



IN THE
LOOP

SEPTEMBER 2023



THE DISH

From Insight to Action: Community Equity Scan Reveals Needs and Strengths

Meals on Wheels People has been working with Practica Consulting over the past year to help identify ways to deepen our partnerships and relationships with other organizations and within the communities we serve. Practica recently conducted a community equity scan with many of our culturally specific community partners. The assessment was centered around hearing the voices of community members, their perspectives, needs, barriers, and preferred ways to engage. Our service area currently comprises Multnomah, Washington, and Clark counties. The largest ethnic groups in the communities we serve are Black/ African American, African immigrant and refugee, Latinx/e, Asian, Asian Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, Native American, and Slavic and Eastern European.

The findings note that the BIPOC communities in our service areas disproportionately experience poverty and are food insecure. There are many intersecting, marginalized identities among the ethnic groups we serve, which can exacerbate their likelihood of having unmet basic needs and experiences of isolation. Examples include, but are not limited to, Arabic-speaking Syrians and LGBTQ-identifying members of BIPOC, immigrant, and refugee communities.

One of the barriers named by community members was the “white American”-centric menu and inaccurately made “ethnic” meals. The direct service needs were accessing culturally specific and affordable food, meal distribution from a trusted community space, transportation support to access food assistance, and quality interpretation and translation. Our traditional older adult programming is predominantly utilized

by non-BIPOC community members, serving 71% to 84% white. The resulting recommendations were to have dedicated personnel to advance community partnerships to improve the community knowledge and visibility of our programming and work to diversify our staff and volunteers.

Noted strengths of MOWP were our willingness to establish strategic community partnerships and embrace new service models to meet community needs. Our congregate dining sites do have strong connections within the communities they serve. Programs like Meals 4 Kids are actually 65% BIPOC and serve multigenerational households. Another highlight was the high rates of racial and ethnic diversity of the Senior Farmers Market Vouchers Nutrition programs.

Following these insights and suggestions, our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee will continue to develop a work plan to help sustain, affirm, and support culturally specific service and invest in our community-building efforts for more effective outreach and communication among community-led groups. Reducing barriers to services and anchoring our capacity-building efforts are aligned with our strategic imperatives. We are committed to supporting all work that helps to recognize and alleviate the root causes of food insecurity.



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TASTEMAKERS

Most of us spend at least a third of our day during the workweeks with our co-workers. There's no need to restrict your conversations to work chit chat or discussing the weather for the third day in a row. Your co-workers are innovators, trendsetters, and thought leaders. From their career journey to their hobbies and interests outside of work, discover what makes your co-workers unique — and perhaps find some common ground to bond over.

Agustin's Work Ethic and Wisdom

Meet Dishwasher Agustin Cruz-Baiza.

When Agustin Cruz-Baiza goes on vacation, it requires two or three temps to replace him in the dishwashing station. There's an art and science to doing it effectively — he knows how to cut through grease, the order in which to clean things — but the key to Agustin's efficiency is his mentality.

"What do I get paid for? For working. But there's a secret besides that," he says. "It is to be orderly, to know everything they need, to know what they need first, to be thinking that the more that comes, the more I can give."

Lessons in Hard Work

It's a mindset he developed growing up in El Salvador. His father died when he was just 6, so he started working to help his mother, who was now raising six children on her own. He foraged for fruits and hunted animals. At 12, he started working in the fields, planting corn, beans, and sesame seeds.

"That's where I learned to work fast," he says. "They humiliated me if I didn't get the job done, so I learned to work smarter, not harder."

To shield Agustin from the clutches of forced military recruitment during the Salvadoran Civil War, his mother sent him to the capital. While she believed this move would protect him from the dangers of the army, it presented a new set of challenges. In the city, he found himself confronted with the hardships of employment barriers due to his age. Not yet 18, opportunities were limited.

From Apprentice to Entrepreneur

He found work sewing. Under the guidance of skilled craftsmen, he learned the intricate art of tailoring, specializing in crafting pants. He threw himself into the work with unparalleled dedication, sometimes laboring tirelessly day and night. At one particularly demanding juncture, he found himself working a staggering 36 consecutive hours. Eventually, he ventured out on his own, establishing a business that thrived for 17 years.

But the war's aftermath left the nation ravaged, with its citizens grappling with economic hardships. The impact was felt in his business. With the weight of providing for his wife and sons on his shoulders, the need to provide became even more pressing. Facing such adversities and contemplating a brighter future, he sought new opportunities in the United States.

Quest for Excellence

He moved to California, where he returned to the fields, picking apricots, peaches, and nectarines. After two labor-intensive years working in the fields, he believed he could aspire for more. He transitioned to a fruit packaging company, where his diligent work and constant quest for improvement did not go unnoticed. "I was always wondering how can I do this better?" he says. He was soon promoted to supervisor and then recruited away to manage a farm.

In 2002, Agustin moved to Oregon to be closer to family and friends and got a job working in Central Kitchen at Meals on Wheels People. He worked in the bakery and on the food production line, but these days, he happily works by himself at the dishwashing station. "I like to be on my own where I can work very fast," he says.

