



# Behind the Wheel

Volume 5, Issue 3

Published four times per year by AgeWell Services, 560 Seminole Rd., Muskegon MI 49444

## AgeWell Services's VISION for West Michigan!

Senior hunger is a complex community concern. While 1-in-6 seniors lack access to foods, it's a variety of issues: poverty, driving restrictions, living in locations where grocery stores do not exist, dementia. Our focus for our meals programs over the next two years includes on large goal: to be the most innovative senior meals program in the nation! So how do we get there? Purchase from local vendors, Farm-to-Plate and increase food access.

### 1) Purchasing from Local Sources: Transfer 10% buying power to local agriculture.

AgeWell Services is excited to be part of a new food system project. Consumers Energy Foundation, Community Foundation for Muskegon County and Muskegon Farmers Market launched the Muskegon Food Hub Pilot project on Tuesday, May 2, 2017.



AgeWell Services is a proud partner in the pilot as a buyer of fresh produce from local farmers in our first efforts to bring our food programs "farm to table."

We received our first delivery on Tuesday, May 9, 2017; 470 pounds (11 large bags) of fresh, local asparagus! Approximately 6 of the bags delivered that day were used for the meal on Friday, May 12, 2017 for our Meals on Wheels and Meal Site participants! The remaining bags will be frozen and used at a later time. More to come as we introduce more variety based on Michigan harvest season.



### 2) Bring the local food Farm-to-Plate! Increase scratch cooking from 50% to 80%.

Thanks to an \$18,000 HEALTHY Muskegon grant from the Community Foundation for Muskegon County AgeWell Services will continue to expand our scratch cooking.

While our Meals on Wheels kitchen already produces 50% of meals from scratch, we are eager to combine the efforts of HEALTHY Muskegon and the Food Hub Pilot project. Items the kitchen is currently serving to increase their scratch cooking include: pasta sauces, red skin potatoes, rice pilaf and bread pudding.

We are continuing to experiment with more scratch cooking for our hot and hearty meals. Using fresh ingredients including herbs grown by individuals in the LifeCircles P.A.C.E. program and the fresh produce from the Food Hub.



### 3) Increasing food access through variety.

In West Michigan, we do not have a problem with a lack of food, we have a problem with ACCESS to healthy, nutritious foods. A portion of a healthy food system is aggregating and preserving foods for redistribution, making them more accessible to those who lack funds or transportation. The epitome of the food justice movement is allowing people to choose the food they eat each day rather than "settle" for the food accessed on pantry or convenience store shelves. Thus, creating a new "Choice Menu System" where clients are empowered to choose what they eat adds value to their health and nutrition.

Even more importantly, it allows for us to feed aging adults foods they grew up cooking in their kitchen and growing with their families in the garden. Choice brings flexibility to their door each day, meeting food preferences of different cultures, religions, diets and lifestyles.

**Help AgeWell Services eliminate barriers to our goal!**  
- External walk-in freezer  
- Volunteers with expertise in LEAN / Six-Sigma  
- Bag Sealer with supplies

## Letter from the Director



Dear Donors,

No doubt Meals on Wheels received a lot of national attention in the last several months. In the wake of potential massive cuts to the proposed 2018 federal budget, programs across the nation are waiting with bated breath to see what will happen to critical federal funding that supports food insecure aging adults. According to Meals on Wheels America, our program's value is not quantified solely by the numbers of meals served. Nationally, 5,000 local programs support more than 2.4 million Americans by delivering nutritious meals and a friendly visit. National statistics show that Meals on Wheels participants report fewer falls and malnourishment, saving the country billions in health care and hospital costs. According to Meals on Wheels America, "we can provide senior Meals on Wheels for one year for roughly the same cost as 1 day in the hospital (2017 US Fact Sheet)."

Locally, federal funds comprise 31.4% of our annual budget which provided 170,000 meals of the 374,850 meals we served last year. Government funds are an important contribution to our diverse base of income, providing 45% of our total meals served. Any reduction to the Older Americans Act will impact the individuals we serve, especially in a time of immense growth to the senior population.

Since centralizing our operations to the Tanglewood Park facility in Muskegon, the number of seniors we serve has risen drastically. However, we know that as the Baby Boomer generation begins to retire, the population of aging adults will DOUBLE in all three counties we serve. The expected need for home delivered meals especially will drastically affect the way our business operates.

AgeWell Services is focused on increasing our organization's capacity to grow in a sustainable way, connecting our mission to a very unique population of active, aging adults. If 1 in 6 seniors suffer from food insecurity now, imagine the intense need in 10 and 15 years. Purchasing food from local sources provides foods high in nutritional value and supports local farmers, increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Increasing our scratch cooking recipes by 30% adds value to our variety of offerings that meet the palates of Baby Boomers. By introducing a "choice" menu system, we are part of the true Food Justice movement by allowing clients to choose what goes on their plates, including meeting their cultural and ethnic preferences.

While federal funding makes-up almost one-third of our operational budget, YOU provide 14.4% of the revenue for our meal programs. We cannot thank you enough for your financial gifts. In order for us to grow operations to meet the upcoming demands, additional resources will be needed to expand our organizational capacity. This translates to very important equipment, technology, transportation, volunteers and more direct-service team members. If you are interested in assisting our organization with these opportunities to grow, we invite you to coffee and discussion. Your partnership is an essential piece to managing our growth and sustaining it through the upcoming years. Will you consider an offering of your time, talents and treasure to make this vision a dream come true? If your answer is yes, let's discuss!

