

# Meals of Joy Platter Chatter

A Newsletter for Supporters of Meals of Joy Home-Delivery Meal Service

WINTER 2024

## Our Clients Are Our Passion

Daily interaction with our clients allows us to monitor their well-being and alert if someone is in need of further assistance. We are honored to be a part of their lives and well-being.

During the past 10 months, Meals of Joy has been able to support as many seniors as our funding allows. Our grants and public donations enable us to carry on our mission.

Sharing our client stories helps to illustrate the need that many seniors across the West Valley face each day. Many are too proud to share their issues with their relatives or friends, but their stories are not rare. Ten million seniors in America face the threat of hunger. Millions more live in isolation.

*Here are some recent examples of senior clients who have benefitted our services:*

**Male, 72 years of age** – Medical situation: client is just out of the hospital with pneumonia and COPD. Financial: living alone, below the poverty level.

**Female, 72 years of age** – Medical situation: breast cancer just out of surgery; fibromyalgia, arthritis, high cholesterol. Financial: living alone, below the poverty level.

**Male, 88 years of age** – Medical situation: had knee replacement, broke hip twice, prostate issues, difficulty walking. Financial: Above poverty level but unable to stand to prepare his own meals.

**Male, 80 years of age** – Medical situation: bladder and prostate cancer, renal failure, urostomy pouch. Financial: living alone, below the poverty level.

**Female, 65 years of age** – Medical situation: post-polio syndrome, receiving dialysis, diabetic, hypertension, mobility issues. Financial: living alone, below the poverty level.

### WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY



*“Thank you for the delicious meals and to the wonderful people who bring them.”*

*“I was in the hospital for a week and am on Home Health Care now. I think your meals are helping me get some energy back.”*



## Board of Directors

**FOUNDER:**

Larry Cervarich

**PRESIDENT:**

Jim Frey

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

Bill Kinney

**SECRETARY/**

**TREASURER:**

Steve Thimjon

**MEMBERS:**

Jeannette Barsky  
Edward Brabham  
Kamal Charef  
Brian Day  
Susan Fix  
Mike McNally  
John Pugsley  
Jaime Ryum

Serving most  
West Valley cities,  
Monday-Friday.

**For information  
or to begin meal  
service:**

(623) 594-9588  
info@mealsofjoy.org

**Online application  
for meal service:**

[mealsofjoy.org](http://mealsofjoy.org)

### FOUNDER'S LETTER

## What makes our meal program unique?

Larry Cervarich, *Founder/Public Relations*



At the core of Meals of Joy service is a nutritious meal, companionship and a watchful eye on the health and safety of our seniors. This is a vital asset that allows our senior clients to feel more independent. Meals of Joy assists individuals recovering from illness or surgery and allows homebound seniors to reside longer in the comfort of their home.

As the calendar year comes to an end, we can be thankful for our many donors and the events that have helped Meals of Joy continue our mission. Our informational Breakfast, Top Golf and the Red Carpet Affair Annual Gala all helped to contribute to the needs of our organization. Our gala was attended by more than 260 guests this year and may have been our biggest and best yet!

Meals of Joy is beginning to expand our route service again to reach even more seniors. We also plan to offer additional services that further support the quality of life and independence of our senior clients. Currently offering pet food for clients' pets, and the possibility of providing fresh fruit and vegetables for clients who do not have the means to access fresh foods regularly.

It is our honor and duty to support those who cared for us for so many years. Your continued donations and volunteer efforts can change their lives! Every dollar donated helps us fund meals for those who need it most. Help us bring joy and hope to seniors in need.

---

## Thank You Trilogy

Bill Kinney, *Vice-President, Board of Directors*

As Meals of Joy has expanded and grown in the northern part of the West Valley, the Trilogy of Vistancia Community (in Surprise) has played a significant and generous role.

After Meals of Joy announced its needs for growth, Trilogy residents stepped up to and volunteered to drive and deliver meals. We now have 16 Trilogy volunteer drivers covering the West Valley on a daily basis.

Trilogy groups have also generously given financial support. Groups including the bingo clubs, the Mix & Mingle Singles Group and the Trilogy Women's Club have all stepped forward to contribute significant grants and donations to keep our daily meals and wellness visits on schedule.

This fantastic relationship can only grow as the needs of our senior community expand with increasing age. We are here to serve our senior community one meal at a time and we're all doing it together.

