners.
- Check that your gas appliances produce a sharp blue flame.
- Check all electrical connections and controls.

Always keep flammable materials outdoors, in approved containers and away from your furnace, water heater and all other natural gas appliances.

DETECTING A GAS ODOR

Natural gas is colorless and odorless. National Fuel adds an odorant that produces a distinctive “gas smell” so that leaks are easier to detect. If you smell a gas odor:

DO

- Open windows and doors to ventilate.
- Leave the premises.
- Call National Fuel’s emergency line, 1-800-444-3130, from a different location.

DON’T

- Switch lights on or off.
- Light any matches.

SMELL GAS? ACT FAST! CALL 1-800-444-3130, 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK.

Ways to Give

End of Year Donations

Many people choose to make their charitable donations during the holiday season. If you are looking to make a donation before year-end please keep the following in mind.

2015 Taxes – If you want to claim a donation on your 2015 taxes, it must be postmarked by December 31, 2015. This is due to IRS regulations.

Website Donations – You can make a secure online donation at any time at www.mealsonwheelswny.org. Our new PayPal portal makes your online donation process smoother than ever. As with other channels, you can make online donations in memory or honor of a loved one.

Holiday Gifts – Did you know you can make a donation on behalf of a loved one this holiday and receive a special donation card showing the value of the donation and how many meals that represents? Contact the Meals on Wheels Foundation at 822-2201 to place a donation and receive your donation cards today.

Thank you for your ongoing support; happy holidays!
New Client System Improves Customer Service Efficiency

This summer, Meals on Wheels for WNY launched a new client software system. Developed by Accessible Solutions, Inc. (ASI), the ServTracker system will provide expanded reporting and better retention of client data.

The new system replaces a former database program, which was more than 15 years old and beginning to fail after surpassing the limits of its intended use. By transitioning to the new database system, Meals on Wheels will be able to more easily access client data and better serve clients by having a better understanding of their situation and needs.

“The new system will give us luxuries such as having multiple caregivers listed in the system and being able to identify clients by additional demographic details – such as their veteran status and the type of disability they may have,” Chris Procknal, Chief Operating Officer, Meals on Wheels for WNY, said. “Ultimately, it will mean better service and also more advanced reporting, allowing us to understand trends in our client base and anticipate future changes. We’re excited to have a brand new system to better serve our clients and caregivers!”

The ServTracker launch was generously supported by the James H. Cummings Foundation, the WNY Foundation and Bank of America.
Our Community Helps Fund Improvements!

By Dana Romeo

Each day, Meals on Wheels caters to approximately 1,800 home-delivered clients and another 1,200 congregate clients. And those numbers are growing. As a result of the high volume of production, our equipment can only last so long. Unfortunately, some of our industrial equipment is reaching its life expectancy and must be replaced. Generous financial support from the community plays a huge role in helping us ensure safe food preparation can continue at our facility.

Recently, Bank of America donated $10,000 to MOW to help reach the goal of getting a new industrial mixer. Getting a 140 quart Hobart industrial mixer will help not only with ensuring food safety and product consistency by making one large batch when preparing food instead of combining two batches, but will also make the operation more efficient. Meals on Wheels needs to raise $30,578 to reach our mixer goal, which means we still have a lot of money to raise. Everyone here at Meals on Wheels sends their deep appreciation to Bank of America for their very generous gift toward our new industrial mixer!

This November, we completed another project with the remodel of our pots and pans room. After a year of planning the renovations, the room is finally complete and looking better than ever. We were lucky enough to have TJI donate their services to help rip out the old flooring, move all the equipment, and then move all the equipment back in once the new tiling was put down. The new tile has resulted in a better and safer environment for the workers of our food vendor Bateman Community Living.

We can’t thank our project partners enough for all of their help and donations that have been given to us here at Meals on Wheels.

In another fun annual collaboration, on Labor Day weekend dozens of volunteers helped out at Wingfest by selling meal tickets. In return, the Wing King donated $4,000 to our foundation. Every gift that we have received has been a huge help and we can’t thank the WNY community enough for all of the support!

Partnering to Feed Those in Need on Thanksgiving

Our commitment to providing nutritious meals to individuals in our community does not stop with the clients we serve on our meal delivery routes or those who obtain meals from our congregate sites. This is the fourth year that MOW has worked with the team at Buffalo City Mission to ensure they can serve a warm, delicious meal to all who visit them on Thanksgiving Day. The City Mission has a small kitchen with only a handful of ovens, so preparing the many turkeys that are needed for the holiday is an overwhelming logistics challenge. Our facilities, however, are equipped to handle the volume of food needed and we are proud to be able to help make the annual Thanksgiving meal a success.

The task begins early the week of Thanksgiving when our food vendor, Bateman Community Living, cooks the turkeys – almost 300 of them. Next, more than 25 volunteers come together from the Food Bank of WNY, Goodwill Industries of WNY, Buffalo City Mission, Bateman Community Living and MOW. These individuals pick the meat off the birds in order to provide an estimated 3,800 pounds of meat! That turkey, combined with delicious traditional sides like potatoes, stuffing, corn and rolls, gives the 5,500 individuals who come to the City Mission for the holiday a hot, hearty Thanksgiving meal. The meals also are provided to homes through the Turkey Express program and to Cornerstone Manor.

“We’re thrilled to be able to collaborate with these great community partners,” Stuart Harper, Executive Director at Buffalo City Mission, said. “With state-of-the-art equipment at our disposal, the quality and freshness of the meal we’ll be able to provide this year will be superb. The Meals on Wheels commissary in South Buffalo is incredible and we’re blessed to be able to partner with Meals on Wheels, the Food Bank, Goodwill and others to make this Thanksgiving a great one.”
The essential work done by Meals on Wheels for Western New York is made possible by generous financial support from community members, local foundations and corporations, as well as through grants from the New York State Office for the Aging and Erie County’s Departments of Senior Services and Social Services.

Spread Holiday Cheer. Not the Flu.

It’s estimated that between 80 percent and 90 percent of seasonal flu-related deaths have occurred in people 65 years and older. As you prepare for holiday gatherings, get vaccinated for flu to protect yourself, your friends, and your loved ones from flu and its complications, such as deadly cases of pneumonia. While you’re at the doctor or the pharmacy, ask about other vaccines covered by Medicare, including pneumococcal, shingles, and Tdap (which covers both tetanus and whooping cough). These vaccines are vital for your health—and the health of those around you.

Recent Sponsors & Supporters

($1,000 and up)

Meals on Wheels for Western New York would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their recent donations and generous support of Meals on Wheels.

Bank of America
Virginia Evans Devereux Memorial Fund
Epiphany United Church of Christ
Mrs. Judy Marine
Mr. and Mrs. Manson C. Surdam
Mr. Robert W. Waver