On his breaks, Agustin wanders around Multnomah Village. As he admires the houses, his mind crafts plans for his future dwelling in El Salvador, gathering inspiration from the structures around him. "I'm getting ideas to make my house in El Salvador."

Paying It Forward

Upon retirement, Agustin plans to return to El Salvador to be near his children and to help the local community, putting into practice what he's learned over his years studying the Bible. "I have seen a lot of poverty in my country," he says. "We lived through a lot of poverty when we were children. Sometimes we had nothing to eat. So I am saving to build my house but also to buy in bulk things like a food bank and teach them what the Bible says."

That's the other secret, he says: "It's about paying it forward."



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Ética de Trabajo y Sabiduría de Agustín

Conoce al Lavaplatos Agustín Cruz-Baiza.

Cuando Agustín Cruz-Baiza se va de vacaciones, se requieren dos o tres trabajadores temporales para reemplazarlo en la estación de lavado de platos. Hay un arte y una ciencia para hacerlo de manera efectiva: saber cómo cortar la grasa, el orden en que se limpian las cosas, pero la clave de la eficiencia de Agustín es su mentalidad.

"¿Para qué me pagan? Para trabajar. Pero hay un secreto además de eso", dice. "Es ser ordenado, saber todo lo que necesitan, saber primero lo que necesitan primero, ir pensando que cuanto más llega, más puedo dar".

Lecciones de Trabajo Duro

Es una mentalidad que desarrolló al crecer en El Salvador. Su padre murió cuando él tenía solo 6 años, por lo que comenzó a trabajar para ayudar a su madre, que ahora criaba sola a seis hijos. Se alimentaba de frutas y cazaba animales. A los 12 años empezó a trabajar en el campo, sembrando maíz, frijol y ajonjolí.

"Ahí es donde aprendí a trabajar rápido", dice. "Me humillaban si no hacía el trabajo, así que aprendí a trabajar de manera más inteligente, no más difícil".

Para proteger a Agustín de las garras del reclutamiento militar forzado durante la Guerra Civil salvadoreña, su madre lo envió a la capital. Si bien ella creía que este movimiento lo protegería de los peligros del ejército, presentaba un nuevo conjunto de desafíos. En la ciudad, se enfrentó a las dificultades de las barreras

laborales debido a su edad. Todavía no 18 años, las oportunidades eran limitadas.

De Aprendiz a Emprendedor

Encontró trabajo cosiendo. Bajo la guía de hábiles artesanos, aprendió el intrincado arte de la sastrería, especializándose en la elaboración de pantalones. Se entregó al trabajo con una dedicación sin igual, a veces trabajando incansablemente día y noche. En un momento particularmente exigente, se encontró trabajando la asombrosa cantidad de 36 horas consecutivas. Finalmente, se aventuró por su cuenta y estableció un negocio que prosperó durante 17 años.

Pero las secuelas de la guerra dejaron a la nación devastada, con sus ciudadanos lidiando con dificultades económicas. El impacto se sintió en su negocio. Con el peso de mantener a su esposa e hijos sobre sus hombros, la necesidad de proveer se volvió aún más apremiante. Ante tales adversidades y contemplando un futuro mejor, buscó nuevas oportunidades en Estados Unidos.

Búsqueda de la Excelencia

Se mudó a California, donde volvió a los campos, recogiendo albaricoques, duraznos y nectarinas. Después de dos años intensivos en mano de obra trabajando en los campos, creía que podía aspirar a más. Hizo la transición a una empresa de envasado de frutas, donde su trabajo diligente y su constante búsqueda de mejorar no

pasaron desapercibidos. "Siempre me preguntaba cómo puedo hacer esto mejor". él dice. Pronto fue ascendido a supervisor y luego fue contratado para administrar una granja.

En 2002, Agustin se mudó a Oregon para estar más cerca de su familia y amigos y consiguió un trabajo en Central Kitchen en Meals on Wheels People. Trabajó en la panadería y en la línea de producción de alimentos, pero en estos días, felizmente trabaja solo en la estación de lavado de platos. "Me gusta estar solo donde puedo trabajar muy rápido", dice.

En sus descansos, Agustín camina por Multnomah Village. Mientras admira las casas, su mente elabora planes para su futura vivienda en El Salvador, inspirándose en las estructuras que lo rodean. "Estoy sacando ideas para hacer mi casa en El Salvador."

Pagar Hacia Adelante

Al jubilarse, Agustín planea regresar a El Salvador para estar cerca de sus hijos y ayudar a la comunidad local, poniendo en práctica lo que ha aprendido durante sus años de estudio de la Biblia. "He visto mucha pobreza en mi país", dice. "Vivimos mucha pobreza cuando éramos niños. A veces no teníamos nada para comer. Así que estoy ahorrando para construir mi casa, pero también para comprar cosas a mayoreo como un banco de alimentos y enseñarles lo que dice la Biblia".

Ese es el otro secreto, dice: "Se trata de devolver el favor".

