



ALAMEDA MEALS ON WHEELS

ALAMEDA FRIENDLY VISITORS

FALL 2020

A FOND FAREWELL TO RETIRING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ROSEMARY REILLY

This past Spring, Rosemary Reilly retired as the Executive Director of Alameda Meals on Wheels after more than 30 years of leading our organization. She has enhanced the lives of thousands of our Alameda neighbors over many years and has with her hard work, dedication and compassion been responsible in shaping Alameda Meals on Wheels into the organization that it is today. She started first as a board member and after some turmoil with the director at that time she agreed to step in as the director on a "temporary" basis. She stayed in that role for over 30 years and much of the success and effectiveness of AMOW is a result of Rosemary's efforts.



In the early days, revenue in the program was scarce and Rosemary often had to hold her paycheck until there were sufficient funds in the account to cover it. That demonstrated the need to enhance our fundraising strategy and she took the principles of political fundraising that she had learned previously and applied them to our program. We began a fall fundraising mail campaign using the skills she had learned, subsequently adding a spring campaign and later supporting both campaigns with our newsletter. This put the program on a much better financial footing and it has grown significantly over the years allowing the program to serve those that can't afford the cost of their meals.

Another of Rosemary's skills that has helped AMOW thrive is her ability to recruit and motivate a cadre of over 150 AMOW volunteers that are the engine that make our program go. Unlike other meals programs in the Bay Area that must pay their "volunteers", Rosemary's caring personality and organizational skills resulted in a group of truly dedicated volunteers, some of which have been with the program since Rosemary began.

About 15 years ago, Rosemary proposed to the board that we add another program called "Friendly Visitors" modeled after a meals companion program in Fremont. Recognizing the isolation of many of our meals clients, this program matches a volunteer with a recipient for a weekly visit of friendship free of charge. Starting from zero, there are now about 70 additional volunteers and recipients that participate in this program further enhancing the lives of many.

Rosemary reflected, "The volunteers and the board, the overall program, the Friendly Visitors, it's serving people with what they need in terms of practical daily living but it's done in a way that's very caring and that brings great meaning to my life. I see people at their very best. Our volunteers stay for decades and our recipients are so very grateful." Rosemary's daughter, Becca Perata, observed how important this program is to many people in the community. "My mother realized that there is a need for this because often the meal brought by a volunteer was the only time the recipient interacted with anyone all week."

Every day and every step of the way, Rosemary was always looking for ways to make Alameda Meals on Wheels a program that better serves the needs of the Alameda community. From compassionately adding clients, occasionally saving lives of those recipients experiencing medical emergencies, interacting with local police, fire and protective services as needed, looking for fundraising opportunities, ways to add services like the "Secret Santas" that have adopted over 50 recipients around holiday time and interacting with volunteers. Our board recognizes how fortunate we were to have a director who was so dedicated to our clients and the community. Rosemary is truly a valuable community asset and we thank her for her extraordinary contributions to Alameda Meals on Wheels and wish her a wonderful retirement.

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AMOW WEBSITE:
alamedamealsonwheels.org



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MARIAN WILLIAMS RETIRES FROM SERVICE AS A CASEWORKER & BOARD MEMBER

Marian Williams retired from Alameda Meals on Wheels this past Spring at the age of 95, just as Covid entered our lives. Marian was a teacher in her earlier life. AMOW Board Member Kathleen Woulfe provides a story of Marian:

"Marian Williams was my 7th grade Homeroom Teacher at Haight School in Alameda, back in the day. She was my favorite teacher of all time. I learned so much from her.

She also taught the Choir Group for the school. While I played viola for the school orchestra starting in 3rd grade through AHS, I could not sing a note. I tried out for choir with Marian Williams. Imagine me standing next to her on piano and me singing God Bless America in front of a full class of candidates. She was ever so polite and whispered to me "stick with your viola" and winked ;)

Fast forward to Alameda Meals on Wheels, 2000. I was elected to sit on the Board of Directors. Marian had already been affiliated with the program and contributed her time, talent & treasures. I adore and love, Marian Williams, a cherished friend."



Volunteerism - Above and Beyond

Marian Williams recently retired from our Board of Directors. Her retirement brought to mind the incredible volunteer hours that she provided to our program. She served on our board for 30 years and during that time, she volunteered as our case manager interviewing new recipients. For 32 years she delivered meals to our recipients. During that time, she delivered over 46,100 meals. Yes, 46,100!!

AMOW's former Director, Rosemary Reilly, said "she provided years of service to our community and did so with kindness, professionalism and care. She paid attention every step of the way to ensure that our recipients' needs were met."

