A Message from our President and CEO

I’d like to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague and friend Tara A. Ellis on her new position as President and CEO with the Food Bank of WNY. Her passion for eradicating hunger and her skills, experience and empathy make her a natural choice to lead this crucial community organization.

I’m honored and excited that the boards have selected me as interim President and CEO of Meals on Wheels for WNY and the Meals on Wheels Foundation of WNY. After forty years of management and operations experience with traditional businesses, I’ve enjoyed the last five years on the not-for-profit side, first volunteering with and then joining the organization before taking the role of Chief Operations Officer.

The mission of Meals on Wheels is absolutely crucial to the community and I am proud and humbled to be able to lead the team in providing food and friendship to our vulnerable neighbors. The impact that we have on the community in terms of providing healthy meals, friendship, well-being checks and more cannot be understated. I’m excited about our future plans – such as the introduction of made-without-gluten meals, allergy-free diets, and the potential expansion of our commissary.

Walmart and Subaru: KEY PARTNERS IN FEEDING WNY SENIORS

Walmart recently donated $151,000 to the Meals on Wheels Foundation of WNY (MOW) through their Walmart State Giving Program. The grant will provide four new combi ovens for the commissary, which are vital equipment used in the preparation of 90% of our daily meals. Combi ovens are called such because they can be used in food preparation to heat, steam, or do a combination of both.

These ovens are crucial for our production of nearly 1.5 million meals over the course of a year, including our home-delivered meals, congregate meals, and the meals we produce for other not-for-profits and health-related organizations throughout New York and into Pennsylvania.

“"We are so grateful to the Walmart organization for their continued support and generous donation. The ability to purchase this equipment gives us the opportunity to provide higher quality of life to all of our recipients. Thank you to Walmart for helping us provide food, friendship and hope," Chris Procknal, Interim President and CEO, MOW, said.

"Share the Love"

Subaru of America (SOA) and West Herr Subaru are other key partners exhibiting long-term support of MOW. For its tenth year in a row, Subaru of America is holding their popular “Share the Love” event in which SOA donates $250 for every new Subaru that is purchased or leased to a charity of the buyer’s choice. Charities include several national charities as well as a local charity. For the fifth year in a row, West Herr Subaru has selected the Meals on Wheels Foundation of WNY as their local charity of choice.

Over the past four years, MOW has received $183,142 total from this campaign. We are so grateful to Subaru of America and West Herr Subaru for their support.

The fundraiser is going on now and ends on January 2. If you are in the market for a new vehicle, please visit West Herr Subaru and Share the Love with MOW!
Volunteering Together: Team Building, Community Building

Meals on Wheels for Western New York produces and delivers meals to more than 3,400 homebound clients. This enormous undertaking is made possible by the caring and generous individuals and groups who commit their time and energy to our neighbors in need.

Many people think, “I would love to help, but there’s not enough time in the day!” The great thing is, meal delivery only takes about an hour, and you can volunteer as little or as often as you’d like. Still, for someone who works a typical 9-to-5 job, this may seem impossible.

However, close to 100 local organizations make it possible for their employees to take part in giving back to the community during their workday, on their lunch hour. These organizations are our Adopt-A-Route partners who have a team of employees assigned to a particular delivery route close to their office.

Matt McAfee, M&T Bank, explains, “From my experience, the simple act of delivering meals to clients provides not only needed nutrition and a well visit for the clients, but inspires volunteers to find other ways to make our community a better place to live. A nice side benefit of the Adopt-A-Route program is that it affords work colleagues who wouldn’t otherwise have reason to interact, an hour together to become better acquainted. The employee networking via the Adopt-A-Route program creates a greater sense of community within our firm and helps fulfill one of our bank’s core missions, to be part of the fabric of the communities we serve.”

A common concern for someone who is interested in coordinating an Adopt-A-Route partnership within his or her organization may be participation. However, in Matt’s experience this is not an issue. “What started as about a dozen or so employees participating three years ago, has grown to more than 40 of my bank colleagues who selflessly volunteer an occasional lunch hour to serve our elderly and homebound neighbors.”

Another of our Adopt-A-Route partners, Rich Products Corporation, will be celebrating twenty-five years of service with MOW in 2018. Linda Velarde, Foodservice Division Marketing, is Rich’s Meals on Wheels coordinator, and has planned their delivery schedule for 12 years. “My job is easy because we have some team members who have been delivering MOW for more than 15 years. Year after year, the same teams come back, leaving me with very few new members to recruit. We have 51 dedicated team members. It’s a testimonial to the fact that this is truly a very rewarding experience!”

Whether an organization is large or small does not affect the impact they can have on the homebound elderly in our community. Walsh Duffield Companies has been participating in Adopt-a-Route for nearly five years. “Our eight volunteers look forward to their turn to deliver each month and see the friends they’ve made over the years. The comradery amongst our volunteers is evident. Each week, I hear them asking each other how ‘their people’ were this week. Our company most certainly gets more out of this experience than we put in,” Stephen E. Mayo, Vice President, Walsh Duffield Companies, Inc., said.

If you’d like to learn more about getting your group involved in our Adopt-A-Route program, we’d love to talk with you! Start the conversation with Ashley Yerdon, Volunteer Relations Associate, by calling 822.2002 x21 or emailing ayerdon@mealsonwheelswny.org.

Thank you to these and the dozens of other organizations that Adopt-A-Route with MOW!
Plan now for a gift that is meaningful today, tomorrow, and for years to come...

Tribute gifts are a meaningful way to honor or remember a friend or loved one while giving back to Meals on Wheels and benefitting the lives of our homebound neighbors.

“How completely comforting to imagine that hungry people will be assisted because of choices I am making now.”

Consider this method of giving when setting up your own future plans. Directing gifts made in your memory to the Meals on Wheels Foundation of Western New York, through a provision in your will or estate plans, in lieu of flowers, provides for the future of Meals on Wheels to ensure that every member of our community will receive a meal that meets their nutritional needs and receive unsurpassed care provided by our staff and volunteers.

To learn more about Meals on Wheels’ Planned Giving programs or to make a gift, please contact Kelly Campbell at (716) 822-2201 ext. 43 or kcampbell@mealsonwheelswny.org.

Plate Expectations 2017

“ROCKING AND ROLLING AT THE RICHARDSON”

Our annual fundraiser was held at Hotel Henry on August 30, 2017. We sold out the event, with 600 plus attendees. Partygoers were excited to check out the recently opened historic architectural treasure and support Meals on Wheels.

Guests enjoyed food and drink; live music by Hot Club of Buffalo, 007 Band and Saxman Slim; our balloon pop and wall of wine games; a silent and “super silent” auctions; tours of the architectural treasure; and meeting Chef Fabio Viviani from Bravo’s Top Chef All Stars!

Thanks to the all of our attendees, volunteers, boards, and staff, 2017 was a record-breaking year, netting more than $117,660 raised!

Volunteer Elizabeth sells the popular balloons to guests.

Chef Fabio Viviani, sponsored by Bateman Community Living, cooks up delicious meatballs.
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.