

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF MISSOULA AGING SERVICES

2022 CONNECTIONS

SPRING

An Incredible Journey



It is difficult to put into words the gratitude, honor, and privilege it has been for me to serve at Missoula Aging Services over the last almost 39 years, with 32 of those years serving as the CEO. I started my work in aging with the Greatest Generation and have had the opportunity to listen and learn from them and all the people that followed, through the current generation of older adults. My first job at MAS was working as the Director of RSVP. There I learned the incredible richness of older adults volunteering to make our community a better place. This still holds true today!

Along the way, I learned the critical role caregivers play in the support of those aging and MAS has worked hard to include them in our education, training, and services. I have always said my career has taught me “how to grow old,” and Missoula Aging Services has become the focal point for acknowledging, advocating, and providing services to make this journey the best it could be. Throughout it all, older adults and those that care for them drove our decision making for adding new and innovative services.

The other incredible lesson I have experienced firsthand, is that Missoula is a wonderfully caring community. Our donors and foundations have pulled us through tough times, allowed us to keep up with growth in our services and trusted us to find new ways to serve our community. We could not have done this without them. Similarly, I need to acknowledge our public funding sources, city, county, state, and federal government who have provided a strong base to build from.

Last but not least, I want to recognize the staff and board members who have served at MAS. Their dedication, passion, and commitment to serving our mission has been so inspiring. I have learned from every staff and board member who has served at MAS. For this reason I am assured MAS will continue to be the innovative organization it has been. It takes a village to help us all grow old. Thank you for the incredible journey you all have afforded me.

Susan Kohler
Chief Executive Officer

WE'RE PROUD *of* OUR YEARS



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, Farmers Market Coupons, Liquid Nutrition (Ensure®), Community Lunches
- **Expert Assistance and Education:** Call Center, Medicare & Medicaid Consultations, Resource Center Appointments, 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 Programs: RSVP, Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, Caring 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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● M E A L S ●
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Connections is published quarterly by
Missoula Aging Services (MAS).

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Programs of Missoula Aging Services are
funded in part through the Montana Dept.
of Public Health and Human Services,
Corp. for National and Community Service,
Administration for Community Living, City of
Missoula and Missoula County.

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In Perspective



Recently I have been asked how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted older adults in Missoula County. Based on our observations and discussions with hundreds of older adults, the biggest impacts have been in loneliness/isolation and food insecurity.

This month, as we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of March for Meals, I thought we could delve into some of the issues around food insecurity.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we all experienced bare shelves in the grocery stores as we stocked up to go into lockdown. This impacted many people in a profound way and created a real sense of food insecurity that has not left us. We were all told to stay home, but there was a special emphasis on the vulnerable in our community. Most older adults were told to stay home without having a reliable way to get groceries, which in turn created even more food insecurity. That was almost two years ago, and we continue to have new issues that create worry and anxiety about the pandemic and access to food. We are now faced with supply chain delays, the Omicron variant, and the highest level of inflation the country has seen in decades. Instead of feeling more secure over time, many older adults are facing even greater food insecurity.

Thankfully, MAS has been here to help older adults and people living with disabilities in our community. We have responded to growing food insecurity by:

- Increasing the number of home delivered meals through Meals on Wheels
- Educating older adults to use technology to address isolation, while also teaching them to shop online for groceries
- Expanding the home delivered meal program to provide meals to anyone meeting the program requirements, regardless of age
- Providing assistance through the Resource Center to connect people with a variety of food programs

These efforts to fight hunger and isolation have been possible because of generous community support. Thank for your compassion as we continue working to support the most vulnerable in our community.

Russ Hill

Chief Operations Officer

MEALS ON WHEELS

A Lifesaver While Recovering from Surgery

When Tawnya Cazier shattered her left leg in 2019, a months-long process of healing including five surgeries, began. The active 43-year-old was suddenly faced with challenges nobody could prepare for. Initially, Tawnya received help from her mom who drove from Idaho to help her daughter navigate her new mobility challenges. “I was thankful for my mom coming to help during that time, but after a month of staying with me, she had to return to her own life and responsibilities,” Tawnya shared.

Following her mom’s departure, Tawnya once again faced the challenge of being unable to drive to the grocery store and had difficulty standing with her mobility device in the kitchen to prepare food. “It was during a doctor’s visit a nurse told me about Meals on Wheels for people like me who are unable to obtain and prepare their own meals,” she continued. While most Meals on Wheels recipients are over the age of 60, many are unaware the service is also available to individuals just like Tawnya who are faced with a temporary crisis.

