



SOCIAL SERVICES NEWS

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CATAWBA COUNTY MEALS ON WHEELS CELEBRATES MARCH FOR MEALS

HICKORY -- Catawba County Meals on Wheels is celebrating March for Meals this month. Meals on Wheels America and local Meals on Wheels organizations across the nation are taking part in this campaign to draw attention to the vital role played by this service.

In Catawba County, more volunteers are needed to deliver meals to seniors age 60 or above who are unable to shop or prepare their own meals. In addition to providing five meals a week, the volunteers are a friendly face who may be the only person the recipient sees that day. This vital service allows seniors the choice to remain in their own homes longer and has been shown to improve their overall health. It only takes an hour and a half a month to be a volunteer.

Donations are also important to supporting this program. A gift of \$21 provides for one week of meals, \$91 for a month, and \$1,092 for a year of meals for one recipient. Donations may be made by writing a check payable to Catawba County Social Services and writing "SNS" in the memo line. Checks should be mailed to Senior Nutrition Services, P.O. Box 207, Newton, NC 28658. You may also donate securely online by going to catawbacountync.gov/dss and clicking on the red "Donate Now" button.

During the last fiscal year, Catawba County Senior Nutrition Services served a total of 1,539 seniors through Meals on Wheels and related programs. There is currently a wait list of 65 persons who want to receive Meals on Wheels, and there are 29 meal routes in the county. Meals on Wheels are free of charge to recipients. There is no income requirement; anyone who is 60 or older and who has a need for the service can receive meals.

"Our goal is that no senior will go hungry or be forgotten," said Jan Shaffer, supervisor of Senior Nutrition Services in Catawba County. "Our elders have done so much for us. Now it's our time to give back to them."

A recent study by Brown University compared three groups of seniors in eight Meals on Wheels programs across the United States. Each participant was assigned to one of three groups: daily, traditional meal delivery; once weekly frozen meal delivery; and remaining on the wait list (no service).

After the 15-week study, researchers concluded that those who received meals daily were in better health than those who did not receive the meals, or those who only received once weekly delivery of frozen meals. Researchers concluded: "The More Than a Meal study supports the wealth of past research, indicating that home-delivered meals improve the health and well-being of older adults, particularly those who receive daily-delivered meals and those who live alone." Having daily contact with a volunteer meal deliverer reduced feelings of isolation and loneliness, reduced the rate of falls, and improved overall health.

As part of the March for Meals campaign, Catawba County Meals on Wheels has released a video of local volunteers talking about their experiences delivering meals. The video features Hickory Crawdad's mascot Conrad and WHKY radio talk show host Hal Row of First Talk with Hal Row. The video may be seen at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HG2wQncas&feature=youtu.be>

For more information about Catawba County Meals on Wheels, or to become a volunteer, call 828-695-5610 during business hours. Businesses that are willing to organize a team of employees to volunteer are also especially needed. For the latest updates on Meals on Wheels, like our Facebook page at [facebook.com/MealsonWheelsofCatawbaCounty](https://www.facebook.com/MealsonWheelsofCatawbaCounty).

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