# Chef's Corner



## WINTER UPDATE

My name is Chef Kevin Barko, owner of Heritage Street Cooks, LLC (HSC). Our team is very proud to be in partnership with Meals of Joy. HSC has been providing personal chef services, catering and cooking classes since 2020. HSC began providing Meals of Joy fresh scratch meals in June of 2024.

## IT TAKES A TEAM

The Heritage Street Cooks team is proud to work with a very focused group of food service professionals and the best volunteers — all with one goal in mind; to provide the best fresh prepared daily meals delivered with a friendly smile.

Our team is led by Chef Anza Hopper, a true professional with great experience. Chef Anza has ten years of cooking experience at restaurants, hotels, schools, and catering companies throughout the valley. Chef Anza's team consists of several individuals that fit all the pieces to the puzzle. Mhamed Kabal, is a 'Swiss-Army Chef' in the kitchen that can

do it all. Jacob Argano is a talented cook that always helps where needed while providing an interesting story. Josue Moreno Trujillo is a young culinarian in the making that brings joy to the team. Carlos Perez has been the missing piece to the puzzle and is an extremely hard worker. Also, one of the best salad makers in town is our Garde Manger cook, Kayla Jacobo Vargas.

The kitchen team would not be successful if it wasn't for the Volunteer Program Coordinators, Jane Suba, Lana Wright, and Gail Gregg. These three wonderful ladies ensure that the drivers receive the correct meals and route sheets. They perform quality checks on all the food before it gets placed in the bags and they bring a smile to the team's faces daily.

Finally, the team wouldn't exist without the Meals of Joy office staff: Pam Christy, Ashlee Hise, Mary Gaye Rogers, and Vicki Swinford. We work closely with great support from the office team, who many of you interact with daily.

## WHAT'S NEW

Our January menu has some new selections, and we look forward to many new menu items in the future. February brings National Heart Healthy, Saint Valentine's Day, and National Chocolate Month. We will be working on menu ideas for February and March 2025 so please reach out to us with your suggestions. You can send your ideas and comments to Chef Kevin Barko at [kevin.barko@yahoo.com](mailto:kevin.barko@yahoo.com).

Happy holidays! We look forward to serving you in the New Year of 2025!

*Bon Appétit!*



◀ **Pictured (L to R) Front row:** Gail Gregg, Anza Hopper, Jane Suba, Lana Wright  
**Back row:** Jacob Argano, Mhamed Kabal, Chef Kevin Barko



# Red Carpet Affair 2024 Was a Night to Remember

*This year, 256 friends, sponsors, volunteer drivers, board members and staff once again celebrated another successful year for Meals of Joy at the Annual Gala on November 9.*

## ***A Big Thank You to Our 2024 Meals of Joy Annual Gala Red Carpet Affair Sponsors:***

### **Clark Gable Level:**

Avondale Toyota

### **Marilyn Monroe Level:**

Gallagher Family Foundation  
Bill & Kathy Kinney Foundation  
Mellon Family Foundation  
Microsoft

### **Bob Hope Level:**

Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Arizona

### **Audrey Hepburn Level:**

Care Givers of Arizona  
Fountain of Life Lutheran Church  
Michael Hendrick  
Ken Kelley Insurance  
Radwell International  
Southwest Refreshment Services

*Thank you to all who  
participated in the Silent Auction.*



The theme of a 'Red Carpet Affair' lived up to its name. Tuxedos and elegant dresses were seen throughout the evening at the festive affair. The proceeds from this event will allow us to continue providing nutritious meals to seniors in the West Valley. A big shout out to Avondale Toyota for being this year's Main Event Sponsor. Other major sponsors include The Mellon Family, Microsoft, Osborne Jewelers, Frances Sargent, the Bill & Kathy Kinney Philanthropic Fund and the Gallagher Foundation. And thanks to these companies for sponsoring: Blue Cross Blue Shield, BPR Companies, Kelley's Insurance, Care Givers of Arizona, Michael Hedrick, Radwell, Southwest Refreshments, BMD Printing and Fountain of Life Lutheran Church.

As we continue to expand the areas for meal delivery, we will need to add more volunteer drivers. By committing to a few hours a day, one day a week or more, you can help us with our mission and it's a great way to give back to the community. We have individuals who deliver, husband and wife teams and two person teams. The office staff provides training for new volunteer drivers so I hope that you will consider signing up to be one of our volunteer drivers. Call Pam Christy at (623) 594-9588 and let her answer your questions and learn more about our program.