Two years following Tawnya’s accident and recovery, bad luck struck again. Tawnya recently broke her right ankle, thereby tethering her to the four walls of her home once more. This time, however, she knew where to turn for help. “I called Dean at Missoula Aging Services and he got everything set up for me right away. It has been such a relief knowing help is available.”

Tawnya learned the first time around how important good nutrition is while you heal from an injury or illness. “Meals on Wheels has been a lifesaver for me, and I’m hoping that sharing

my story can help others during a crisis as well.”

When asked her favorite Meals on Wheels meal she replies, “Well, I’m a sucker for the mac ‘n cheese. Or the stir fry. And the ravioli is really good too.” These hot delicious meals have been key to Tawnya’s recovery.

We hope you think of Missoula Aging Services if something like this ever happens to you or your loved ones.



“Meals on Wheels has been a lifesaver for me, and I hope that sharing my story can help others during a crisis as well.”

-MAS Client



Memory Care Support Services MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Have you or someone you know started experiencing memory loss or recently been diagnosed with dementia? At Missoula Aging Services, we know this may feel overwhelming, but Memory Care Support Services is here to help. MAS Care Manager Jill Ziessler emphasized, “Working with Memory Care Support Services early on allows someone to fully participate in planning for the long term. It is often possible to successfully age in place.”

Memory Care Support Services provides personalized support for each person’s unique needs. This may include meals delivered with a safety check from a Meals on Wheels volunteer, home modifications to improve safety, support groups for caregivers, and more. Memory Care Support Services helps both people who are living at home by themselves and those with support from a family care partner. When someone is living alone with dementia, this program matches the individual with a Care Manager who can work with them over time and help make sure they’re getting the support they need to continue living safely at home. If you or someone you care about could benefit from Memory Care Support Services, call (406) 728-7682 to set up a no-cost assessment. Referrals are always welcome.

Dr. Richard Blank named 2021 Outstanding Community Service Volunteer by AARP Montana

As a long-time volunteer with Missoula Aging Services, Dr. Blank has drawn on his own experience to serve as a strong advocate for families who have loved ones living with Alzheimer’s. He has honored his late wife Pat by serving as a member of Dementia Friendly Missoula, and shared his experience and expertise widely throughout the community, with both support groups and the Montana Legislature. He participated in the MAS Kitchen Table Conversations to educate people on end-of-life care for many years. He has volunteered with Meals on Wheels and frequently connects with clients. Dr. Blank has made a real difference in the Missoula community and has touched many lives. Thank you for your volunteer service!

In Memorium

In honor and remembrance of these dedicated individuals whose volunteering enhanced the lives of those they served.

AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers

Harry Siebert

Mary Nichols

Ronni Lynn Edelson

Jeremy Kinross-Wright

Albert Yonovitz

John Talbot





269,318 Meals delivered since the pandemic started



90+ Volunteer Drivers



2388 friendly check-ins each week

March for Meals Celebrates 50 Years of Generosity

As we begin March for Meals 2022, all of us here at MAS would like to thank the Missoula community for your ongoing support for your neighbors, especially during these last couple years. Meals on Wheels has been helping a wide range of people during this time, including homebound older adults, adults with disabilities, and people recovering after returning from the hospital.

Your support matters. The number of people receiving Meals on Wheels has increased 66% since the start of 2020, with about 2,388 meals delivered each week. Because of your generosity, Missoula Aging Services has had the resources to continue providing expanded services to all who need it.

This March for Meals, we invite you to continue joining with us in support of Meals on Wheels through donations and volunteer service. With an increased number of clients, we also have a greater need for volunteers, including both regular drivers and substitute drivers. If you're interested in volunteering with Meals on Wheels, we would love to hear from you! Contact sklinge@missoulaagingservices.org or call us at (406) 728-7682 to learn more.

Please join us in the fight against hunger and isolation in Missoula County. Donations can be made via the card attached to your copy of *Connections* or online at missoulaagingservices.org

—Thank You—

to the MISSOULA POLICE DEPARTMENT for raising funds to provide holiday meals for Meals on Wheels clients in 2021!

MAJOR DONORS

November-December 2021

Individuals and Businesses who made gifts of \$200 or more:

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Keith Yale
Dean & Sharon Yould
Dorothy Young
Terry & Mary Zahn

WITH GRATITUDE

Special thanks to
Terry and Patt Payne for
your generous support of
Meals on Wheels.

Thank you for joining with
Missoula Aging Services in
the fight against hunger
and isolation.



