On Veteran’s Day, more than 200 veteran Meals on Wheels for WNY recipients throughout Erie County were greeted and thanked by volunteers of similar military background. USA-themed sugar cookies, donated by Tops Markets, were paired with American flags for veteran clients. Each volunteer received an American flag pin as a small token of thanks from Meals on Wheels for their service.

“Throughout your career, you’re used to service,” said LTC Edward F. Bukowski, USA (Ret.), a sixteen-year volunteer with Meals on Wheels. “Serve others and always get the job done, no matter the obstacles. Being part of this community shares that same ideal – weather and distance are always overcome to finish the job: delivering hot meals and checking in on our neighbors.”

LTC Bukowski served with the US Army in several countries over his 21-year career, including Korea, Vietnam, Germany, and Saudi Arabia. Now, decades removed from active duty, he and his wife are active in the community as volunteers.

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These gifts, however, came second to the stories shared between those of common military background. Reminiscing about the hardships and sacrifices made while abroad made just as much of an impact on the volunteers as it did on those who receive meals.

“I brought three gifts to three veterans, and I was struck by the love each had for their country,” said LTC Bukowski, “They gladly acknowledged they were veterans, and immediately turned it around to thank me in return! It was humbling to receive the same heartfelt appreciation that I was bringing to them.”

Each paired duo of veterans were able to draw from an endless well of stories and common experiences, which helped to guide thoughtful conversation. The references to military terms, deployment, and procedure provided a bridge of common ground between veterans who served in wars that were decades apart.

“I got to meet a World War II veteran, who was an incredible person,” said Mark Lee, Air Force veteran and Meals on Wheels Volunteer. “When I introduced myself and thanked him for his service, there was instant conversation and chemistry. He told me details of his unit, his duty, and stories about deployment. I told him he was my hero, and wish I could have spent an hour hearing more about his service.”

When asked a few days after the event what he thought of the Veteran’s Day celebration, meal recipient Fred K. summed up the general consensus with a wonderful response: “I haven’t eaten my cookie. I keep it here to show everyone who comes by!”

“It brightens up their day to exchange stories,” said fifteen-year Meals on Wheels volunteer Frank Pytel, who served in the army as a sergeant. “Many clients can’t get out of the house to take part in other Veteran events on the holiday, and for some, their family may live out of town. We’re happy to bring this celebration to them with their Meals on Wheels.”
MOW Staff presents at NYS Aging Services Conference

Leaders in senior nutrition and aging services from across New York State were invited to Buffalo in late-October to attend this year’s New York State Aging Services Conference. The two-day conference, held at The Westin Buffalo, brought the aging services community together for a series of keynote addresses and presentations by state and local leaders.

Staff and board members from Meals on Wheels were in attendance to learn about nutrition, best practices, fundraising, volunteer strategies, and serving an aging population. Guest speakers from state and national organizations included Bob Blancato, Executive Director of NANASP, Ellie Hollander, President & CEO of Meals on Wheels America, and Greg Olsen, Acting Director of the New York State Office for the Aging. Tara A. Ellis, Meals on Wheels for WNY board member, was the conference chair for this year’s event.

Joining this year’s lineup of state and national speakers, Meals on Wheels for Western New York was well-represented in the agenda, providing presentations that covered several topics:

- **Lisa Woodring, Chief Development Officer**, led a presentation about best practices in fundraising alongside Sarah Snyder of Child & Family Services.
- **Lauren Hibit, Foundation & Media Relations Specialist**, was a panelist for two breakout sessions alongside Jennifer Meegan, Cassandra Barrett, and Lauren Picone of the Food Bank of WNY. The panel shared their experience on special events and online giving with attendees. They also covered third-party events.
- **Justin Baumgardner, Foundation & Communications Coordinator, and Jennifer Klein, RD, CDN** led a presentation about technology trends in the workplace and how technology is being adopted by our clients.
- **Kelly Campbell, Planned & Major Gifts Officer**, held a discussion about grant writing and planned giving strategies, presenting alongside Liz Lucas of the Food Bank of WNY.

“Bringing leaders of the aging services community to downtown Buffalo gave our staff and board members the opportunity to hear about issues facing senior populations throughout New York and around our country,” said Chris Procknal, President & CEO, Meals on Wheels for Western New York. “In turn, we were able to share our team’s knowledge and experience with experts from other aging services organizations. It was a win-win for our program and for Buffalo.”

