



# The WHEELER report

Metro Meals on Wheels Newsletter – Spring 2012



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BRINGING PROGRESS UPDATES AND STORIES FROM THE ROAD TO OUR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS!

## THE NORTHSIDE TORNADO: MEALS ON WHEELS HELPS PEOPLE STAY IN THEIR OWN HOMES AND CONNECTED TO THEIR COMMUNITY

On May 22 of last year, a tornado ripped through North Minneapolis. The storm uprooted trees, snapped power lines, and destroyed homes. Not only was there millions of dollars' worth of damage—there was loss of life and livelihood in a part of the city that was already struggling. Over 30 percent of the residents in North Minneapolis live in poverty, and nearly 80 percent receive assistance from Hennepin County. Add a natural disaster to that, and the devastation is untold.

The same day that the Minneapolis tornado hit, the Joplin, Missouri, tornado hit, killing 162 people and overshadowing the damage in North Minneapolis. The Federal Emergency Management Agency decided to leave Minneapolis without aid, so it was fully up to the community to make things

right—and North Minneapolis Meals on Wheels played a vital role in the first response and relief effort.

“I’m always thinking about the clients. Always,” says Meals on Wheels administrative assistant Lynn Dahlke. “Some of them are frail, some move slowly, some of them are bedridden. Those were the ones I was most scared for—the ones that couldn’t get out safely.” Less than an hour after the skies cleared on May 22, Lynn was in the North Minneapolis Meals on Wheels office and on the phone with Executive Director Denise Harris, discussing what needed to be done to ensure their most vulnerable neighbors didn’t fall through the cracks.

“We had our emergency preparedness plan in place. So we worked the plan—we notified our staff, we

## Tips 4 Staying Cool

As summer heat nears the following tips will help our senior neighbors stay cool

- Wear loose-fitting clothing
- Keep the air moving; even a small fan can make it seem a lot cooler
- Put a damp cloth on your neck
- Drink lots of water, staying hydrated will keep you cool.
- Meals on Wheels may be able to help with a free fan, call **612-623-3363** for more info.

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www.meals-on-wheels.com  
Got a Question? Call us! 612.623.3363

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# 5 in Thirty!

## 5 Simple Ways to Help Metro Meals on Wheels in 30 Days

1. Deliver a Meal! Call **612.623.3363** to sign up to deliver a meal over your lunch hour.
2. Create care packages for Meals on Wheels recipients with your kids! Learn how at [meals-on-wheels.com/family](http://meals-on-wheels.com/family).
3. Support Meals on Wheels using social media. You can help us serve more meals with every tweet or status update – [www.helpattack.com/loves/mmow](http://www.helpattack.com/loves/mmow).
4. Discover a new power lunch and create a workplace delivery team. Visit [meals-on-wheels.com/get\\_involved\\_team](http://meals-on-wheels.com/get_involved_team).
5. Buy your tickets for **Meals on Heels—The Party with a Purpose** at [www.mealsonheelsevent.org](http://www.mealsonheelsevent.org) Event to be held on August 16th, 6-9 PM.

### LEAVE A LEGACY – Continued from Page 3

Together we can ensure that many more meals will be delivered.

Please use the following wording when working with your attorney: I give, devise and bequeath to Metro Meals on Wheels,

Tax Identification Number 31-1501057,  
the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(or state a fraction or percentage of estate) to be used for the ongoing operation of Metro Meals on Wheels.

Metro Meals on Wheels may be contacted in care of:

**Patrick Rowan, Executive Director**  
**1200 Washington Avenue South, Suite 380**  
**Minneapolis, MN 55415**  
**612-623-3363, meals-on-wheels.com.**



# The Northside Tornado

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changed our voicemail, and we contacted our caterer. Then we had to watch and see when we were able to get into the North Side,” Denise explains. “We told the City on Tuesday that we were going to start delivering meals on Wednesday. They told us that was the best news they’d heard all day.”

Equipped with IDs that let them past police barriers, Meals on Wheels staff—many of whom live in North Minneapolis and suffered damage to their own property in the storm—took to the streets. One driver, Kizzy, remembers what she saw on her route: “Everything was different. Debris, trees down. You couldn’t drive to a lot of places, so you had to walk to the clients’ houses. There were people who didn’t have water, electricity, gas—and it wasn’t only our clients.”

While Meals on Wheels staff and volunteers walked door to door to their clients, they also worked to get help for non-client community members in need. They connected people to food, water, blankets, and information. Lynn designed a “non-client application” to ensure ongoing delivery to other North Minneapolis residents without utilities. Drivers and volunteers took down names and addresses of people that needed help, and they reported suspicious activity to the authorities. Harold, another Meals on Wheels driver, says this “first responder” responsibility isn’t limited to times of crisis. He sums up his role like this: “I am the eyes and ears of some of those people that can’t get out, those people that don’t have others watching over them.”