TASTEMAKERS

Most of us spend at least a third of our day during the workweeks with our co-workers. There's no need to restrict your conversations to work chit chat or discussing the weather for the third day in a row. Your co-workers are innovators, trendsetters, and thought leaders. From their career journey to their hobbies and interests outside of work, discover what makes your co-workers unique — and perhaps find some common ground to bond over.

Josefina's Tale of Tomatoes and Tenacity

Meet Food Production Assistant Josefina Flores Aviles.

Tomato season might be coming to an end, but Josefina Flores Aviles has found a way to hold onto that ephemeral taste by canning her garden's bounty. Canning, a method passed down through generations, has allowed her to preserve the fruits of her labor. Each jar is sealed with the warmth of summer, ensuring that even in the middle of a cold and rainy winter, she can open a jar and relive those sun-drenched days.

Rooted in Tradition

Josefina has always had a green thumb. She attributes her gardening skills to the time she spent with her grandmother, Rosario, in Mexico. The vivid memories of planting seeds, nurturing the earth, and the anticipation of the first sprout were lessons she learned by her grandmother's side.

In her garden, the taste of nostalgia is as ripe as the tomatoes she cultivates. It's not just a patch of land — it's a living memoir of the time she spent with her abuelita. When she was younger, alongside tomatoes and herbs, they would also take care of chickens and cows. "My grandmother — she is a very hard worker, a fighter," Josefina says. "I tend to be like her. I had a tough upbringing. When life gets you down, it makes you weaker or it makes you strong. For the most part, it's made me stronger."

Navigating New Lands

When Josefina was 18, she moved to San Diego with her mother and two younger sisters. Leaving behind home wasn't easy. She had to adjust to a new country, culture, and language and got a job working in the kitchen at Olive Garden to help pay the bills. "It was very difficult for me," she says. "Ever since I was a little girl, I had to blaze my own trails."

She met the man who would become her husband through neighbors, and they moved to Oregon. Josefina kept working in kitchens while she raised their four children. But she longed for the communal culture in Mexico, where neighbors would spontaneously share meals and stories over a simple taco and salsa.

"Freedom is here, but it's a different type of freedom," she says. "Here, there is no family. You have to send your kids to daycare. I have been living here for seven years, and I don't know the name of the neighbor next door, or the one on this side, or the one across the street. All I know is that one has a black dog, one has a white dog, and one has a yellow dog."

Serving with Heart

Josefina found connection working at Meals on Wheels People's Cornelius Center, where she loved interacting with diners. "It is very nice to talk with

the elderly and spend time with them, listen to their anecdotes," she says. "You learn a lot of things, and I really loved that and cooking for them."

When the pandemic led to the closure of the Cornelius Center, Josefina moved to Central Kitchen, where she is a food production assistant. Memories of her grandma, who still resides in Mexico, frequently surface, grounding her and reminding her of the deep roots that once nurtured her love for cooking and community. Just as Rosario inspired Josefina, she hopes to pass down that relentless spark and work ethic to her children, ensuring that the legacy of hard work, resilience, and community lives on.

"The spark that my grandma had, the energy that my grandma had, I believe I've transferred that to my kids — that they've learned that in order to obtain something, you have to work very hard."



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El Cuento de Jitomates y Tenacidad de Josefina

Conoce a la Asistente de Producción de Alimentos Josefina Flores Avilés.

La temporada de jitomates podría estar llegando a su fin, pero Josefina Flores Avilés ha encontrado una manera de conservar ese sabor efímero enlatando la generosidad de su jardín. El enlatado, un método transmitido de generación en generación, le ha permitido conservar los frutos de su trabajo. Cada frasco está sellado con la calidez del verano, asegurando que incluso en medio de un invierno frío y lluvioso, ella pueda abrir un frasco y revivir esos días bañados por el sol.

Arraigado en la Tradición

Josefina siempre ha tenido un pulgar verde. Ella atribuye sus habilidades de jardinería al tiempo que pasó con su abuela, Rosario, en México. Los vívidos recuerdos de sembrar semillas, nutrir la tierra y la anticipación del primer brote fueron lecciones que aprendió al lado de su abuela.

En su jardín, el sabor de la nostalgia está tan maduro como los tomates que cultiva. No es solo un pedazo de tierra, es una memoria viviente del tiempo que pasó con su abuelita. Cuando era más joven, además de tomates y hierbas, también cuidaban gallinas y vacas. "Mi abuela, es muy trabajadora, luchadora", dice Josefina. "Tiendo a ser como ella. Tuve una educación dura. Cuando la vida te deprime, te hace más débil o te hace más fuerte. En su mayor parte, me ha hecho más fuerte".

Navegando Nuevas Tierras

Cuando Josefina tenía 18 años, se mudó a San Diego con su madre y dos hermanas menores. Dejar atrás el hogar no fue fácil. Tuvo que mudarse a un nuevo país, cultura e idioma y consiguió un trabajo en la cocina de Olive Garden para ayudar a pagar las cuentas. "Fue muy difícil para mí", dice. "Desde que era una niña, tuve que abrir mis propios caminos".

Conoció al hombre que se convertiría en su esposo a través de unos vecinos y se mudaron a Oregón. Josefina siguió trabajando en las cocinas mientras criaba a sus cuatro hijos. Pero añoraba la cultura comunal en México, donde los vecinos compartían espontáneamente comidas e historias con un simple taco y salsa.

