



## The Driver's Seat: TLC Meals on Wheels Volunteer Newsletter

### Remember ...

Please help us out by remembering the following:

- If you are unable to drive, please call our office at 303.798.7642. If we are closed, please leave a message. You can also email us at [info@tlcmealsonwheels.org](mailto:info@tlcmealsonwheels.org). This address is checked daily by the staff, and we prefer you email us at this

Welcome to the *The Driver's Seat: TLC Meals on Wheels Volunteer Newsletter*. Whether you deliver meals or groceries, help out in the kitchen, or answer phones and file in the office, the work you do every day plays a vital role in driving away hunger in the South Metro Denver area. These quarterly newsletters are written especially with *you* in mind.

This edition starts a new column, *Spotlight on Our Volunteers*, where we share the story of a volunteer(s). Read about Gayle Peters and Jack Baker, who have been driving a route together for three years and are tying the knot this September. Be sure to read our column *Please Spread the Word*, where you can learn how to enter a raffle to win a Bundt cake, as well as our article on how to keep a

general address for all information related to delivering routes rather than emailing Diane or Dana individually, as they are sometimes out of the office. Thanks!

- Bring in your King Soopers plastic bags as drivers need them to hang clients' meals on their doorknobs when they are not home.

conversation going with a client. Enjoy!

### What's New at TLC Meals on Wheels?

**Weekend Meals!** In response to feedback from our annual survey, along with our Friday meal we now include two frozen meals to all clients who request it. We prepared for this rollout over the past several months by freezing a sample of our meals to determine which taste the best frozen. Although we are unable to accommodate individual food preferences, in order to meet the needs of most of our clients we do not send fish, spicy food, pork, or foods high in vitamin K.

Nearly 100 clients have already enrolled in the program! Thank you to our Friday drivers who deliver the extra meals to ensure our seniors aren't hungry on the weekends!



Jerry Derr returning his bag

**Save the Date: Our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Reception:** Join us for good food and company as a way to thank you for your service to our program!

Date: Wednesday, October 26th

Time: 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Location: TLC Meals on Wheels

- After delivering meals, bring your meals bags back the

next time you come to our facility.



## Please Spread the Word

**Please Spread the Word:** Calling all volunteers: We NEED your stories! Stories about our client's put a human face on the impact our services have on our community and are our most important tool in our marketing tool box. Whether it's a story of a special interaction you had with a client, an evolving friendship over the years, or how our services have improved a client's life, we want to hear them. Please take a moment to write them down and drop them off to Anne Gross in our office, or you can email them



### How to Keep a Conversation Going with Your Clients

We all want to converse with our clients, but what happens when our attempts fall flat? According to Debra Fine, author of *The Fine Art of Small Talk*, here are some tips on how to keep a conversation going:

- Ask questions about things around you. This might be a plant in their yard, or if they invite you inside, about family pictures. If this doesn't work, try questions that pose an option, such as "Were you the gardener in the family, or did somebody else do it?"
- When questions lead nowhere, start by talking about yourself and then follow it up with a question. You might talk about the neighborhood and how you live close by, sharing your memories of the favorite things you did when your kids were young. Then segue into asking about their favorite neighborhood memories, as individuals always like to recollect memories. You could do this

to us at  
[info@tlcmealsonwheels.org](mailto:info@tlcmealsonwheels.org).



To show our appreciation, everyone who submits a story will receive one of our home delivered meals, which you can either eat here or enjoy at home. We will also enter you into a raffle to win an 8-inch delicious chocolate chip Bundt cake generously donated by Nothing Bundt Cakes of Littleton. The raffle will take place at the volunteer reception.



## We Need Your Input

*The Driver's Seat: TLC Meals on*

with a number of topics – a book you recently read, an interaction with your pet, etc.

Talk about a topic that is common ground. This could be the Broncos game, how they are enjoying the meals, and the changing weather. In regards to the weather, follow up by asking them if they are drinking enough water, if it's the summer, or if they are keeping warm, if it's the winter.

If they ask you how you are doing, rather than give a one word response, be prepared with a more detailed answer. Talk about a recent experience or something important that is happening in your life. Not only may this encourage them to talk, but like all of us, seniors want to feel connected to others, and sharing information about yourself is one way to do this.

Finally, when it comes to feeling valued, listening to what they say is just as important as asking questions. And remember, forming a relationship takes time. Don't expect too much from one chat – there is always the next time.

*Wheels Volunteer Newsletter* is for you and we invite your input. If you'd like to share a story which we can showcase in our newsletter, have any ideas for content you liked or didn't like about the newsletter, please stop by the office and see Anne Gross.

## Spotlight on Our Volunteers



### *Jack Baker and Gayle Peters Share Their Love of Square Dancing and Delivering Meals!*

For the past three years, Gayle and Jack have delivered meals every week. Like so many of our volunteers, they look forward to their route and visiting with their clients, knowing all the while that they are helping others in our community.

Jack and Gayle, who met through square dancing seven years ago, are to be married September 10<sup>th</sup> in a small ceremony. Participating in their nuptials are their combined families of five children and eight grandchildren, all of whom are

either dancing, singing, or playing music. Later in the month, they will change into their western garb for a celebratory square dancing party with over a 100 of their closest friends.

Neither of them had finding a life partner on their mind when they started square dancing, Gayle in 2008 and Jack in 2009. Gayle's doctor recommended she start dancing to strengthen her ankles, which were causing her to fall when she climbed stairs. Jack had recently lost his wife to Alzheimer's, and was looking for an activity that would take him out of the house.

They dance two to three times a week as part of the Mountaineers Square Dance Club in Littleton. They have served as co-presidents of their organization, participate annually in their state convention, and over the past several years have attended national conferences in Spokane, Washington to Springfield, Massachusetts. They usually head out to the conferences in their car, allowing them to see the country along the way.

This is not the first time Jack has served as a volunteer driver. In 2005, because his wife was suffering from Alzheimer's, the two had to forego several of the activities that they previously enjoyed doing together and find something new. Jack was drawn to our organization not only because his wife could drive along with him, but because it involved helping others in the community. One day, two years after they started, his wife got confused after delivering a meal and couldn't figure out how to get back into the car, putting an end to their volunteer work. But he never forgot his experiences here at TLC MoW and started it up again with his favorite square dancing partner, Gayle.

Best wishes to you both on your wedding and thanks for all you do to drive away hunger in our community!