As always, THANK YOU for leading the way to aging well!

Sincerely,

Kris Collee  
Executive Director  
(231) 733-8630

[www.agewellservices.org](http://www.agewellservices.org)

### Board of Directors

Chair	Members
Diane Cunningham	Lois Barringer
Treasurer	Janet Hansen
Phil Kelly	Joe Legros
Secretary	Matt Mills
Jean Ann McCann	John Ward

AgeWell Services of West Michigan  
560 Seminole Road  
Muskegon, MI 49444  
Phone: (231) 755-0434

[www.agewellservices.org](http://www.agewellservices.org)  
[www.facebook.com/agewellservices](https://www.facebook.com/agewellservices)  
@AgeWellServices

## Pat on the Back...

### Donor Spotlight: The Kersman Legacy



Lorin Industries and the Kersman family have been long time donors of AgeWell Services' Meals on Wheels program. Most recently they were the "Greatest Needs Auction Sponsor Match" at the \$3,000 level for our Heels for Meals fundraiser in 2016 & 2017.

The Kersman Legacy goes deeper than just monetary donations for AgeWell Services' Meals on Wheels; they have volunteered as home delivered meal drivers. Lorin Industries President and CEO, Park Kersman remembers delivering meals to seniors in the Muskegon area with his grandfather, Herb Kersman. "It is meaningful to me personally remembering this time with my grandfather and his passion for seniors," said Park Kersman. "I really enjoyed getting involved and helping bring meals to those in need. What a great experience for me personally."

"Thanks to AgeWell Services organization for all you do for our community. You show innovation, efficiency and positive impact on our community," said Park Kersman. "For me, having the ability and opportunity to give is exciting in itself. These are the kinds of things that make our community unique."

### Community Partner Spotlight: Best Financial Community Giveback Challenge

Thank you Best Financial Credit Union for hosting your first ever "Community Giveback Challenge" in March! AgeWell Services was one of 10 local nonprofits nominated and we had to create a 1-minute video about our Meals on Wheels program. After 4 weeks of public voting, we got 3rd place and won \$5,000 from Best Financial Credit Union.

Their generosity resulted in AgeWell Services' Meals on Wheels providing 833 meals to homebound seniors in Muskegon County.



### Meals on Wheels Benefits from Dancing With The Local Stars



The Women's Division Chamber of Commerce in Muskegon has developed a fantastic fundraiser called Dancing with the Local Stars and it is going strong. In 2017, the event raised \$126,000 for West Michigan food pantries and the Meals on Wheels program. This year AgeWell Services' Meals on Wheels was the recipient of \$11,500, that donation alone helps us provide 1,916 meals to homebound seniors.

AgeWell Services and Meals on Wheels has offered use of our facility at Tanglewood Park for practices. One of our own, Francine Sagan-Kilcrease, AgeWell Services Fitness Specialist (Pro) has been a part of it since it began in 2009.

This year, Francine was paired with Christopher Kuhn, Vice President of Commercial Lending with Community Shores Bank in Muskegon (Star). The duo performed an entertaining freestyle dance that included drumming by Kuhn, sparkles, and light-up shoes and hats. Together, they won 5 trophies including the coveted, "Critics Choice" and "Best Costume".

The real winner are the local food pantries, including Meals on Wheels. The event brings awareness to food insecurity in our community, it brings critical dollars to provide a much needed service. Meals on Wheels is so grateful to the Women's Division Chamber of Commerce.

## Wish List

Promoting healthy aging and maximizing independence through nutrition, wellness, and supportive services in Oceana, Muskegon and Ottawa counties requires a lot of food and support from you! With a donation to fund items below, you can help us continue to lead the way to aging well.

- Feed a senior for 1 year. Meals on Wheels delivers meals to the door. - \$1,500
- Meals on Wheels' 2012 Van remaining loan balance on 5 year loan. - \$1,450
- Computer with internet hotspot and 1 telephone with 1 year of service for a Meal Site. - \$1,000
- Safety Cages to protect Meals on Wheels drivers from van contents shifting. Cages and installation for 2 vans. - \$810
- Feed 4 homebound seniors for 1 month. Meals on Wheels delivers meals to the door. - \$500
- Feed a senior 5 days a week for 1 month. Meals on Wheels delivers meals to the door. - \$125



560 Seminole Rd.  
Muskegon, MI 49444

#### PLEASE HELP KEEP OUR RECORDS UP TO DATE!

Is your name and mailing address correct?  
Please contact Heather Smith with any changes:  
Email: [heather@agewellservices.org](mailto:heather@agewellservices.org)  
Phone: (231) 733-9636

#### Thank you for making Heels for Meals 2017 a success!

AgeWell Services would like to thank everyone for making Heels for Meals on April 22, 2017 at Bella Maria's a huge success! With the support of our sponsors, donors, emcees Brent Ashcroft and Britta Cleveland, event guests, auctioneer Rob Schweifler, volunteers, vendors and team members we had a profit of nearly \$35,000 for our meal programs to help feed seniors in our community.

- We had several games, activities and auctions including a Best Heels Contest, Heads or Heels and Signature Glass Sales.
- 9 items in the Live auction including a 5-day, 4-night stay at a hotel in Cancun, Mexico that sold for \$1,700.
- 22 items in the Good Fortune auction.
- 43 items in the Silent auction, including a Kayak that sold for \$250.
- Greatest Needs auction had 8 items and 42 donors that raised \$11,705.



save the date

Heels for Meals 2018

Saturday, April 21, 2018, 6-10 p.m.

at Bella Maria's Event Center