"La libertad está aquí, pero es un tipo diferente de libertad", dice ella. "Aquí no hay familia. Tienes que enviar a tus hijos a la guardería. Hace siete años que vivo aquí, y no sé el nombre del vecino de al lado, ni del de otro lado, ni del de enfrente. Todo lo que sé es que uno tiene un perro negro, otro tiene un perro blanco y el otro tiene un perro amarillo".

Sirviendo con Corazón

Josefina encontró una conexión trabajando en Meals on Wheels People's Cornelius Center, donde le encantaba interactuar con los comensales. "Es muy lindo hablar con

los mayores de edad y pasar tiempo con ellos, escuchar sus anécdotas", dice. "Aprendes muchas cosas, y realmente me encantó eso y cocinar para ellos".

Cuando la pandemia provocó el cierre del Centro Cornelius, Josefina se mudó a Central Kitchen, donde es asistente de producción de alimentos. Los recuerdos de su abuela, que aún reside en México, afloran con frecuencia, la conectan a tierra y le recuerdan las profundas raíces que alguna vez alimentaron su amor por la cocina y la comunidad. Así como Rosario inspiró a Josefina, ella espera transmitir esa chispa implacable y ética de trabajo a sus hijos, asegurando que el legado de trabajo duro, resiliencia y comunidad perdure.

"La chispa que tenía mi abuela, la energía que tenía mi abuela, creo que se la he transferido a mis hijos, que han aprendido que para obtener algo hay que trabajar muy duro".

MEET OUR

FRESH TALENT

Get to know the personalities, backgrounds, and passions of the new employees who are driving our success forward.

Development in Every Groove

Meet Chief Development Officer Shelah Hanson.

Shelah Hanson grew up outside, riding bikes around the cul-de-sac and exploring trails around her home in Salem, Oregon, from dawn until dusk. Unlike other kids, she didn't think about what she wanted to be when she grew up, and when it came time for Shelah to declare a major in college, she was stumped. "Even during college, I couldn't imagine my future career," she says, "so when pressed to choose, I studied sociology."

A Serendipitous Pivot

A fresh graduate from the University of Oregon, Shelah embarked on a career at a recycling company, driven by the allure of an organization that stood for sustainability and positive change. Little did she know that a chance engagement with United Way would redirect her path in a way she had never imagined.

Every year, in a sort of corporate exchange program where companies loaned their employees as fundraisers, Far West Fibers would fill a seasonal fundraising position at United Way of the Columbia-Willamette. It was a win-win, with the nonprofit benefitting from fresh talent and companies using it as a developmental opportunity for their rising stars.

And Shelah was about to shine. "You have two weeks of training, and then you're handed a list of companies and told to go ask them for money," she recalls. "I was meeting with CEOs at some of the area's major companies very early on in my career."

The temporary loan turned into a permanent position, and Shelah spent four years managing donor relations with United Way. For her, it was not just about raising funds but also about shaping minds.

"I liked teaching people to be philanthropists," she says. "At United Way, you're not always working with major gift donors. You're working with regular people who want to give back to their community. I'm teaching someone who never thought they could make a difference that they can do this work."

From Animal Advocacy to Serving Seniors

Over a decade in development at Lewis and Clark Law School armed her with vast experience that she took to the Oregon Humane Society. The nonprofit was progressively leaning into the significance of the animal-human bond, and it became evident to Shelah how crucial pets were, especially for seniors. After six rewarding years of focusing on animals, she felt a tug toward dedicating herself more exclusively to humans, to their direct needs and well-being.

MOWP's mission resonated deeply with her. Her previous encounters with Loaves and Fishes staff during her United Way days had already sown the seeds of admiration for our organization. When Shelah met Suzanne, her immediate thought was a powerful one: "I want to work with her."

Shelah started at MOWP in July, and she looks forward to channeling her expertise, dedication, and passion into further enriching the lives of those we serve.

Work Hard, Play Heartfelt

Even as she carves out meaningful paths in the professional realm, Shelah ensures there's always room for personal joy — she delights in spontaneous adventures, soul-stirring music, and the warm company of her furry friends. Kayaking on calm waters, enjoying the rhythm of live music, engrossing herself in a good book, listening to one of the thousand vinyls in her record collection, or simply spending quality time with her beloved cat, dogs, and partner — these are the moments that ground and rejuvenate her.



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Ambleside

Longtime volunteer Kathy Hughes plays ambient guitar music during congregate lunches twice a month. She has also played for Cherry Blossom and is trying to line up gigs at Belmont, too. If any other centers are interested in booking live music, reach out to Kathy at kathyshughes13@gmail.com. Kathy is a winner of the 2023 Marcus Lampros Volunteer Awards, given to eight outstanding volunteers who exemplify our values: Integrity, Respect, Inclusion, Creativity, Commitment, and Teamwork.