Roy and Lillian Addison
Leigh Addison

Taylor Alford
Melissa Peterson

Marleen Bain
Philip Bain

Phil Bakke
Glenn & Patty Camp

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Ellie Barnes

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Joan Young
Dwight Young

Darlene Zentner
Cheryl & Bruce Troutwine

Jack Zottnick
Fern and Brian Schock

GIFTS IN HONOR OF INDIVIDUALS November-December 2021

Coralie 'Rocky' Allen
Margaret & Stephen Montsaroff

Tam Armstrong
Maeta Kaplan & Dan Wilcox

Dorleen Bakke
Glenn & Patty Camp

Dennis Bangs
Kristin Johnson-Shadley

Dale and Millie Best
Sharon Hughes

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Bruce & Mari Bender

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Jan Hiller

Mary Dalton
Nancy Gay

Ingrid Davis
Bruce & Janis Davis

Dave & Mary Dickson
Jim & Cathy Semmelroth

Michael Fredrickson
Betsy & Dick Holmquist
Pam Gardiner and Lyle Geurts
Jennifer Slayden

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Brad Haugan

Austin Hurd
Daurine Spritzer

Jackie Johnson
Kristin Johnson-Shadley

Kathy Kimmel
Anonymous

Susan Kohler
Kent & Barbara Bevington
Jack & Bonnie Chambers
John Garrity & Jean Thorstenson
United Way of Missoula County
Dirk Williams & Kristine Foot

Steven Lake
First Interstate BancSystem Foundation

Lynn Maul
Melody Jeffries Peters

Marge Lubbers

Mark & Jeanne Brown
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Denise Small

Bryon & Colleen Smith
Dan Combo

Roy Spangler
Amy Eagle Thompson

Greg Superneau
Elizabeth Williams

Cynthia Wood
Glenn & Kathi Wood

Bob Yokum
Bob & Jane Becker

Volunteer with Missoula Aging Services

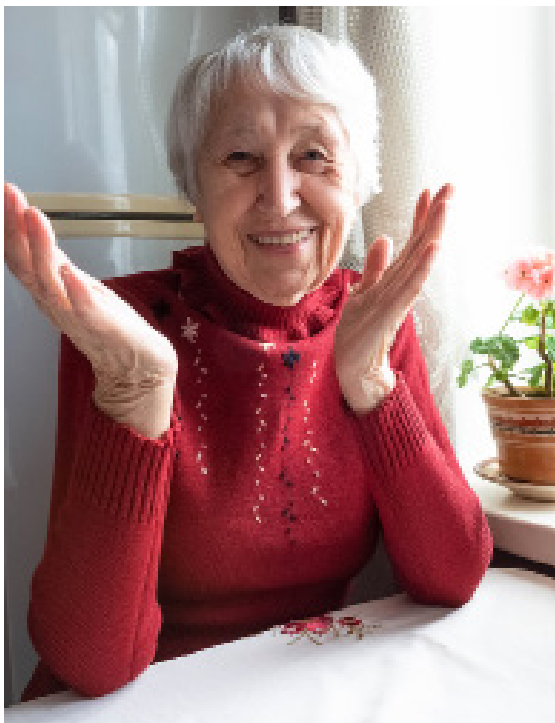
BUILDING COMMUNITY BY HELPING OTHERS

Have you been thinking about volunteering at Missoula Aging Services but didn't know where to start? Perhaps you've been concerned about committing your time because you need some flexibility for family, appointments, and other interests. Volunteer Services can help!

We have a team of professionals who will take the time to sit with you, talk about your interests, time constraints or other barriers and help you find the perfect volunteering opportunity. We have partnerships with dozens of local organizations that serve a full range of populations, as well as unique volunteer opportunities that fill critical community needs.

One exciting opportunity where we are currently seeking volunteers is the **Senior Companions Program**. This program is part of the national AmeriCorps Seniors initiative. Senior Companions can serve as a friend or companion to an older neighbor by helping them run errands or do other simple tasks so they can live in their own homes for as long as possible. The program offers modest stipends to eligible volunteers to help offset the costs of volunteering, as well as supplemental insurance and mileage reimbursement. This volunteer opportunity allows you to look at your schedule and decide how much time you would like to commit while still maintaining your flexibility. You'll receive training and support along the way and be welcomed into a community of other volunteers. Ready to lend a hand? Give Volunteer Services a call today at (406) 728-7682 to learn how to get started, or visit the website to fill out an application!

Money Management Now Accepting New Clients



The Money Management Program helps older and at-risk adults manage their financial affairs. Knowing that bills are paid brings peace of mind. MAS professionals are standing by to help you or your loved ones stay on top of bill-paying and prevent possible exploitation.

