

New Medically Tailored Meal Menus Now Available



Studies suggest that food insecurity leads to health issues including obesity, Diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.

Prior to the pandemic, many SOSMOW clients were already coping with poor health because of food insecurity. Now, we must strategize for the long-term to serve a larger caseload with greater rates of chronic health conditions as compared to before COVID-19.

Recently published healthcare articles suggest there will be a rise in rates of chronic health conditions

because of the pandemic. To that end, a subset of our clients may experience increased health issues because of either recovering from COVID-19 or coping with the stressors of it on everyday life, such as greater feelings of food insecurity, social isolation, inflation, and barriers to a burdened healthcare system.

To address this problem, SOSMOW has launched medically tailored meal menus with the goal of helping our clients improve their health and well-being and age better at home. Other benefits of offering medically tailored meals include improving our ability to provide post-acute in-home care. Two types of medically tailored meal menus, a mechanical soft/puree and a renal, are now posted on our website under the menu heading at www.sosmow.org/meals. Renal meals are for clients with kidney disease and mechanical soft/puree meals are for clients that have trouble swallowing and chewing. We are fortunate enough to serve these meals with the help of Blossom Foods, our medically tailored food vendor. So far, our mechanical soft/puree meals are the most popular. It is with great enthusiasm that we can offer our homebound clients more options to fit their health needs.

If you, a friend, or a family member would like to receive medically tailored meals through our Meals on Wheels

Increase in Suggested Client Donations

SOSMOW suggests optional donations from our clients to defray the costs of their meals. The current \$3.50 suggested donation has not increased for well-over a decade. Because of our expanded caseload combined with skyrocketing meal costs over the past year, we have decided that we must ask for a greater contribution. The suggested donation amount will go up from \$3.50 to \$4.00, as of January 2023.

Healthy Living Festival 2022

The Healthy Living Festival is a free event for older adults in Alameda County to promote health and wellness. It is an annual event often held at the Oakland Zoo and usually brings in around 2,000 participants. The festival organized by United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County, gave participants access to the zoo, physical activity classes, live music, and booths with health information and resources. Free lunch for participants was prepared and distributed by our SOSMOW team and volunteers. It was an incredibly successful event filled with community, joy, and fun!

Huge thank you to the office of Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley for sponsoring this event.



The Seniors We Serve: Meet Marjorie Ritchie



Marjorie Ritchie, 98 years old and Bay Area native, is best known for her caring and helpful attitude. She volunteered at her neighborhood Church in Castro Valley. Through the church, she was a part of a quilting group that made quilts for people that were ill. She also volunteered at the Hayward Senior Center selling bingo tickets for over 15 years. Marjorie started her professional career at the age of 50. With no prior work experience, she took a class to help her pass the Civil Service test to get a job at Oak Knoll Navy Hospital. She began in a temporary position and after going above and beyond, she was offered a full-time position. She worked for 10 years in the Physical Therapy Department and 11 years as the office manager in the Cardiology Department.

Post-World War 2, Marjorie and her family were in search of a three-bedroom house in the Bay

Area. During that time, a post-war development crisis led to new housing development in suburban areas. Marjorie wanted a three-bedroom home to be built in the Fairmont Terrace area in San Leandro and her request was granted and built-in 1948. As one of the first families to live in the area, she experienced the history of development of the neighborhood park. When Marjorie heard about a renovation and expansion of the park, she donated a bench in her name, as one of the longest residents of this area. On the bench, she will have this saying printed, "Linger awhile with me, through your thoughts I still will be." Also, her close friend, JoAnn Johnson, wrote a book about her life as another way to make her mark on the world.

Marjorie, like many others, joined our community at the start of COVID-19. She shared with us her love for the warm and friendly community of staff and volunteers, who she said treat her "like a queen". Marjorie has been diligent about building a community around her with services like SOSMOW and the falls prevention program from our partner Spectrum Community Services, to help her continue to live a healthy and independent life in the home she has loved for 75 years.

Marjorie is very passionate about joining mothers in the community to stand up against war and wants to share with the women of the world to stand up and say, "no more!"

Meet JayJ and Angela, Volunteers

Angela and JayJ, Bay Area natives, found out about Meals on Wheels services because their father used the program when he was ill. Together they have made immediate and long-term impacts on our program. JayJ and Angela volunteer weekly in the kitchen, help put together client mailings, assemble non-perishable food items for our most acute cases, and JayJ also delivers meals on Tuesdays. JayJ has created very close connections with the clients on her route. She sits with them for about 10-15 minutes when she delivers meals and even brought back a few t-shirts from her vacation to the Grand Canyon for them.

A message, sisters JayJ and Angela want to leave with our community is, "It's worth your time and effort to help others."

We want to thank JayJ and Angela for their dependability and willingness to go above and beyond for our community. Happy one-year anniversary of volunteering at SOSMOW to sisters JayJ and Angela!