Luepke

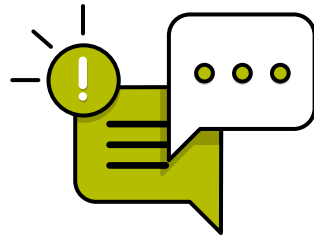
Thanks to generous donations from the Clark County Food Bank, Luepke staff were able to make desserts for congregate dining clients. Program Assistant Villary Meddock used pudding left over from home delivery that came from Central Kitchen, and the rest was donated. "It feels good to find ways to use up extra items rather than throwing them away, and our clients love having a little dessert after their meal," Villary says.



Cherry Blossom

Tomatoes and cabbages and peppers, oh, my! Cherry Blossom's garden has taken off this summer, producing more than 30 pounds of vegetables and flowers for our congregate diners. Site Coordinator Michelle Martinez's zucchini and tomatillo soup was a huge hit, and they're excited to try a mild salsa verde next. "We couldn't have done it without Thrivent's generous garden grant, our volunteer gardeners, and East Portland Community Center giving us use of the beds," says Home Delivery Coordinator Sarah Vhay. "Feels great when unexpected resources turn into healthy and delicious food for our clients."

BITE-SIZED UPDATES



Introducing MOWP's Mentorship Program

Are you new to the organization or want to explore more about what makes this a great organization? The first of three mentorship tracks — Group Mentorship — launched Aug. 31, and there's still time to join! This program offers a guided tour with new and current employees to explore career opportunities while taking a deeper dive into all aspects of the organization. Cohorts are assigned to all new employees and are open to anyone. The program involves a series of presentations, workshops, and realistic job previews across all departments and programs in three months. A new topic is covered every Thursday from 2 to 3 p.m. on Teams. Topics include center operations, Central Kitchen operations, medically tailored meals, technology tools, and volunteer services. The next session takes place Thursday, Sept. 7, at 2 p.m.

Green Committee

We all work here to make a positive difference in the community we share. We provide help and hope to the most vulnerable. With your help, the Green Committee is making the future environmental impact of our work here lighter and, yes, greener: We now sort biodegradable waste. We break down cardboard. The indoor lights go off automatically. And soon, the lights themselves will be changed to a much more efficient bulb. Plastic is being recycled. Electric vehicles are delivering food.



A next step for MOWP: Many of the paper and plastic bags used to deliver food will be replaced with reusable thermal bags. Green Committee members have piloted samples of these bags and found they work well for some of their routes. Centers tested out using these bags to fit seven meals, milk, and supplementals. Bags are unloaded at clients' door for immediate return. They are the same bags Meals 4 Kids uses. We should be receiving them in the next few weeks, so we will be getting you some more information on the process, timing, and distribution if you are interested. Please stay tuned to see if this might be a good option for your routes. We hope everyone tests them on a route or two!

This is a positive change and will also help in next-step thinking — thinking in a way that always considers how our environment must be part of the equation. Thinking in ways that future generations will see we tried.

None of these changes have come without more work. Thank you for helping. Thank you for your work. Your Green Committee is working to make a sustainable difference in the energy and materials used by MOWP. Our impact should be strong but our footprints light.

New Employee Resource Group Meets Again

The New Employee Resource Group is up and running again. This ERG seeks to support the mission of Meals on Wheels People by offering current and new employees the chance to introduce incoming employees to the organization leaders, network, raise awareness of relevant issues facing the organization, and share and develop best work practices. Existing employees are encouraged to attend meetings and help guide new employees, get acquainted with our culture and resources, and share useful information about different aspects of the organization. This is a great venue to collaborate, share information, and come up with new ideas on how to improve existing practices. Meetings are at 2 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month. Contact Emily Sterling to be added to the meeting agenda at emily.sterling@mowp.org.

Safety & Wellness Committee

Lace up your sneakers, Meals on Wheels People! Please join the Safety & Wellness Committee for a September Step Challenge! This is a self-paced challenge. Whether you walk, jog, or run, the type of steps is up to you. Track them on your fitness tracker, watch, pedometer, or phone. Once you've tracked those steps, [enter them here](#). All employees who participate by tracking and entering their step count will be entered to win a \$25 gift card. Also, remember that participation in any health or wellness activity gets you an entry into the Quarterly Safety & Wellness drawing for an extra personal holiday.

People and Culture Hour

We are receiving great feedback from employees who have attended the past People and Culture Hours. These meetings are for the Human Resources team to share information about what is happening across the organization in regard to training, events, organizational updates and to serve as a fun place to get together with peers. All meetings are virtual, unless otherwise stated. People and Culture is moving their meetings from every fourth Thursday to every fourth Wednesday at 2 p.m. over teams to accommodate the new Mentorship Program presentations.

Use Your Vacation Time Before You Lose It

Can you believe we are only four months until the end of the year?! We want to remind you to use your vacation time and to schedule days off for the holidays in advance. We encourage you to care for yourselves and disconnect from work when needed. Please check in with your supervisors before you schedule time off. They will help schedule coverage if needed. Remember: Meals on Wheels People pays out 36 hours of vacation time at the end of the year. Anything over 36 hours is lost. Any unused personal holidays are also lost at the end of the year — so make sure you use them.



