

Your Gift Helps People Like Annie

Sharing more than a hot meal with seniors

Imagine living alone, with no one to rely on, no one to see or talk to. Imagine being unable to leave your home unassisted day after day. Unable to do something so basic for yourself as cook a hot meal.

As difficult as that is for many of us to imagine, it is a harsh reality for hundreds of senior citizens in the River Region. But the Montgomery Area Council On Aging (MACOA), an affiliate agency of the River Region United Way, is working to ease the burden for these elderly residents through the Meals on Wheels program.

"It's not just about that meal," said Pam Goodwin, director of senior services for MACOA.

Everybody needs human contact. Sometimes the Meals on Wheels people are the only people they see or talk to all day long.

Annie Nichols, 91, enjoys the meals she receives from Meals on Wheels, but more than that, she enjoys the company.

"When you get old, nobody's sitting with you," she said. "Nobody visits me." On a recent visit, Ms. Nichols lit up when the volunteer arrived with her meal, hugging the young lady enthusiastically. "That's the only company I have," she said of the Meals on Wheels volunteers.



Meals on Wheels volunteer Tia Turner delivers lunch to Annie Nichols.

Meals on Wheels drivers serve another much-needed purpose – helping to keep the seniors safe in their homes.

Volunteers are specially trained to look for signs of injury, such as falls, and report back to MACOA for follow-up. "It's about getting the best care that allows them to be independent and stay home as long as they can in a safe, happy environment," Goodwin said.

MACOA is always much in need of volunteers. The drivers deliver hot meals to 404 homebound seniors every day, and there is a waiting list of 308 to be added to Meals on Wheels routes in Montgomery.

"The continuous support of United Way to MACOA helps sustain our efforts to provide nutritious meals to senior citizens," Goodwin said. "We are fortunate to have a partnership with an organization that fully understands our mission. In a perfect world, we would one day be able to serve every senior on our waiting list, but, as for now, with the help of United Way, we are taking it one meal at a time."

**Your gift to the River Region United Way helps
1 in 3 people in our communities every year.**

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