

AgeWell SERVICES

BEHIND THE WHEEL

Published three times per year by AgeWell Services of West Michigan
October 2026



Bringing Meals on Wheels to Life

For more than 50 years, AgeWell Services has helped older adults remain healthy, independent and connected to their communities. Now, we are preparing for the next chapter of older adult nutrition through expanded and enhanced **Meals on Wheels**.

This initiative grew from a continuous quality improvement project that began in March 2025. We asked a simple but important question: **How can Meals on Wheels better meet each person's nutritional, cultural, medical and personal preferences while creating opportunities to serve more older adults?**

Beginning **November 2, 2026**, current AgeWell Services' Meals on Wheels clients will have access to expanded and enhanced meal choices. Options will include culturally diverse meals and specialized choices, such as gluten-sensitive, renal, mechanical soft and pureed meals. **Nutrition is not one-size-fits-all and older adults deserve choices that reflect their needs, preferences and lifestyles.**

This launch in an important milestone, but it is not the finish line. Our next phase will expand access to healthy home-delivered meals for Medicaid beneficiaries referred through physicians and healthcare providers. Through healthcare partnerships, food can become a practical intervention that supports health, reduces barriers to nutritious meals and helps older adults remain independent at home.

To fully bring this expanded and enhanced Meals on Wheels to life, we're seeking support for the equipment and infrastructure needed to strengthen our commercial kitchen and prepare for future growth. The overall initiative budget is $425,000 (more details on page 3) and nearly half has already been secured through individual donors and corporate partners. **Will you consider making a gift to help bring the Meals on Wheels expansion and enhancement initiative to life?**

Your investment will help AgeWell Services purchase the infrastructure needed to expand meal choice, strengthen nutrition services and prepare for future growth. You make make your gift using the enclosed response envelope or online at agewellservices.org/donate.

Together, we can create more choice, **more flexibility and more independence** for the older adults we serve.

With gratitude,

Kris VanderStelt

Kris VanderStelt, Executive Director

2026 Board of Directors

Board Chair
Tony Johnson

Vice Chair
Kayla Kolbe

Treasurer
Rick Snellenberger

Secretary
Lorena Frederick

General Members
Chad Bazzatt
Michelle Gravlin
Karla Middlecamp
Gwen Moeggenborg
Susan Ostrum
Luke Reynolds
Barb Vukits
Delores Whittaker

Ex-Officio
Uvett Brown

Mission Statement

AgeWell Services invites you to redefine age! We provide vital connections to keep you nourished, active, learning and living independently.

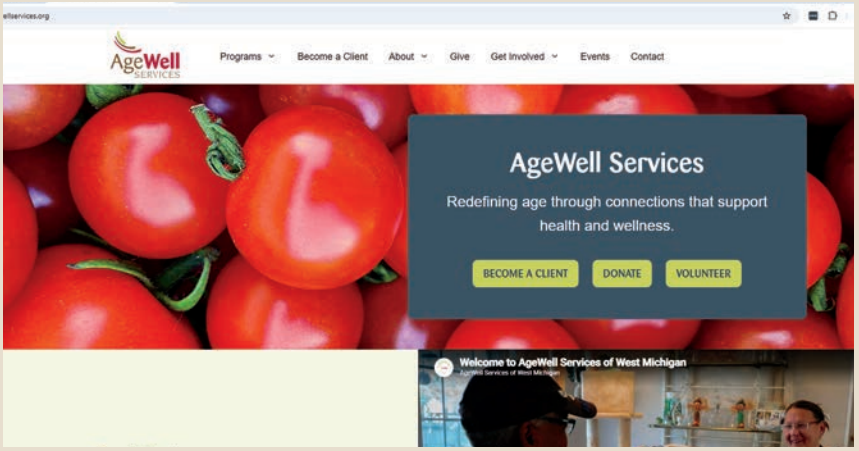
Exciting New Happenings at AgeWell Services!

A FRESH NEW LOOK

Our Community Engagement Team has been working on giving the AgeWell Services brand and website a glow-up!

AGEWELLSERVICES.ORG 2.0

First up was our website refresh, featuring a clean new look and improved navigation. The new Become a Client form makes it easier for older adults and their loved ones to connect with AgeWell Services, while upcoming online meal ordering will streamline access to Meals on Wheels Your Way. We've also updated our Events page with a calendar view, making it simple to browse classes and events by week or month. Be sure to visit and explore what's new!





Stay tuned for our new look, coming soon! A little brighter, a bit more modern, but still everything you expect from AgeWell Services as we provide opportunities for older adults to redefine age through health and wellness.

AgeWell SERVICES

Michigan Elder Justice Conference

MICHIGAN ELDER JUSTICE CONFERENCE

Learn.
Network.
Collaborate.