Volunteer Satisfaction Results Are In

Last year, 2,472 volunteers gave 89,678 hours of service, valued at over \$200 million. A significant majority (84%) of the volunteers are within the age group of 56 to 76 years. One-third of them have volunteered for less than two years, and 16% have volunteered for 11 years or more. The feedback from volunteers is overwhelmingly positive, with 95% expressing satisfaction with their experience. A major factor contributing to their satisfaction is the perceived value and importance of their roles, as conveyed by the MOWP staff. Kudos to you for fostering such a positive and rewarding environment for volunteers!

Board President Scott Christianson Named to PBJ's 40 Under 40

Meals on Wheels People's board President Scott Christianson of Ferguson Wellman Capital Management was named to *Portland Business Journal's* 40 Under 40 class for 2023. Scott started in an entry-level role at Ferguson Wellman on the Monday after his graduation from Oregon State. Sixteen years later, he is a vice president, a portfolio manager, and a significant shareholder in the Portland firm. To make this list is a high accomplishment, and we are thrilled to celebrate Scott on this well-deserved achievement!

Future Trailblazers

There are several leadership opportunities available as committee and employee resource group chairs. Chairs receive an additional \$30 per pay period for two monthly hours allocated to work on programming. If you are interested in any of these leadership positions, please send a letter of interest to Ulises Alvarez Olvera at ulises.alvarezolvera@mowp.org.

- Whole Body Health ERG

New Hires

- Zakiya Jackson, Development Director
- Marilynn Russell, On-call Home Delivery Coordinator
- Deymi Zamorano, M4K Program Assistant
- Tom Jackson, Luepke Site Coordinator
- Joshua Mschichowski, Cook at The Diner
- Roopkiran Kaur, Dietician Consultant
- Mariela De La Rosa, M4K Program Coordinator
- Michelle Mollenhour, Pet Program Coordinator

Open Positions & Referral Program

Refer anyone you know who would be a great addition to the Meals on Wheels People team and great for any of our open positions. Receive a bonus of \$300 (less taxes) for each referral who is successfully hired and meets the hours worked requirements. Refer to the Employee Referral Program on the Wheelhouse for more details. Please reference our careers page for the most up-to-date open positions. As of press time, they include:

- Grant Coordinator
- Delivery Driver
- MLK Program Assistant
- Program Coordinator — Safe Home for Seniors
- Various on-call positions

TOP 10

September's Splendors: 10 Free Events to Enjoy This Month

September brings a breath of crisp, fresh air as the seasons transition. Portland, in its ever-vibrant spirit, never fails to offer a bouquet of exciting, culturally diverse events to enjoy without even opening your wallet. Here's a roundup of 10 free events happening this September. (Note: While entry might be free, some activities inside might come with a price.)



1. DAHLIA FESTIVAL

Aug. 2-Sept. 30
Swan Island Dahlias

As the summer fades, dahlias bloom in a riot of colors. This festival is a visual treat for anyone who appreciates nature's artistry. Stroll through almost 40 acres and a beautiful display garden of stunning dahlias featuring over 370 varieties. Pick out and order your favorite dahlias for spring delivery and planting. Purchase a beautiful bunch of cut dahlias to take home with you or to make someone's day. Visit the Gift Shop with hundreds of local treasures. Fill your belly with yummy treats from food carts, relax and enjoy the live music, attend the Sunday farmers market, or take one of the classes throughout the festival dates.

2. CHAPMAN SWIFT WATCH

Sept. 1-30
Chapman Elementary School

In a phenomenon that delights both young and old, every September evening at sunset, as many as 16,000 Vaux's swifts on their annual migration from Canada to Central and South America circle and dive into the chimney at Chapman Elementary where they'll roost for the night. Throngs of spectators gather on a nearby grassy slope to watch the birds perform an aerial ballet for nearly an hour before eventually seeking refuge within the chimney's confines for the night. Volunteers from the Audubon Society of Portland are also on hand most nights to help educate the curious public. So bring a blanket, sit on the lawn, and let nature's ballet unfold.

3. FIRST THURSDAY

Sept. 7
The Pearl District

First Thursday in the Pearl is a monthly celebration held on every first Thursday of the month. Initially a meetup for art collectors and dealers, it has now blossomed into a massive gathering, drawing over 10,000 attendees, ranging from art lovers to wine enthusiasts and socialites. The district's art galleries remain open late, hosting receptions and introducing new exhibits. Attendees can enjoy food, drinks, and the unique opportunity to interact directly with artists. The vibrant streets come alive with local artists showcasing their work as well as live musical performances.

4. PORTLAND DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

Sept. 9-10
Tom McCall Waterfront Park

Enjoy Portland's annual Dragon Boat Festival, featuring Hong Kong-style dragon boat racing along with food vendors, a beer garden, and more. Join the throngs of spectators, cheer on as many as 96 dragon boat teams from all over the world, and get immersed in this ancient tradition.

5. PORTLAND SERBIAN FEST

Sept. 9-10
St. Stephen Serbian Orthodox Church

Experience Serbian hospitality, culture, and tradition. From folk dance performances to traditional foods, it's a cultural immersion you don't want to miss. Plus, the annual event helps raise money to keep cultural programs and activities running.

