

Missoula Aging Services (MAS) empowers older adults, their families and caregivers through programs, services, volunteer opportunities and education to continue to live independently at home, for as long as possible.

Due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, MAS was and continues to be in a unique position to provide critical services, supports and social connectivity for those most at risk of serious consequences of the disease, in the communities we serve. Our beneficiaries, supporters and organization were all profoundly impacted during the final 3 ½ months of the fiscal year. The following information is reflective of those impacts, as some programs expanded to meet new needs, some programs combined efforts or changed dramatically, while others decreased as MAS closed its doors to the public for everyone's safety. Staff moved off site to safely plan and continue to provide essential services to older adults in innovative ways, while following shelter-in-place orders, local health department guidance and CDC recommendations.

The Community Lunch Program normally serves Missoula County residents who receive meals and education at sites in Missoula, Bonner, Seeley Lake, Lolo and Condon. In the final 3 ½ months of the fiscal year, Community Lunches transitioned to low touch, drive through style Grab and Go lunches, provided at no cost at both Missoula and Seeley Lake Senior Centers. In these final months Community Lunches were counted more accurately as Meals on Wheels deliveries. *29,333 Community Lunches were served July 2019 - March 2020.*

Meals on Wheels serves housebound older adults and people with disabilities in Missoula County. Rural sites include Condon and Seeley Lake. Liquid Nutrition (Ensure®) is provided at cost. During the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity became a significant issue for older adults and people with disabilities. Fortunately MAS was able to increase the number of people served and meals delivered. After March 31, clients served through a new Grab and Go service were counted as Meals on Wheels deliveries. 77,297 meals (including Ensure®) were provided by 147 volunteers to 381 housebound individuals from July - March. An additional 54,584 meals were provided April - June (including Ensure® plus Grab and Go service) to 737 at risk individuals. *A total of 131,881 meals were provided in Fiscal Year 2020.*

The Farmers' Market Coupon Program provides older adults who meet income guidelines with vouchers to purchase fresh, locally grown fruit and vegetables at local markets. *501 older adults were served through this program.*

Family Caregiver Support assists family members and others who provide unpaid in-home or distance care to older adults. Certified resource specialists provide access to local services, and can connect long-distance caregivers to services in communities across the country. Monthly support groups are offered by trained facilitators. No classes or groups were possible in the final months of the fiscal year. Only very limited essential services were safely provided in homes after March 15, 2020. *11,050 hours of Respite/ Homemaking were provided to 247 clients in Fiscal Year 2020.*



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Mission

Missoula Aging Services promotes the independence, dignity and health of older adults and those who care for them.

Continued on back



Susan Kohler
Chief Executive Officer

Continued:

The Care Management Program staff identify service needs to address the social determinants of health and develop care plans for older adults with complex needs, including those who transition from the hospital or a nursing facility back home. Case management services are provided. *Staff worked with a total of 290 clients last year.*

The Resource Center provides unbiased referrals, information and assistance for older adults and their caregivers. Adult children seeking referrals to services locally or from a distance are also served through a database of over 400 current resources. Packets are available at no cost on topics such as long-term care, Medicare, and Medicaid. A library and internet access are available. Services were limited to virtual meetings and Call Center services after closing the doors to the public on March 15 due to COVID-19. *\$708,633 was saved on Medicare prescription drug plans, homeowner/renter tax credits and Medicare Savings Plans, through staff consultations, prior to the pandemic.*

Montana Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is a statewide program that engages trained volunteers to help reduce Medicare and Medicaid waste, fraud and abuse. After March 15, 2020 services were delivered via video and on-line. *12,806 Medicare beneficiaries were educated and assisted across the state by Montana SMP.*

The Ombudsman Program provides certified local ombudsmen who work to protect the rights of people living in assisted living and nursing homes. They help residents understand and exercise their right to good care. Ombudsmen are impartial mediators who investigate resident concerns and may provide information, suggest solutions and advocate for change on behalf of residents. After March 15 of 2020, Ombudsmen were not allowed into assisted living or nursing homes for the safety of this demographic. Phone and online meetings were implemented to gain virtual access and continue services. *1,453 in-person or virtual visits were made to residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities.*

Transportation issues and solutions are actively worked on by MAS. A partnership with the city bus system helps support paratransit and no cost services. Senior Companions and Caring Companions help with transportation needs. After March 15, transportation services were significantly impacted. *40,069 rides for older adults and people with disabilities were provided last fiscal year.*

Senior Companions assist older adults and people with disabilities with daily tasks such as grocery shopping, arranging transportation and socialization for isolated individuals. These friendships often make the difference between living at home and moving to a nursing home prematurely. After March 15, the program was profoundly impacted as older adult volunteers could no longer serve safely. *30 Senior Companions gave 22,292 hours serving 154 clients. Staff and volunteers provided reassurance phone calls and check-ins during the pandemic.*

Foster Grandparent volunteers provide special care, attention and academic guidance to at-risk children of all ages, in 17 Missoula County schools, organizations and pre-schools. After March 15, the program was profoundly impacted as older adult volunteers could not serve safely and schools closed. *27 Foster Grandparents provided 24,213 hours of mentoring to 216 at-risk school children.*

Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent volunteers must meet income guidelines to receive a tax-free stipend in return for 15-40 hours of volunteer service each week.

RSVP (volunteer program) members use their wisdom and experience to help address critical needs in their community. After March 15, volunteers could not serve safely which deeply impacted the program. *389 volunteers were recruited, trained and served 32,374 hours with 39 local public, nonprofit, private and government agencies.*