It’s that mentality that had Meals on Wheels workers giving a little extra to

their clients who felt lost. Lynn recounts, “One lady told one of our drivers ‘the one thing I really miss is a hot cup of coffee.’ She had no power. So on that Thursday he managed to bring her a hot cup of coffee from a coffee shop.” She adds, “And that lady is still in her home.”

And while they did what they could to make their neighbors comfortable, Meals on Wheels also facilitated connections between isolated clients and the outside world. “Relatives from out of state could call us and we could tell them what the situation was with their loved one, what we observed with the condition of their home,” Denise explains. “One of our clients—her daughter lives 1,000 miles from here. We were able to assure her that Mom was okay, that she was being fed, and that she had electricity and water.”

North Minneapolis Meals on Wheels played a big role in the relief effort, but no one said they did it alone. “The thing that’s so inspiring was the cooperation of everyone involved—the City, the United Way, the Red Cross, and many other nonprofits—we all came together and forgot about individual fundraising,” Denise explains. “It wasn’t about ‘me’; it was about ‘we.’”

One year later, many of the homes in North Minneapolis have been repaired. The debris is gone, the city is replacing trees, and life at North Minneapolis Meals on Wheels has gone mostly back to normal with one



## SNAP for Seniors

Meals on Wheels Working to Increase Seniors’ Access to Healthy Foods

A nutritious diet is important, particularly for seniors, to avoid illness, recover from injury and live longer lives. That’s why Metro Meals on Wheels has partnered with Minnesota’s Nutritious Food Coalition, a statewide effort to increase participation in the state’s Food Support, formerly Food Stamp, program. The coalition’s launch coincides with Governor Dayton’s proclamation that January is Food Support and Nutrition Outreach month in Minnesota.

The Food Support program is a county-run federal nutrition program that helps people get the foods they need to maintain a healthy diet. Recent changes to Minnesota’s Food Support program, which include removing the asset test and raising income guidelines to 165% of poverty, have resulted in even more Minnesotans being eligible for the program. Despite these changes, participation rates in the program are still low, with only 41% of eligible seniors receiving the nutrition benefits.



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exception—Meals on Wheels membership is way, way up.

“A lot of times with small nonprofits, they say your heart’s in the right place but it’s not run professionally. We were able to dispel that. We were on point and were ready to not only meet the needs of our clients, but

also the needs of others,” declares Denise. “We were also able to raise the profile of North Minneapolis Meals on Wheels and let people know we are here. There were some unmet needs in the community that have now been realized.”

Helping people stay in their own

homes and connected to their community is what North Minneapolis Meals on Wheels and the Meals on Wheels programs in every neighborhood in the Twin Cities do every day—rain or shine, in times of disaster or peacefulness.

Got a Question? Call us! 612.623.3363

## Partner Profile Coon Rapids/Blaine – Meals on Wheels

Area Served: Coon Rapids & Blaine

Year Program was started: 1973

How many clients: 250+

How many volunteers each year: 290

How many meals served each year: 29,600

Types of meals offered: Diabetic, Low Sodium, Vegetarian, and Mechanical Soft

Number of staff (full/part/volunteer): 1 Full Time

Special Feature: Coon Rapids/Blaine Meals on Wheels partners with the city police and fire departments for “Big Wheels Delivers Meals” to deliver meals in fire trucks and police cars!



Photo courtesy of ABC News

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To address low participation rates, particularly among seniors, Metro Meals on Wheels has been awarded its second year of funding from the USDA to conduct Food Support outreach with Meals on Wheels clients. In partnership with our

members, Metro Meals on Wheels is raising awareness of the Food Support program by distributing outreach materials, conducting eligibility screenings and providing limited application assistance to Meals on Wheels clients.

If you know of someone who needs help adding more healthy foods to their diet, please share the Food Support Screening Tool with them or have them call the Minnesota Food Helpline at 1-888-711-1151.

## Leave a Legacy

Secure the Future of Meals on Wheels with a Charitable Bequest

A charitable bequest is a distribution from your estate to Meals on Wheels through your last Will and Testament. Your estate is the sum of your assets, including property you own, insurance policies, retirement accounts, cash, etc. While some people may have large estates, most people who are not wealthy still have the resources to make an impactful charitable bequest.

A gift in your Will to Metro Meals on Wheels will go a long way in ensuring delivery of hot nutritious meals and daily visits from a volunteer for seniors and people with disabilities in our community, and will help us guarantee service to neighbors needing meals in the future.

Drafting or updating your Will is easier than you think. Please call your attorney and let him or her know you want to make a charitable bequest to Metro Meals on Wheels and keep hot, nutritious home delivered meals available for generations to come.

When you choose to include Meals on Wheels in your plan, please let us know. We want to thank you and let you know how much we appreciate your kind gesture. Always remember that any gift by will is meaningful – it doesn’t have to be large. Even a gift of “3% of my estate” will make a difference to those we serve.

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