6. PORTLAND SUNDAY PARKWAYS

Sept. 10
Gabriel and Spring Garden parks

These inclusive events transform city streets into car-free zones, inviting everyone to bike, walk, and revel in the open space. Different neighborhoods host the event each Sunday, making it a refreshing way to explore the city. The Southwest Multnomah route features a 2-mile multimodal path and a separate 1.5-mile pedestrian path. Participants can join from any point and choose their own direction. Highlights include the accessible playground at Gabriel Park and the recently updated SW Capitol Highway, showcasing new sidewalks and bike lanes. Whether you're leisurely walking or biking through the rolling terrain, it promises an engaging experience.

7. EL GRITO

Sept. 15-16
Moda Center

Commemorating the independence of Mexico and other Latin American countries from Spain, El Grito is a vibrant festival of music, dance, and gastronomy. Celebrate the deep-rooted Mexican traditions and the spirit of freedom. In addition to folkloric and Aztec dancers, live mariachi, salsa, cumbia and pop music, there will also be traditional food and beverages, community booths with interactive and educational materials, and the Mexican tradition known as El Grito de Independencia.

8. COME THROUGH: BLACK & INDIGENOUS MARKET

Sept. 18
The Redd on Salmon Street

This market is not just a place to shop but also a space to learn and connect. Explore the diverse offerings from Black and Indigenous vendors, engage in conversations, and leave with a richer understanding. The market centers Black and Indigenous farmers and supports growers in taking their small business dreams to the farmers market environment.

9. ANKENY ALLEY FESTIVAL

Sept. 22-24
Downtown between SW 2nd and 3rd Ave.

Local merchants, restaurants, and entertainment venues welcome locals and tourists alike to explore the Ankeny Alley area while supporting small businesses in downtown Portland. The theme is "Autumn Solstice/Fall Kick-Off" and will feature music, live entertainment, delicious food, art, strolling entertainment, and more.

10. PORTLAND FLEA + FOOD

Sept. 23-24
Various locations

Portland Flea + Food serves as a hub for Portland's creative talents, held on the last weekend of each month from April to October. Each gathering showcases over 80 local artisans, offering a curated selection of the finest vintage items, handcrafted products, and locally produced goods. This event is a must-visit for those keen on supporting and discovering the best of Portland's local craft and vintage scene.



Dear LACEY

Dear Lacey is Meals on Wheels People's advice column, where Lacey responds to your questions about the office, workplace issues, careers, leadership development, money, work-life balance, and more. Have a question? Send it to Lacey at [tinyurl.com/dearlacey](https://www.tinyurl.com/dearlacey). (It's anonymous.)

Dear Lacey,

Lately, it feels like the word "trauma" is thrown around for everything — like being stuck in traffic or getting ghosted after a date. I know at Meals on Wheels People, we're big on trauma-informed care. But is trauma just a trend? Are we perhaps conflating minor setbacks with real traumatic events? I mean, does everyone truly experience deep trauma, or is it sometimes just a case of everyday frustrations?

—Terminology Torn

Dear TT,

The topic of trauma and trauma-informed care has gained significant attention in recent years, especially in the fields of psychology, education, social work, and health care. The increased emphasis is due to a growing understanding of how trauma can deeply affect the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of individuals.

Trauma is not about the event itself but about the individual's emotional and psychological response to it. Different people can experience the same event and have very different reactions. An event that is traumatic for one person may not be traumatic for another. Trauma can result from a variety of experiences, from severe incidents like war, physical or sexual abuse, to seemingly "minor" incidents that deeply affect someone's psyche.

Trauma is not about the event itself but about the individual's emotional and psychological response to it.

Many people have had experiences that still carry emotional weight and influence their behaviors, beliefs, and worldviews. The ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) study, for example, has shown that a significant portion of the population has experienced at least one adverse childhood event, such as losing a parent to divorce or death or a family member who is addicted to alcohol or another substance, which can have long-term health and social impacts. While trauma can certainly arise from personal experiences, it is essential to recognize the broader systemic and societal structures that contribute to and perpetuate trauma. Capitalism, patriarchy, and racism can perpetuate trauma through economic inequities, enforced gender roles, and systemic discrimination, leading to both direct and intergenerational impacts on individuals' well-being.

A trauma-informed approach is about understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma. It emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety and helps people rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. It's about creating an environment where individuals feel safe, respected, and understood, regardless of their past experiences. Even if someone hasn't experienced trauma, the principles of trauma-informed care can be beneficial in most settings.

In the past, many societies had a "tough it out" mentality, where people were encouraged to suppress their feelings and "move on" without addressing them. However, research shows that not addressing trauma can lead to a plethora of issues, including mental health problems, physical health problems, relationship difficulties, and more. Recognizing and addressing trauma is a way to promote healthier individuals and communities.

It's important to avoid judging others based on our perceptions of what trauma should look like. Just because someone's experience doesn't seem "bad enough" to us doesn't mean it wasn't deeply traumatic for them. Dismissing others' experiences can further isolate and harm individuals who are already struggling.

