



Pickens County Meals on Wheels
P.O. Box 184
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www.pcmow.org

Mission: Pickens County Meals on Wheels exists to combat the effects of hunger, loneliness and isolation on those living in Pickens County, and to provide a lifeline through the use of caring volunteers.

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEALS ON WHEELS ANNOUNCES NEW MEAL DELIVERY SYSTEM

Pickens County Meals on Wheels (PCMOW) is pleased to announce a New Meal Delivery System effective January 3, 2012. In an effort to sustain its reach and integrity, systemic changes are being made to the program's operations. PCMOW has formed a collaborative partnership with Meals on Wheels of Greenville County in order to reduce direct meal costs and provide meals to its 230 homebound, elderly and disable served each week day. "We are honored to have this collaboration with Meals on Wheels of Greenville County. They are a distinguished and established partner, as they have been operating since 1968 and serve over 1,500 daily nutritious meals to homebound recipients in Greenville County," says Executive Director, Meta Bowers.

As a result of this change in meal providers, Meals on Wheels is now transporting meals from Greenville to Easley, Liberty and Pickens for volunteer pick-up and delivery. Under the New Meal Delivery System, recipients will receive the exact same nutritious meal enjoyed by over 1,500 Greenville County Meals on Wheels recipients. The meals are prepared and packaged by staff and volunteers at the Greenville facility each day.

Over the last four years, Pickens County Meals on Wheels has been on a path of incremental growth. During this time, four new routes have been established, and the organization has grown from serving 130 meals a day in 2007 to 230 meals a day in 2011. However, they continue to see an increase in the number of requests for service, 25 per month in 2011. And, like other non-profits, it has become increasingly difficult to raise the necessary funds to not only sustain existing level of services to clients, but also meet the increase need for services.

Because fiscal year 2010 ended with a deficit, 2011 was particularly challenging from the start. Throughout the year donations were down across the board, even with increased fundraising efforts and the extraordinary success of the Sam Wyche Food Fight Bowl in September, PCMOW's financial results were disappointing. "It's tough right now, and I don't expect that to change much in 2012," states Bowers. "This change allows us to grasp an extraordinary opportunity to decrease costs and ensure that quality nutritious meals are still delivered 5 days a week to the 230 we serve. In addition, this change allows us to serve more variety and accommodate people with specialized diets. And, when feasible, these costs savings will allow us to purchase more meals and serve more people for the same budgeted amount."

Where other programs across the nation have had to scale back meal delivery services to 2 or 3 days a week or charge clients for meals; this New Meal Delivery System is a proactive way for the program to continue serving 5 days a week to the 230 recipients it serves.

The New Meal Delivery System is a result of over six-months of research, financial and operational due diligence, and careful deliberation by the Pickens County Meals on Wheels Board of Directors. A lot of sensitivity was placed on what is best for those served, and for those who provide the service. “Meals on Wheels volunteers provide an extraordinary service each time they deliver. They are a very dedicated group of people who are committed to going the extra mile to care for the homebound in Pickens County. They are invaluable,” says Bowers.

Recipients now receive meals that include more variety and selection. They are based on a four week menu cycle that rotates seasonally. Each meal includes a variety of proteins such as pork, beef, fish, and chicken; vegetable blends, mixed fruit and starches. The goal is for each meal to provide one third of the daily recommended allowance for an average adult.

In addition to a broader menu, Bowers indicates PCMOW can now provide specialized diets: chopped, pureed or renal as needed. Many physician’s and home health agencies refer their patients to the program because proper nutrition is key to managing heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and other chronic health conditions. Bowers says, “Meals on Wheels is the perfect recipe to keep our recipients healthy, both physically and emotionally.”

Because of this change, other program enhancements are also underway to customize existing service. According to Bowers, the needs of their recipients change over time. In 2012, there will be a concerted effort to not only assess, but reassess recipients, according to their specific needs: specialized diet, weekend meals, emergency food staples and/or referrals to other agencies in the county.

It is an exciting time at Meals on Wheels as they look toward the future. When founded in 1980, the organization served 10 meals a day. Through the years, it has steadily grown, seeking to combat the effects of hunger, loneliness and isolation on those living in Pickens County. The organization is now well positioned to expand its services as funding and volunteers permit. This new system will also provide the time necessary for the Board of Directors- Kitchen Committee to explore options related to operating a kitchen in Pickens County.

PCMOW appreciates the support of its recipients, volunteers, community businesses, organizations and individuals that have helped facilitate a smooth transition, with special thanks to Save-A-Lot in Pickens, Little Bistro in Liberty, and Susan’s Treasures in Six Mile.

Senior hunger is an issue that Pickens County Meals on Wheels addresses on a daily basis by providing, home-delivered meals to the homebound elderly and disabled in our community. Meals on Wheels is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that is supported by individuals, churches, church groups, schools, businesses, the United Way, civic and service organizations who generously donate their time, talents and treasures to alleviate this growing need.

Find out about all the good things happening at Pickens County Meals on Wheels by visiting the office, 704 S. Pendleton St. Easley, SC 20640, by calling 855-3770 ext. 303 or visiting www.pcmow.org.

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