AgeWell Services, SafeSeniors, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan (PAAM) hosted the 2nd annual Michigan Elder Justice Conference in July 2026. The conference brought together 235 professionals from across Michigan to strengthen efforts to prevent elder abuse, negect and financial exploitation.

Thank you to our sponsors!

Senior PREFERENCES — Lunch Sponsor

Reliance COMMUNITY CARE PARTNERS — Premier Sponsor

Muskegon Federal Credit Union — Happy Hour Sponsor

Senior Medical Transportation

Demand for rides to non-emergency medical appointments continues to grow and we're excited to share that four new vehicles will be joining our fleet over the next several months! These vehicles have replaced four fleet vehicles that are more than 11 years old and have traveled over 150,000 miles. Made possible through generous donors and funding from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Section 5310 program.



We're also looking for volunteer drivers and dispatchers to help keep older adults connected to the care they need. Call Community Engagement Manager, Sara, at (231) 559-2005 to learn more.

The Need Behind Choice Meal Plan & Freezer Favorites

WHAT IS HAPPENING ON NOVEMBER 2?



On November 2, 2026, current Meals on Wheels clients will begin receiving more meal choices. Instead of relying on the same selection for everyone, clients will have access to a broader range of meals that better reflect their preferences, dietary needs and medical requirements. These options will include culturally diverse meals and specialized choices such as gluten-sensitive, renal, mechanical soft and pureed meals.

The **Choice Meal Plan** offers a selection of meals, with easy ordering through a paper form, a phone call or online.

Freezer Favorites are a selection of popular meals delivered to those who don't wish to use the Choice Meal Plan.

This is the next major step in our effort to make home-delivered meals more flexible and person-centered.

WHAT INFRASTRUCTURE IS NEEDED?

Offering more meal choices requires more than changing the menu.

Making this transportation possible requires significant investments in commercial kitchen equipment, food storage, additional food safety tools and delivery infrastructure. Thanks to generous donor support, important progress has already been made, including the purchase and installation of a new commercial combi oven, high-capacity dishwasher and cooler conversion. Additional investments underway include a blast chiller, kitchen upgrades and replacement delivery vehicles to support the growing demand for nutritious meals throughout West Michigan, new materials for Meals on Wheels clients, supplies for the new initiative and additional client database licensing.

WHAT IS THE CHOICE MEAL PLAN & FREEZER FAVORITES INITIATIVE BUDGET?

The budget is $425,000, with 72% of the expenses for commercial kitchen equipment.

48% of the goal has already been secured, bringing us closer to a future where older adults have more choice, flexibility and independence in the meals they receive. Continued investment will help AgeWell Services build the capacity needed to deliver innovative, person-centered nutrition services that meet evolving needs of our community.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Make a gift to support Meals on Wheels using the enclosed envelope or online at agewellservices.org/donate

Volunteer with one of our programs.

Share our mission with friends and family.

Stay connected through our website, newsletter and social media channels.

Together, we can create more choice, more flexibility and more independence for older adults to age well.



NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
GRAND RAPIDS MI
PERMIT NO. 1

AgeWell SERVICES

AgeWell Services of West Michigan
275 W Clay Ave Ste 100
Muskegon, MI 49440

Would you prefer an email version of this newsletter?
Is your name and mailing address correct?
Please contact Jennifer Drury with any changes:
Email: jennifer@agewellservices.org
Phone: (231) 733-8635

Heels for Meals & More



Thank you to our 2026 Sponsors!

Platform
Betten GMC

Best Shoe Contest
PW Services Inc

Dessert
Blended Furniture

Happy Hour
FFCU Family Financial Credit Union

Lace Up for Seniors
Senior Marketing Group of West Michigan

Oxford
Wasserman's Flowers & Gifts Since 1880
CMF Marketing & Events
Trillium Catering and Event Center
Floatmybiz
Wonderland MKG

Platform
Meijer / Community Giving
MMG Wealth Management
Parmenter Law

Stiletto
Custom Service Printers
ICS Data
The Mart Dock

Slipper
CarePatrol of West Michigan - Lakeshore
Hackley Community Care
Langlois Home Furnishings
Quality Tool & Stamping Co., Inc.
Route 31 Credit Union
Shape Corporation
Trinity Health Michigan
Webb Chemical

Croc
Cedar Crest Dairy
Earthroot Acupuncture & Holistic Health
Muskegon YMCA
Port City Ventures
Ravenna Family Practice, P.C.
Shelby State Bank
Shoreline Insurance Agency
State Representative Will Snyder
The Hearthstone Bistro
Tucker Benner Realty, LLC

Save Thursday, April 22, 2027 for 2027 Heels for Meals & More!