Empathy, compassion, and understanding are crucial. By being trauma-informed, we not only promote healing for those directly affected but also create more inclusive, understanding, and resilient communities.



FIVE-STAR REVIEWS

What's the next big show to binge? The next podcast to download? The best take-out spot? Your co-workers have plenty of recommendations. Whether you want to stay on top of the latest trends or connect with others with common interests, here are their latest endorsements.

Turo ★★★★★

Recommended by Chief People and Strategy Officer Jessica Morris

"At the end of our last People and Culture Hour, I asked for a recommendation from the group for car rentals. Our family was planning to head out the next morning for our annual family reunion campout, and Ray and I had just found out the drive train on our rig was shot. I was scrambling to figure out how to get three teens, two dogs, and a camper to a remote area three hours away — the NEXT day. That's when Kelsey recommended Turo [like Airbnb for car rentals] — an absolute lifesaver! Within 20 minutes, I had found a truck with a king cab to get us all there and back. Registering was simple, booking was a breeze, and the truck was in fantastic shape. Ray and I are seriously considering not replacing the rig and just using Turo anytime we need a larger-capacity vehicle. Five stars!!"

Swimply ★★★★★

Recommended by Chief Development Officer Shelah Hanson

"I like Swimply [like Airbnb for pool rentals] because it's like being on vacation for the afternoon. You are in a beautiful pool within driving distance of your home, but it feels like you could be anywhere in the world!"

Thai Herbs Restaurant ★★★★★

Recommended by Development Director Zakiya Jackson

"Highly recommend Thai Herbs for lunch! Such a cute place right next door to the Village Coffee. I got the green curry with chicken. It's got a bit of spice, FYI for those who may be a bit sensitive to that, but it's delicious and comes with a side of jasmine rice. It's very filling. I also had a Thai lemonade — a little on the sweet side but yummy."

SAVOR

THE MOMENT

Life is meant to be enjoyed and savored as it's lived. Whether it's a small gesture like an email wishing someone a happy birthday or a team lunch to celebrate an anniversary, taking the time to recognize these milestones can have a big impact on our happiness.

September Birthdays

- 2 **Maya White**, Development
- 2 **Jeremy Wray**, Client Service
- 3 **Kate Blazer**, Children's Levy
- 7 **Debra Bartnik**, Luepke
- 7 **Tyrell Comeaux**, Operations
- 9 **Felipe Perez Diaz**, Battleground
- 14 **Allen Bascos**, Popcorn
- 15 **Cathy Huck**, Operations
- 16 **Ricardo Gonzalez**, Diner
- 19 **Ulises Alvarez Olvera**, Executive Office
- 19 **Kenneth Koral**, Luepke
- 23 **Sarah Vhay**, Cherry Blossom
- 27 **Connie Gilfillan**, Operations
- 30 **Mitchell Nye**, Diner

September Work Anniversaries

- 5 years **Johanna Cohen**, Client Service
- 3 years **Caroline Dunn**, Operations
- 17 years **Theresa Thornton**, Tigard
- 2 years **Xiaoling Wang**, Central Kitchen
- 15 years **Yong Wu**, Central Kitchen



SAVE THE DATE

Add These Two New Calendars to Your Outlook

We launched two new calendars that you will be able to add to your personal calendar in Outlook. When you add these calendars to your shared calendars, you will be able to view or hide each calendar within Outlook. **One thing to note:** You will still need to accept a calendar invite when received from either calendar. Otherwise, you will not be able to see it in your personal calendar. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ulises Alvarez Olvera at ulises.alvarezolvera@mowp.org.

Training Calendar

The training calendar will display all the trainings that are happening across the organization. Training staff will use this calendar to send out meeting invites to employees who need to attend a specific training. Information regarding the training will be visible within the meeting invite. If you have any questions, suggestions, concerns, or want to learn more about MOWP training, you can email training@mowp.org.

Additionally, we have created an overview of the training that will be offered throughout the 2024 fiscal year. You can find it on the main page of the [Wheelhouse](#).

People and Culture Calendar

Our People and Culture Calendar will display birthdays, work anniversaries, people and culture hours, and committee/ERG meetings.

Sept. 13 | How to be a Mental Health Ally in Your Personal and Work Life Webinar

Learn what mental health allies are and why they're so valuable. Familiarize yourself with ways to help those you recognize as struggling. Contribute to positive psychological environments at home and work in order to support the health of those around you. [Register here](#) for this employee webinar by Magellan Health at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 13.

Sept. 14 | Biases and Microaggressions Workshop

The Community Services Network is hosting a virtual Biases and Microaggressions workshop on Sept. 14 from 1 to 3 p.m. [Register online](#).

Sept. 18-22 | Fall Prevention Week

See the [National Council on Aging's toolkit](#) for information that may help you, your loved ones, or your clients stay healthy and safe. If your site runs a congregate lunch, consider making this information available to participants.

Sept. 28 | CPR/First Aid Training

A CPR/First Aid training will be held Monday, Sept. 28, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at The Diner. This training will be primarily for Diner and Clark County employees; however, there will likely be one to two available. If you would like to be included in this training, please email Brianna Winningham at brianna.winningham@mowp.org.

