

# C NNECTIONS

THE QUARTERLY CLIENT NEWSLETTER OF MEALS ON WHEELS OF RIDGEFIELD, CT

WINTER 2019

**H**appy new year! Winter weather is finally here - brrrrr! We hope you all had a great holiday and enjoyed our special complimentary Thanksgiving and Christmas meals, and all of the lovely seasonal gifts that were donated by local organizations or hand-made by local school children.

We are excited to announce that 2018 was a record year for us – we served 24,260 meals to over 158 Ridgefield residents. We're glad we can be there to help anyone in our community who needs assistance. Our clients are one of our best referral sources, so please keep telling people about our services and thank you for spreading the word. And if you let us know that you referred someone who signs up, we will send your next delivery free.

Stay warm and enjoy the winter months – we look forward to sending you another newsletter in the spring!



## WINTER MENU HIGHLIGHTS

The kitchen crew hopes you are enjoying the meals on our winter menu. We are serving hearty “comfort food” meals to help you combat the cold, including chicken pot pie, beef stew, mac and cheese, beef stroganoff, turkey chili, baked pork chops, pasta Bolognese and many more (you may not recognize all of these meals if you don't receive 7 dinners a week).

Besides the hot meals we serve, our salads and soups are a highlight. We have tried a broccoli salad (one of our kitchen team's favorites!), as well as Waldorf salad and ambrosia salad. Some of the new soups we serve are Italian wedding soup (with hand-made meatballs!), asparagus orzo soup, beef barley, potato soup, broccoli soup, and so many more.

## “CRIS'S CORNER” *Meet our Kitchen Operations Manager, Cris Nichols*

If you've stopped in our kitchen or contacted us over the phone, then you've probably already met me – I'm Cris Nichols, the Kitchen Operations Manager. I'm in charge of running our kitchen, which includes setting up new clients, ordering food and supplies, and making sure our process works smoothly so your meals are prepared and delivered to you as requested. I'm also in charge of ensuring we have a dedicated group of volunteers to staff the kitchen. *(continued)*





our daughter finishing up her senior year at Union College.

If you need to reach me, just call at 203-438-8788 or email [mowridgefield@gmail.com](mailto:mowridgefield@gmail.com). I get emails while I'm away from the office which helps me take care of your needs even faster than if you leave a phone message. I look forward to speaking with you!

## NUTRITIONAL INFO FROM MEG WHITBECK

*Our Consulting Dietitian*



Meg Whitbeck, the RVNA's registered dietitian and nutrition educator, consults with the MOW kitchen team on our menus and recipes to make sure they are healthy and nutritional. Here are some winter nutrition and health tips from Meg:

- Even though it is winter, hydration is still important. Aim to drink 6-8 glasses of water each day to ward off illness, improve balance and keep your mind sharp!
- Enjoy seasonal veggies this time of year. Winter squash, citrus, greens and root vegetables give you the energy and nutrients you need to thrive through winter. Grab an orange and reap the benefits of a blast of Vitamin C during cold and flu season!

## WINTER DELIVERY REMINDERS

- In case of snow, please ensure your driveway and walkway are clear for our drivers.
- If you'd like the meals delivered to a different door during the winter, just call Cris to let her know. For example, if your walkway isn't clear we can leave the meals in a cooler outside a garage door.
- If you plan to be away in the morning or don't want to be disturbed, you can always leave a cooler outside with a note for our drivers to place the meals inside. If you don't have a cooler, please let us know and we will see if we can help find one for you.
- If we can't deliver meals due to severe weather, remember to use your emergency bags to tide you over until our drivers can safely get meals to you.



I have estimated that it takes nearly 40 hours of volunteer time each working day to put together your meals, along with meals for our other 70+ clients. It all starts with me taking your information and recording it so 2 of our volunteers know the number of meals you require, ensure your dietary and allergy restrictions are met, make sure you get whole milk vs. low-fat milk, etc. They let the kitchen manager know how many dinners, lunches and specialty items need to be prepared for the day, and the 12+ kitchen volunteers get to work cooking and packaging dinners and lunches. Lastly, 7 volunteers pick up and deliver the meals to you. Thank goodness so many dedicated people volunteer their time for this organization, because we couldn't do it without them!

In addition to my work at Meals on Wheels, I also spend a great deal of time volunteering for the Friends of the Ridgefield Library. I organize the 2 book sales we have each year. Plus I spend time with my newly retired husband and our dog Java. We are empty nesters, with