In addition to being a volunteer driver and the Meals of Joy President, I'm also a member of the Goodyear PebbleCreek Rotary Club. People ask me why I'm so involved with the community, and I tell them it's because of my parents. They had a small plaque in our house that said, 'I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now: let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.' That's what drives me to do the things that I do for the community.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support of Meals of Joy.

— **Jim Frey**, *Meals of Joy Board President*







## From the Acting Director of Operations

In June, I stepped into the role of Acting Director of Operations at Meals of Joy, temporarily stepping down from my position on the Board of Directors. My goal has been to advance our mission while supporting the incredible team that makes Meals of Joy such an essential resource for vulnerable seniors.

The Board identified key areas for improvement, starting with enhancing our ratings on GuideStar and Charity Navigator. We successfully completed this work, reinforcing our commitment to transparency and donor trust.

Additionally, a new Meals of Joy video was showcased at our Annual Gala, featuring testimonials from clients who have benefited from our programs. Two shorter videos, including one to encourage volunteer participation, will soon be available on our website offering visitors a closer look at how they can get involved and make a difference.

Several other projects are underway, including an upgrade to our food program software that will eventually allow customers to place orders online, making it easier to access our nutritious meals. We are excited about the increased convenience and efficiency this will bring.

Looking ahead, we hope to expand our routes into new areas in the West Valley in 2025. As we continue to grow, my hope is that these efforts will help Meals of Joy strengthen its mission to address food insecurity, social isolation, and loneliness of our aging population so seniors and veterans can live healthy, active lives. I look forward to returning to the Board and continuing to support this vital mission.

*With gratitude,* **Cynthia Knaut**

## New Board Members



**Edward Brabham Jr.** is a seasoned Supply Chain executive with more than 25 years of senior leadership experience, specializing in the management of high-volume, fully automated distribution centers, multiple distribution start-ups, achieving impactful and long lasting results. A passionate advocate for diversity and inclusion,

he is committed to cultivating an inclusive work environment and actively supports the professional development of his team. Outside of his professional endeavors, Edward is dedicated to personal growth and community engagement. He enjoys spending quality time with his family, exploring new destinations, bowling, and participating in community activities, reflecting his deep commitment to both personal and professional excellence.



**Kamal Charef** has been the General Manager at Avondale Toyota since September 2016. He married his wife Angelique in the same year, and together they have adopted four beloved pets, two kittens and two puppies. Kamal and Angelique are passionate about the outdoors, frequently camping and exploring new hiking grounds across the

country and the world. Their favorite destination is Yosemite National Park, where they have enjoyed annual camping trips for the past decade. Kamal is also dedicated to giving back to the community, actively volunteering at various charities, including the Boys and Girls Club.



**Susan Fix** has been a resident of the Litchfield Park community since 1999. She has one daughter at NAU. In her spare time she enjoys golfing and playing Pickleball. Susan's family enjoys all of what Arizona has to offer whether it's playing in the Phoenix sunshine or going to Flagstaff and enjoying the snow.

As a REALTOR and Property Management Specialist, Susan Fix has been a top producer for Southwest Preferred Properties since 1999.

Outside of her professional endeavors, Susan is deeply involved in her community, having served on the Wigwam Country Club Board of Directors and is a current member of the Litchfield Park Recreation and Public Grounds Committee.

# Changes Are Coming to Meals of Joy

*January 2025 is bringing some big changes to our delivery routes!*

Starting January 2, 2025, we will begin taking client applications for the Trilogy area of Surprise. It has been a long process to be able to accomplish this, but it is taking shape. While we currently do not have any clients in Trilogy, we have had a few calls and at least two people that are very interested!

To accommodate our growth and this expansion new routes have been added and some of the existing routes have been rearranged.

## Volunteers Needed

The growth of our program is an exciting time for Meals of Joy. However, it comes with its own unique set of challenges. One of those is making sure there are enough volunteers to cover all the routes.

We are currently looking for additional volunteers. If you know any individual, couple or friends wanting to do something together and they would enjoy giving back to the

community and putting a smile on the client's face, please have them fill out an application and choose an orientation date that fits your schedule.

<https://www.mealsofjoy.org/support/volunteer-with-moj/volunteer-driver-application>

<https://www.mealsofjoy.org/support/volunteer-with-moj/driver-orientation-registration>

## Adopt a Route!

This is a great opportunity for any club/group/ church/group of friends, etc., to 'adopt a route'! Your 'group' would take on the responsibility of picking up and delivering your adopted route. Your group must commit to at least one day per week.

