

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF MISSOULA AGING SERVICES

2023 CONNECTIONS

SPRING

Delivering Hope and Hot Meals



Happy Spring! I am so looking forward to longer days and seeing flowers start to bloom. At Missoula Aging Services (MAS), spring means it's time for March for Meals, our annual campaign to support Meals on Wheels.

We know how important Meals on Wheels is to ensuring the health and well-being of our homebound neighbors, but this program represents much more than just a meal. It's a chance to make a personal connection with isolated older adults, monitoring their needs over time and helping them access additional services if necessary. By providing regular in-person contact, Meals on Wheels deliveries reduce feelings of isolation while bringing consistent, nutritious meals. In this way, Meals on Wheels empowers older adults to remain independent and live in their own homes for as long as possible.

With our person-centered approach to services, when someone signs up for Meals on Wheels, our staff visit with them to determine how else we can help. A simple meal can lead to other services to support aging safely and comfortably at home, such as a benefits screening with the Resource Center, improved home safety and accessibility through the Home Modifications program, or Memory Care Support Services.

The Meals on Wheels program wouldn't exist without the friendly, dedicated volunteers who deliver meals, many of whom are older adults who enjoy knowing they are making such a powerful, positive impact on the lives of others. Hunger and isolation in Missoula County were exacerbated by the pandemic, and the need has not gone away. With your support, Missoula Services can continue to provide this important service for all who need it in our community.

With appreciation,



Lisa Sheppard

Chief Executive Officer



Here for You.

- **Aging in Place:**
Care Management, Home Modifications, Veteran Directed Care, Memory Care Support Services, Homemaking, Payroll Services for Veterans and Caregivers
- **Nutrition:**
Meals on Wheels, Community Lunches, Liquid Nutrition (Ensure®)
- **Expert Assistance and Education:**
Call Center, Medicare & Medicaid Consultations, Resource Center, Educational Classes and Workshops, Lifelong Connections
- **Caregiver Support:**
Family Caregiver Support, In-Home Support Services (Respite, Homemaking and Personal Care), Caregiver Support Groups
- **Community Engagement:**
Volunteer Grandparents, Volunteer Caring and Respite Companions, Friendly Visitors, Meals on Wheels Volunteers
- **Safety and Advocacy:**
Montana Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), Long-term Care Ombudsman Program, Money Management Services

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Missoula Aging Services does not sell or release the names on our mailing list.

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In Perspective



There are times in life when you have the opportunity to work with someone who creates an indelible impression on you. I met Melanie Erickson months ago as the Senior Adult Director at the Missoula Alliance Church. Through her work with the Missoula Aging Services Advisory Council and the residents of the Burlington Square Apartments, she had a deep sense of the importance of helping older adults in our community age with

independence and dignity. After a series of meetings and hours of communication and effort on her part, she pulled together a group of individuals to form a Meals on Wheels Adopt-a-Route group. Adopt-a-Routes are often undertaken by employers or other groups of individuals dedicated to working together to regularly deliver a route to promote teamwork, staff morale, and giving back to the community.

Adopt-a-Route groups provide an avenue for volunteering to individuals that might not otherwise be able to participate. Often, these groups are made up of coworkers and friends. Melanie brought together a group of individuals that didn't necessarily know each other but shared a common mission. The Missoula Alliance Church Adopt-a-Route group began in August. What we didn't know was that Melanie had been diagnosed with cancer and was living with all the impacts of treatment. Despite her diagnosis, she kept moving forward and supporting this group of volunteers.

We were all shocked and saddened to learn of her death in November. Every time I see one of the volunteers from the MAC Adopt-a-Route group picking up their bags and starting their route, I'm reminded of Melanie and her dedication to service. I'm grateful to be able to work alongside all the volunteers who deliver meals in her honor.

Ria Overholt

Volunteer Services Program Manager
Missoula Aging Services



MELANIE ERICKSON
1960-2022

JOIN THE MARCH FOR MEALS

Providing So Much More Than A Meal



Mary Rose Moyer stands with MOW volunteer Sharon Sommer

Mary Rose Moyer is a delightful, witty woman. We visited her just three days before she celebrated her 99th birthday to talk about Meals on Wheels (MOW). During our visit, she sprinkled in some perfectly timed jokes and offered us the comfiest chairs in the room, like any good hostess would. "I go to the table and chair by the door at 10:45 to wait for my food to arrive. That way the driver doesn't have to wait too long for me to come to the door, I can reach the door handle easily from there."

Mary Rose's son, Glen joined us for our conversation. "Mom is always upbeat," Glen shared, "but these meals are the highlight of her day." Mary Rose still lives independently, but Glen and his wife can provide her with extra support from their adjoining home, if needed. Meals on Wheels deliveries add peace of mind for their family. "The independence that Meals on Wheels allows her is really important."