Following a guided tour of the city, attendees were invited to a dinner hosted by Bateman Community Living in the Meals on Wheels Community Center. Wine pairings were provided by Winkler & Samuels, and were described to attendees by Richard Hoelzel, Bateman Regional Director of Operations. The dinner gave guests the opportunity to tour the Meals on Wheels commissary and to ask questions about our organization’s operations.

We are honored to have played such a large role in the success of this important annual conference on behalf of the people we serve. Next year’s NYS Aging Services Conference will be held in Syracuse, NY on October 2-4, 2019.

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This holiday season, give the gift of food and friendship.

For many of our homebound elderly and disabled community members, the only food and companionship they receive all day are delivered by their Meals on Wheels volunteer.

Two delicious, nutritionally-appropriate meals, delivered by one of our friendly volunteers costs only $11.72.

Please add the Meals on Wheels Foundation of Western New York to your holiday gift list today and make a contribution that will enable us to provide our vulnerable neighbors life-saving food, friendship, and support.

To donate, please call (716) 822-2201 or visit www.mealsonwheelswny.org/donate.
Volunteer Judy Marine honored on National Philanthropy Day

Meals on Wheels was proud to honor long-term volunteer Judy Marine as a Distinguished Honoree at this year’s AFP-WNY National Philanthropy Day Luncheon. Volunteering with Meals on Wheels for 28 years, Judy has shared both her time and talent to help neighbors in our community. In addition to her daily delivery route on Buffalo’s West Side, Judy has shared her voice in various television and video productions about our program. Throughout October, her likeness was seen throughout Western New York as part of our billboard awareness campaign.

The Western New York Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals holds this annual luncheon to acknowledge leaders in the community who dedicate their talents and resources to local nonprofit organizations. The event also shines a spotlight on the accomplishments of distinguished guests nominated by member organizations.

We thank Judy for her many years of dedication to the people we serve, and congratulate her on this wonderful honor!

Meals on Wheels welcomes Anne McKenna as Chief Communications Officer

Meals on Wheels for Western New York, Inc. welcomes Anne McKenna as its new Chief Communications Officer. Anne will manage the Marketing and Communications department and will act as the organization’s spokeswoman. She will also lead the Government Affairs program and will oversee volunteer recruitment.

Anne has nearly 20 years of experience in marketing and communications, including digital marketing, social media, media relations and brand positioning. Prior to Meals on Wheels, she worked at The LAM Foundation, serving as their Patient Services Director. Anne holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University at Buffalo and earned her Master of Business Administration in Marketing from Canisius College.

“We are so excited to have Anne join the team at Meals on Wheels,” said Chris Procknal, President and CEO. “Her marketing and communication experience, as well as her compassion for our mission, make Anne an essential asset to our organization.”

Caregiver Corner

Preparing Loved Ones for Winter

Proximity to the Great Lakes leaves many Western New Yorkers guessing when the next big snowstorm will hit. Preparing at-risk loved ones for potential inclement weather often includes building an emergency supply kit, ensuring there is enough food and water stocked for a few days at home, and doing an annual check on the home’s heating system. Here are a few tips to help prepare your home, or the home of a loved one, for the winter season:

- **BUILD AN EMERGENCY KIT** – Water, shelf-stable food, a portable radio, and first aid supplies are a few of the items needed to build an effective emergency kit. The Department of Homeland Security provides a helpful website to give insight into your kit’s contents, where to store it, and how to update it each season. Visit [www.ready.gov/build-a-kit](http://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit) to learn more about building an emergency kit. If you have already created an emergency kit, take the time to refresh any items that may have expired or to add what may be missing.

- **PURCHASE FLASHLIGHTS AND WALL LIGHTS** – Extra lighting options can be helpful when navigating a house during a power outage. A flashlight (with extra batteries in the emergency kit) is preferable over candles. For staircases, consider adhesive wall lights that activate when pressed, so both hands are free to maintain balance while ascending or descending.

- **ADDRESS MEDICAL CONCERNS** – For those with medications or special medical equipment, work with your medical team to build a contingency plan. Weather can affect deliveries of medication, or replacement equipment in the event it breaks down. Whenever possible, have a backup plan.

Meals on Wheels for Western New York prepares for inclement weather through an Emergency Food Kit program for at-risk clients. Boxes of shelf-stable food are provided to at-risk clients, local police stations, and fire stations at the start of each winter season, for distribution if the weather is too hazardous for volunteers to travel.

If inclement winter weather comes to your home during the winter season, please check on your homebound elderly and disabled neighbors to ensure they have what they need!
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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