If this is something that you and/or your group are interested in doing, please call (623) 594-9588 to discuss details.

## Thank You to Our Recent Donors!

Linda Adamski  
Sandy Andrews  
Avondale Toyota  
Susie Baldwin  
Kevin & Amy Barko  
Blue Cross Blue Shield  
Patsy Boman  
Rhonda Boyles  
BPR Companies  
Edward Brabham, Jr.  
Josh & Kristen Brayer  
Doug Bredow  
Kristin Burley  
Tom & Diane Butler  
George Canelos  
Care Givers of Arizona  
Marc Cervarich  
Susan Cordts  
Linda Chattin  
John Cummuta  
Rebecca Davis

Loretta D'Addone  
David D'Amato  
Brian & Beatrice Day  
Jessica Day  
Art Dealy  
Susan Denison  
Jean Dreyfus  
Ed & Paula Dentith  
Kathleen Doland  
Gary Dungan  
David Faragher  
Ron & Marilyn Foreman  
Jim & Cheryl Frey  
Denise Gallagher  
Jackie Gallagher  
Dr. David Giffer  
Karen Gimse  
Kimberla Gray  
Carol Hammond  
Bob & Beth Hatch  
Brad Hedein  
Michael Hedrick  
Linda Hillger  
Vicci Hilty  
Janice Hobson  
Sherrie Holdsworth  
Anza Hopper

Mary Hornacek  
Mike Hosking  
Duane & Delores Hovick  
Valerie Huls  
David Jackson  
Brody Kafora  
Ed Karpe  
Bill & Kathy Kinney  
Cynthia Knaut  
Kristine Krahn  
Shelley Krispin-Pugsley  
Steve Jensen  
Scott Johns  
Kelley's Insurance Services  
Sandi Lehan  
Jerrod & Nicole Logan  
Colleen Malany  
Bill Marcum  
William McGloghlon  
Mike & Sandy McNally  
The Mellon Family  
Alden & Kristyn  
Meulenberg  
Microsoft  
Diane Millender  
Jack & Jill Miller  
Dr. Phil Mizzi

Katelynn Natale  
Mike & Holly Nott  
Autumn O'Connor  
Ann Orr  
Osborne Jewelers  
Matthew & Kristen  
Pentland  
Cheryl Peterson  
Dale & Susan Preslar  
John Pugsley  
Radwell International  
Virginia Robson  
Yvonne Rodrigues  
Sintra Sandstrom  
Frances Sargent  
Rick Savage  
Bill & Sue Schmidt  
Joan Smith  
Southwest Refreshments  
Linda Sweet  
Steve & Kayla Thimjon  
Verrado Rotary Foundation  
Brian Wagner  
Patrick Watkins  
Ralph Wells  
Maureen Wilson  
Ginny Wright



555 East Plaza Circle, Suite C  
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340  
Email: [info@mealsofjoy.org](mailto:info@mealsofjoy.org)  
Phone: (623) 594-9588  
[mealsofjoy.org](http://mealsofjoy.org)

## Would you rather pay the state or help us provide meals to seniors right here in the West Valley?

### ARIZONA TAX CREDIT FOR CHARITABLE GIVING

A reminder that the tax credit has increased in 2024 to **\$938 for married couples filing a joint return** and **\$470 for others**.

If you find yourself having taxable income that results in income tax payable to the State of Arizona, please consider making a charitable cash gift to MOJ up to the limits noted above and get a **DOLLAR-FOR-DOLLAR TAX CREDIT** to reduce amounts otherwise payable to the State of Arizona. No additional out-of-pocket cost to you! The credit is also available to carry forward to future years. MOJ is a qualified charitable organization for the credit. Visit our website and click on 'support' for details.

Find out more at [mealsofjoy.org](http://mealsofjoy.org) or call us at (623) 594-9588.

The Meals of Joy Qualifying Charitable Organization Code is 22002. Donors are required to use this code when taking the tax credit on their income tax returns. Please check with your accountant or personal financial advisor for questions and specific details about this tax credit.

Help us  
bring even more  
fresh meals to  
local seniors  
with your state  
tax credit!



Delivering hope,  
one meal at a time.



Scan here using the built-in  
camera app on your smartphone  
to make a secure online donation.