Nearly blind, Mary Rose uses her walker to navigate from the front door to the dining table in the kitchen. There, she carefully puts her walker to the side, placing her hand on the table to guide herself to the kitchen counter. She uses her hands to orient herself in the kitchen. "Sometimes when I get turned around, I just run my hands like this along my counters until I find the sink. That helps me remember where I'm at." She moved through the kitchen, which she does very well, to save the meal in the refrigerator for later.

We visited in her living room about the volunteers and the meals they deliver. Mary Rose shared that in all of her deliveries, she has never encountered a grumpy driver. On the day of our visit, Mary's MOW driver was Sharon Sommer of Lolo, who delivers meals with her husband. "I always look forward to the dessert," Mary Rose said with a chuckle. "And I always recycle my bags." The day's dessert was chocolate pudding, and the meal included applesauce, chicken, macaroni, green beans and milk. Mary Rose complimented the cooks who prepare Meals on Wheels. She says they are "nice, big meals that are especially good." Glen told us there is often enough for her to save leftovers for later. Though Mary Rose admits with a smile, when it's something really good, she will eat it all. She also greatly appreciates the extra MOW meals she gets for the weekend. She told us that at 99, "my lifelines are Meals on Wheels and books on tape."

Meals on Wheels is a critical service for older adults in Missoula County like Mary Rose. Hunger and isolation have become increasingly common in recent years, and the program now serves 50% more people than before the pandemic. Missoula Aging Services expects to deliver 140,000 meals to homebound individuals this year and will serve almost 40,000 community lunches at locations throughout the county.

If you'd like to support Meals on Wheels, use the provided envelope to send in your gift, or visit missoulaagingservices.org to donate safely online.



MEMORY CARE SUPPORT SERVICES

Working in Partnership with Home Modifications

Memory Care Support Services is here for individuals living alone who may be experiencing memory concerns or cognitive decline, and family caregivers caring for someone living with these concerns. This valuable program, available in Missoula and Ravalli Counties, has already helped 135 individuals to age in place, and helped dozens of family caregivers connect to resources and get the support they need to help them to continue to provide care.

In this program, clients have their home safety assessed, and the MAS Home Modification team helps find affordable solutions to any areas of concern. Updates may be as simple as installing grab bars or smoke detectors, or involve more complex solutions like installing a ramp or outdoor handrails. MAS has increased the safety of 41 local homes since we began offering this service in the second half of 2021.



If you or someone you care about is experiencing memory issues, or is interested in increasing the safety of their home, please call or visit our website. These programs are currently accepting new clients.

Spring Updates from the MAS Resource Center

It's a busy spring with lots happening in the Resource Center! We're assisting clients who want to review their Medicare Advantage plan or switch to a Medicare drug plan (Part D) during Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment, which runs until March 31. This is a perfect opportunity to make a change if you are not satisfied with your current plan.

There is a new Special Enrollment Period for those who use insulin. If you use insulin and have any issues with your coverage, you can switch your Medicare Part D or Advantage plan once during this special enrollment which runs from now through December 31, 2023.

Spring also brings the yearly tax season. We have appointments available to assist people who wish to file for the Montana Elderly Homeowner Renter tax credit. If you are 62 or older as of December 31st, 2022, have lived in Montana for the last nine months, rented, owned, or leased a home in Montana for at least six months and have a total household income under \$45,000, you are eligible. This year, the maximum credit has increased to \$1,150.

Anyone who has been receiving extended benefits during the pandemic should be aware that the public health emergency will officially end on May 11, and requirements that were waived or modified during the pandemic will change. Many public health benefits are affected, including Medicare, Medicaid, and telehealth. As these changes take effect, it is a good time to ask for a Resource and Benefits screening appointment to verify your eligibility and be sure you are receiving the benefits you deserve. If you have questions about your benefits, please come and see us! As always, scheduling an appointment is easy: call (406) 728-7682.

Serving Others with Joy: Volunteer Spotlight



MAS Volunteer Bob Schurr and MAS Volunteer Coordinator Adrienne Hopkins

MAS had the privilege of recognizing three incredible volunteers this spring for their outstanding service to our community. Recently, Bob Schurr won the AARP Montana Legacy Award at age 91. He has served as an MAS volunteer for over 24 years! Since 2001, he has served over 3631 hours. Bob has helped many nonprofits, served on the Senior Corps Advisory Board, MAS Governing Board and delivered Meals on Wheels for 19 years. "Bob exemplifies the spirit of commitment and kindness in making sure those who receive Meals on Wheels were treated with dignity and compassion," says Dean Thompson, Nutrition Program Specialist.