Money Management Program Team Lead, Cindi Oakes, shared, "This program is instrumental for older adults' ability to safely age in place. Our team provides a level of assistance that's right for each individual. Whether it's helping clients create and maintain a monthly budget, serving as financial power of attorney or assisting in debt repayment, we have solutions so older adults can enjoy life knowing their finances are in order."

This program is affordable to all and is available to adults aged 60 and older. Family referrals welcome.

Staff News at MAS



LISA SHEPPARD has been named new CEO of Missoula Aging Services and will begin serving in this capacity starting March 1, 2022. With more than two decades of leadership experience in the aging and disability fields, she has extensive knowledge of long-term care systems and expertise in organizational management, including strategic planning, financial oversight, program development and improvement and stakeholder relations.

Prior to accepting the position as CEO of Missoula Aging Services, Lisa served for nine years as the Director of the Flathead County Agency on Aging, overseeing all operations, including Meals on Wheels, in-home services and information and benefits assistance to older adults. We look forward to welcoming her in March!

JONATHAN HESLA joined our PCA team in November 2021 to care for clients out of our Seeley/Swan office. Jon has a background in sales, customer service and caregiving. In his former positions, Jon provided personal care services to people with disabilities and assisted them to achieve independence. He is medication certified and holds CPR and first aid certification.



CHRIS LARSON Missoula Aging Services welcomed Chris in January 2022 as Veteran Directed Care Coordinator. Originally from Billings, Chris went on to the University of Montana where he obtained a BA in Psychology. He previously worked for the State as a Social Worker for both Child and Family Services and Adult Protective Services. Chris knows the challenges that people sometimes face when they are trying to meet their basic needs, and he is motivated and excited to help support the Missoula community with MAS.



MICHAEL RYAN joined the agency in December 2021 as a Customer Service Representative. He brings 6 years of experience working for an in-home healthcare company that taught him the importance of people being able to stay in their homes while receiving the assistance they need. Michael has dedicated the past two years helping older adults at The Village Senior Residence providing compassionate care. He is committed to bringing the best service possible to our clients every day.



JENNIFER SCHULTZ joined MAS as Communications Coordinator in November 2021. She has a BA in Psychology and minor in Sociology from the University of Montana. Jennifer brings over 15 years of experience copywriting and editing for a national corporation and has served for six years as Vice-Chair of the Lolo Community Council. She understands the importance of community outreach and messaging, and is excited to put her skills to work for MAS.



MELISSA THOMPSON Missoula Aging Services welcomed Melissa in November 2021 as Customer Service Manager. A University of Montana graduate with a BA in Sociology with an emphasis in Criminology and Rural and Environmental Change, Melissa also brings 17 years experience in local social and human services and management. She is a staunch advocate for those in need, especially with marginalized and vulnerable populations in our community.

EST. 1982

MISSOULA *aging* SERVICES

WE'RE PROUD *of* OUR YEARS

337 Stephens Ave | Missoula, MT

MISSOULAAGINGSERVICES.ORG

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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59801

MAS Events

VIRTUAL NEW TO MEDICARE WORKSHOP

Thursday, March 17 from 12-1:30 pm

Tuesday, April 12 from 6-7:30 pm

Thursday, May 19 from 12-1:30 pm

Participate online using Zoom. \$20 or 2 for \$35.

No cost and reduced cost tickets available.

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

AGING MASTERY PROGRAM® (11-WEEK SESSION)

Mondays beginning April 4 from 10 am-12 pm

Attend online via Zoom. No cost for Montana residents.

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

VIRTUAL ADVANCE CARE PLANNING WORKSHOP

Thursday, April 14 from 10-11:15 am

Participate online using Zoom. No cost.

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

VIRTUAL CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

Second Monday of each Month from 4-5 pm

Participate online using Zoom. No cost. Register online:

<https://bit.ly/3Ls910e>

Third Tuesday of each Month from 1-2 pm

Participate online using Zoom. No cost. Register online:

<https://bit.ly/3paloUL>

VIRTUAL POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS®

Six Wednesdays beginning March 23 from 9:30-11:30 am

Attend online via Zoom. No cost for Montana residents.

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

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>

NEW: VIRTUAL MEMORY LOSS CONVERSATIONS

Thursdays at 10 am

Participate online using Zoom. No cost.

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

RETIREMENT CELEBRATION FOR SUSAN KOHLER

Tuesday, March 22 from 5-7:30 pm

Missoula Public Library, 455 E Main Street, Level 4

All are welcome at this public reception honoring

Susan's 38 years of leadership and service.

Call (406) 728-7682 to register for classes by phone.

View a full list of events at missoulaagingservices.org