In 2017, the Meals on Wheels for WNY team completed many important accomplishments that I am proud of — such as the completion of a new commissary floor, the introduction of tablets for our dietitians to enable greater client education, and the expansion of our planned giving program.

Our goals for 2018 continue to be focused on moving the organization forward and planning for future growth and increased sustainability. It would be impossible to include eight pages of text here, encompassing the organizational goals and each department’s goals, but I want to share a sample of our plans for the coming year. We will:

• Work with our food vendor Bateman Community Living to ensure our respective strategic plans are aligned and that we select the growth plan that best fits both organizations’ needs.
• Pursue additional community partnerships and collaboration opportunities.
• More regularly leverage video to highlight clients and volunteers and tell the Meals on Wheels story.
• Continue to advance government advocacy — with a focus on why Meals on Wheels is so important to the community.
• Recruit 350 new volunteers and onboard 18 new “Adopt-A-Route” partners.
• Undertake a volunteer retention project, to include research, recommendations and implementation of changes.
• Evaluate budgets and project plans for an outbuilding, agency roof repair, and a humidity reduction project in our commissary cold room. Work to secure grant funding to assist with these important goals.
• Raise $1,286,500 in total philanthropic support, including for commissary equipment.
• Explore new or unused features in our fundraising software to improve processes and increase donor engagement.

• Expand Planned & Major Gifts outreach to additional audiences, including board members and interested Meals on Wheels volunteers.
• Rollout the made-without-gluten diet, which was piloted in 2017.
• Review Meals on Wheels diet guidelines and make continued tweaks to specialty diets.
• Explore additional diets that may be desired by our clientele.
• Increase site monitoring to ensure that all locations are following guidelines and best practices.
• Increase the percentage of volunteers delivering meals by not replacing departing Site Assistants.
• Meet with medical facilities and Managed Long Term Care programs to promote MOW and various programs to help ensure people are healthy at home.
• Continue “Care and Share” with clients to help connect them to other services or get them small items that they may need through not-for-profit partnerships.

As you can see, our priorities cover a wide range of areas — all with an ultimate focus on providing the best quality product and highest service levels to our clients. Meals on Wheels for WNY could not deliver “food, friendship and good health” to 3,400 clients each year without the support of its employees, volunteers, board members, donors, and the community at large. Thank you so much for all you do to help Meals on Wheels for WNY thrive.

Thank you,

Chris Procknal – President and CEO
Meals on Wheels for WNY

Help us to provide healthy meals and sustain the well-being of our homebound neighbors!

In 2009, Meals on Wheels opened our state-of-the-art commissary which produces approximately 1.5 million meals annually.

There have been noticeable issues with moisture and humidity control in our three rooms used to prepare cold foods and ingredients. A permanent, sustainable solution is needed.

Renovations and upgrades to the cold rooms will allow us to continue serving our homebound clients, active seniors who are served by the congregate dining program, individuals served by our third-party business contracts, and serve as a disaster-ready facility for our region through our role in WNY’s Emergency Preparedness Plan.

The total cost of this project is $166,800. A gift of any size will help us to begin this necessary renovation.

Please consider donating today by calling (716) 822-2201, ext. 43.

Thank you!
“Hot pan!”

That’s the shout you’ll hear as another pan of broccoli, chicken or beans makes its way from the staging ovens to the hot line. Employees from our food vendor, Bateman Community Living (BCL), line up on each side of the hot line, using scoops and tongs to efficiently slide freshly prepared food into black plastic trays. The trays are set on the conveyor belt and a few seconds later they slide out with a pop, fully sealed.

Meals on Wheels for WNY (MOW) delivers between 5,000 and 6,000 meals a day through an incredibly detailed operation that ensures every client gets the exact diets they need each day and that every single meal is delivered by the end of the 2-hour delivery window.

As you may imagine, the MOW commissary sees a lot of wear-and-tear.

“We work hard to anticipate equipment needs and maintenance, but sometimes things break unexpectedly or a need catches us by surprise,” Chris Procknal, President and CEO of MOW, said.

In late 2017, MOW had to unexpectedly replace the commissary floor – a huge project that involved emptying one area of the commissary after another to allow an overnight team to install a new polished concrete floor.

“Thank you to all of our vendors, employees and volunteers for their cooperation so that we could make the needed upgrades as efficiently as possible,” Procknal said. “We’ve always been proud of our high-quality commercial kitchen. With these upgrades we now meet the standards of a state-of-the-art commercial production facility; that’s really exciting as we think about future growth.”