MAS Caring Companion Volunteers Yakov and Alexandra Chinikailo

The AARP Multicultural Service Award was awarded to Alexandra and Yakov Chinikailo for their work with Missoula's Belarusian immigrant community. They have collectively served over 17 years, 19,210 hours, as volunteer Caring Companions. They have faithfully driven their 12 clients 38,254 miles. Yakov said, "Helping others and keeping in contact with our community is why we do this. Our clients have language barriers. We have experienced that first-hand, so we understand where they are coming from. Kindness is an international language." The Chinikailos have been able to help many people because of the translation services provided by their son, Misha, who said, "If not for the continuation of services provided by volunteers

through MAS, the older Belarusians in our community would be left without social connection with one another, something that is very much valued in our culture, and left without an advocate to assist them in navigating through a very confusing world when one cannot read, write or speak in English."

Matter of Balance: New Falls Prevention Class

A Matter of Balance is an evidence-based falls prevention program focused on getting older adults more active and more confident in their ability to prevent falls. The program is suited for anyone age 60 and over who has fallen or has started to restrict activity because of fear of falling.

People using wheelchairs or walkers are welcome! Participants will improve strength, balance, flexibility and will finish the eight week program with a positive mindset regarding falls. See back page for registration details.

"A Matter of Balance was a wake up call for me. Since starting class, I've been more active and have put more thought into preventing falls."

- MATTER OF BALANCE PARTICIPANT

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November 2022 - January 2023

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Dale & Millie Best
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Anonymous
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OF INDIVIDUALS
(continued)

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Julie Campbell
Greg Superneau
Ann & Gary Libecap
Elizabeth Williams

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OF INDIVIDUALS
November 2022 - January 2023

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Leigh Addison
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William Armstrong
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Roy Wenger
Lillian Wenger
Bobby Woomer
Nonda Beardsley
Joan Young
Dwight Young

In Gratitude for Community Partners

*A heartfelt thank you to the Missoula
City Police Department who raised
over \$4000 to support Meals on
Wheels holiday*



*deliveries.
We are grateful
for your
compassion and
generosity!*



Behind the Scenes Dedication

MAS Meals on Wheels Dispatch Volunteer Exemplifies Service

The first adjective that pops to mind when the name Michael Peters is mentioned is “dependable.” But there’s so much more to Mike than this. I have known Mike for nine years, since he began volunteering with MAS to help me set up and provide the twice monthly MAS Roaming Congregate Lunches. Mike was a central part of these lunches for six years until Covid-19 put the brakes on them. Mike’s volunteer work has also included assisting with our farmers market coupon program during multiple summers. He also volunteered for Habitat for Humanity for a bit, collecting donated furniture from the community. Again, a job he put his heart into—and his head... just ask him about the large appliance that tried to mow him down on a loading ramp.

Now Mike is our daily Meals on Wheels Dispatch volunteer. He brings the same energy and tenacity to this job as any of his other endeavors. Mike is the first one at the site, immediately getting organized for the work ahead. He understands what’s needed to get 21 routes’ worth of meals on the road, deftly managing all the racks of food, bringing them up to the main dispatch dock by the elevator, then returning them to the lower level of the Providence Center once emptied. Mike’s intuitiveness to the needs of the volunteer drivers and his quick resolution to these needs gives our staff the freedom to address the other logistics of each day’s meal deliveries.



MOW Dispatch Volunteer Mike Peters

It’s no surprise that Mike is a retired train engineer. Not only does he look the part, but he is not one to tarry when it comes to problem solving and putting alternate plans into action. Although he is not dealing with 200-ton locomotives anymore, he approaches his volunteer work with the same seriousness and dedication. Mike’s commitment to Meals on Wheels, to the volunteer delivery drivers, and ultimately, to the clients we serve is truly remarkable. He is such a valued member of our team and an all-around good guy. We are grateful for his time, skill and generous nature that help make Meals on Wheels run so smoothly.

- Dean Thompson, MAS Nutrition Program Coordinator

Serving the Lolo Community

Thanks to a generous gift from an anonymous donor, the Lolo Community Center will soon be installing a new heating system for the facility. The funds will be used to install a new high efficiency boiler that will better heat the building. Missoula Aging Services has been working with the Community Center on several facility upgrades, including helping to secure funding to install new audio-visual technology, which was put in this past fall.

In addition to the facility upgrades, MAS partners with the Community Center to provide a community lunch for older adults each Thursday. MAS and the Lolo Community Center are pleased to work together on these projects, helping Lolo residents have an improved facility for the community to enjoy.

SAVE THE DATE

WEAR IT AGAIN
jewelry SALE

Saturday, June 10th
St. Anthony Parish
217 Tremont St.



Staff News at MAS

The Agency welcomed five new members to the team this winter and celebrated two Years of Service Milestones. We are thankful to have such a dedicated team who thrives on the service they provide to our community.

KELLI ATKINS joined Missoula Aging Services as a Personal Care Assistant in January. She is a compassionate, experienced caregiver who has worked in diverse healthcare settings and is known for her excellent client care as a Certified Nurse Assistant of twenty-four years in the state of Montana.

EMILY FOXTON joined the Agency in December. Prior to working at MAS, she completed her BA in Sociology at the University of Notre Dame, and is currently finishing her Masters in Social Work online through the University of Oklahoma. Born and raised in Central Ohio, Emily has called Missoula home since early summer, 2021. Emily is passionate about serving those in need and is eager to make a difference in the lives of older adults in Missoula County.

LEON HOSKINS joined MAS in January. He graduated from Florida A & M University in 1987 with a BA in History and Journalism. Leon is also a veteran of the United States Air Force and the Merchant Marines. He brings over 30 years of experience working in social services and loves being able to now serve older adults for MAS.

RAMEY MEINZEN was welcomed to Missoula Aging Services in December as Housekeeping Assistant on the In-Home Support Services team. Ramey comes to the Agency with a background in customer service.

MANDY PETERSEN joined MAS in November as the Falls Prevention Facilitator, delivering Maine Health’s evidence-based program, A Matter of Balance, to Missoula and the surrounding areas. She has over 15 years of experience in program delivery and fitness/wellness improvements for seniors. Mandy holds a degree in Recreation Management and is a certified Personal Trainer with the American Council of Exercise. She looks forward to sharing her excitement for aging well and increasing the health span of the maturing population.

CELEBRATING YEARS OF SERVICE

At Missoula Aging Services, we appreciate the incredible work our staff does every day. We simply couldn’t do it without them! This past winter, MAS had the privilege of recognizing the following staff members for achieving a Years of Service Milestone. We are honored to celebrate these individuals and look forward to walking with all staff as they reach their Milestones with us. Congratulations!

Kyle Broeckel	Development & Communications Team Lead	5 Years
Kathy Kimmet	Resource Specialist	5 Years

EST. 1982

MISSOULA *aging* SERVICES

WE'RE PROUD *of* OUR YEARS

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MISSOULAAGINGSERVICES.ORG

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MAS Events

VIRTUAL NEW TO MEDICARE WORKSHOP

Tuesday, March 14 from 6-7:30 pm

Wednesday, April 12 from 12-1:30 pm

Tuesday, May 16 from 6-7:30 pm

Participate online using Zoom. Tickets available for a suggested contribution of \$20. No cost and reduced cost tickets available for Montana residents in need.

Register online: <https://medicaremas.eventbrite.com>

A MATTER OF BALANCE:

NEW FALLS PREVENTION CLASS AT 2 LOCATIONS

People using wheelchairs or walkers are welcome.

Suggested ticket price is \$40, no cost options are available.

Eight Wednesdays, 1:30-3:30 pm from March 8-May 10

Frenchtown Rural Fire District

Register: <https://matterofbalancemas.eventbrite.com>

Eight Mondays, 1:30-3:30 pm from March 27-May 22

Silvercrest Apartments in Missoula

Register: <https://amatterofbalancemas.eventbrite.com>

VIRTUAL MEMORY LOSS CONVERSATIONS

Thursdays from 10-11 am. New attendees welcome!

Participate online using Zoom. No cost. Facilitated by Dementia Friendly Missoula.

Register online: <https://bit.ly/3ITnAsY>

VIRTUAL CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

Participate online using Zoom. No cost.

Second Monday of each Month from 4-5 pm

Register online: <https://bit.ly/3a9wn9x>

Third Tuesday of each Month from 1-2 pm

Register online: <https://bit.ly/2YkyVPU>

VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR RELATIVES RAISING CHILDREN (MT KINSHIP NAVIGATOR)

Third Wednesday of each Month from 12:30-1:30 pm

Participate online using Zoom. No cost.

Register online: <https://bit.ly/3fb2EjU>

VIRTUAL POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS

Thursdays, March 9 through April 13, from 1:30-3:30pm

Participate online using Zoom. No cost for Montana residents. Register online:

<https://powerfultoolsmassspring2023.eventbrite.com>

SAVE THE DATE: WEAR IT AGAIN JEWELRY SALE

Saturday, June 10, St. Anthony Parish, Missoula

View a full list of events at

MISSOULAAGINGSERVICES.ORG