The massive quantity of food produced each day results in a constant need for various repairs, upgrades and new equipment. This wouldn’t be possible without many generous donors; in just the last six months we’ve received generous commissary donations from the Bank of America Foundation, East Hill Foundation, Frank J. McGuire Foundation, Hooper Family Foundation, James H. Cummings Foundation, Josephine Goodyear Foundation, Lakeshore Savings Bank, Russo Family Foundation and Walmart Foundation.

“Prepared for all weather, Jill typically drives with Joe in her four-wheel drive vehicle. “Some of the driveways maybe aren’t quite as plowed and quite as clear in the winter, so having a Subaru is a great help to get us through,” Jill said. With a laugh, she mentioned how the car was purchased during West Herr Subaru’s “Share the Love” fundraiser, benefiting MOW during the dealership’s year-end sale.

Jill Piechota and Joe Elliott have been volunteering with Meals on Wheels for Western New York (MOW) for three and four years, respectively, out of the Orchard Park delivery site. Covering both the village of Orchard Park and the expanse south of the village provides a challenge during the snowy, winter months.

Joe and Jill bring big smiles and stories along with the meals they deliver. These interactions make a huge difference in the lives of those they serve, and draw words of praise from clients like Linda M.: “I cannot begin to say enough about these two people. They bring me my food with a smile, and they’re always so happy to see me. And volunteers like this are always needed because they brighten my day. I look forward to seeing my volunteers. I don’t see the outside world – they bring it to me.”

Jill and Joe also volunteer with Meals on Wheels at the annual Buffalo Chicken Wing Festival. “I just wanted to give back to the community and help out,” said Joe, acknowledging the importance of helping those in need. He added, “We’ve become good friends with our clients over time.”

Linda’s praise extended into a fun story about Joe’s woodworking skills. “I had bought the word ‘Awesome,’” said Linda, showing off a wooden table decoration typically on display in the front foyer. “I asked Joe if he could possibly add to it to make it say ‘God is Awesome’. So that’s what Joe did for me.”

The work of volunteers like Joe and Jill extend far beyond the time commitment of a twenty-two-mile route, one of our longest. They visit each client with an air of friendship that brightens the days of those they serve, bringing smiles even days after their visit.

Happening every weekday across Western New York, stories like these have come to exemplify the amazing work of Meals on Wheels volunteers. If you would like to nominate a Meals on Wheels volunteer for a future story, contact us at stories@mealsonwheelswny.org.
Local organizations, individuals play “Secret Santa” for Meals on Wheels clients

The popular tradition of being a “Secret Santa” to family, colleagues, and classmates often ends with a big guessing game – each participant left wondering who wrapped the thoughtful gift with their name on it. Through this spirit of giving, approximately 100 Meals on Wheels recipients in WNY found a gift under their tree during the 2017 holiday season.

A true Secret Santa, who wished to remain anonymous, delivered fifty handmade shawls/throws for clients in need of extra warmth during the winter months. Each included a note for the recipient, telling those receiving the gifts that someone is thinking about them.

Long-standing community partners also spread holiday cheer. Home Instead Senior Care, in partnership with some of the employees at Rich Products, fulfilled the wishes of some of our most at-need clients. Some of our meal recipients were asked for a list of a few items they may need – with answers ranging from “warm socks” to “a new clock for the side table.” In a remarkable show of generosity, those involved with the “Be a Santa to a Senior” campaign purchased nearly every item on each of the lists.

Perry’s Ice Cream prepared some of our clients for the winter weather by donating warm gloves, hats, blankets, and other accessories to be given to those in need. However, the company didn’t stop there. The donations were made as part of a larger drive benefiting Meals on Wheels for Western New York. A series of dress down days, basket raffles, 50/50 drawings, and other events culminated in a $3,049 donation to our delivery program.

Many other clients received hand-made cards, placemats, and bookmarks through our Angel Card program. Thank you to all the schools, religious education groups, scouting troops, and others who made cards!

Individual acts of kindness sometimes go unmentioned throughout the holiday season, as heartfelt presents and donations can more easily be attributed to “the spirit of giving.” To the delivery sites, volunteers, community partners, and all others who made a senior smile this past December – thank you!
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.

Recent Sponsors & Supporters

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

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Save the Date

PLATE EXPECTATIONS: THE SUPPER BOWL XV
THE BUFFALO BILLS FIELD HOUSE
WEDNESDAY, JULY 18, 2018
5:30 – 8:30 PM

Join us on July 18 for this fun-filled event at yet another unique WNY landmark. Enjoy food and beverages, auction items and raffles, games and more at our 15th annual Plate Expectations, proudly presented by Wegmans.

Look for more details in the coming months about this year’s special activities, entertainment and tickets at www.mealsonwheelswny.org