Thank you Marian. Your service is greatly appreciated!

PROVIDING MEALS UNDER NEW PROTOCOLS

BY PERI DRAKE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



AMOW has been serving a hot meal to our homebound neighbors since 1973 and we are not going to let Coronavirus stop us! We have had to make some changes, but still continue with our mission. New protocols abound, from the kitchen staff, to the office, to the volunteers, to the recipients. Most volunteers now deliver by themselves, instead of in pairs. Meals are left in bags on doorknobs, instead of waiting for the recipient to answer the door. And, of course, we are all wearing masks and sanitizing hands, baskets, and other equipment frequently.

Thank you to the city of Alameda for helping with our staffing and other needs during this time. Thank you to the community who has come forward with donations of masks, sanitizer, gloves, pet food, and cards for recipients. And most of all, thanks to our donors and volunteers who have allowed us to maintain our level of service.

We receive phone calls every day from seniors, children, grandchildren and others requesting our help feeding their family members. We also receive calls from these same people expressing their gratitude for knowing that their family member is eating at least one nutritious meal a day.

Alameda is a community that watches out for their neighbors. We are now serving the highest number of recipients ever. Your continued support is needed and appreciated.

If you would like to be notified of future events by email, please contact us at Alamedamow@aol.com



THE COMPANY WE KEEP

BY JOYCE LEIGHTON

Dan and Grace began their visits together in the winter of 2018. Sharing stories from their pasts, they became true friends as the weeks and months went by. "She has a great attitude and we enjoy each other's company," said Dan.

As Winter moved aside for Spring, their visits were about catching up with each other's lives and listening to articles and books that Dan had begun reading to Grace. At 98, her hearing and vision were such that watching news and current events on television had become difficult, if not impossible, for Grace. Dan went to the library for books and magazines he thought would be of interest to Grace.

Her favorite stories are about celebrities she remembers, such as the one about Doris Day's life. Dan held his phone to Grace's ear while playing songs by Doris Day. She had a big smile on her face while singing along with the words she remembered.

Dan brought over a slice of pumpkin pie on Thanksgiving, having learned from an earlier visit that it is a favorite of hers. Knowing she likes mysteries written by female authors, Dan found a mystery by a woman who always includes a cat of some sort as one of the characters. "Our visits continue to be a joy for me, and she says that I make her day," said Dan.

For Valentine's Day, he brought candy and flowers, and read an article about the royal family. Dan said, "I rarely come to visit Grace empty handed." For another visit, he brought a book on Hollywood actresses from the 40's and 50's. Dan found a "good news" website because Grace enjoys hearing stories of nice things that have taken place.

To celebrate her 99th birthday in August, he baked oatmeal muffins. And, of course, there was pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving. For Christmas, he settled on fragrant flowers so that, despite her poor vision, Grace would be able to enjoy their aroma. Dan said, "At the end of a visit, we race each other in telling the other one, you made my day."

By March, in person visits were no longer possible. Although her poor hearing made it difficult for both, Dan stayed in touch with Grace through phone calls. "I thought about dropping off a treat at her door, but worried she might be disappointed if she knew I came by and wasn't able to visit," Dan said.

When August arrived, Grace's son set up a small outdoor birthday party in celebration of Grace's 100th birthday. She looked happy while sitting surrounded by flowers and balloons with a beautiful smile on her face. Dan was delighted to be there. "She is a gem," Dan said. "And she makes my day."

If you or someone you know could benefit from the services of Alameda Friendly Visitors, please contact Joyce Leighton at friendlyvisitors@sbcglobal.net or 510-748-0342.



Special Donations with Special Thanks

Longtime volunteer Aubrey Sanchez, age 8, worked odd jobs to raise money to donate to AMOW. She raised \$45.67!



Aubrey holding her certificate of appreciation! (Photo by Peri Drake)

Nancy Joy Gordon has been playing piano and guitar concerts from her home since July. She calls her porch concerts Music to Inspire. At times, Nancy may perform up to three concerts in a week. She requests a donation that goes to Alameda Meals on Wheels among other local charities. Thank you for your beautiful music and donations.



Nancy Joy Gordon playing music to raise donations! (Photo by Joan Steber)



A new way to deliver meals to recipients while keeping a distance.

Due to the Coronavirus, people delivering meals have made changes. Masks, hand sanitizing, and social distancing are part of the process in delivering. Kitchen staff are tested often, and temperatures are checked.



Members (Kathleen Suryan, Sue Neumark-Morgan, Christine Walters) of the Secret Santa group at recent wine event! (Photo by Joan Steber)

The Secret Santas will provide presents this Christmas to recipients of Meals on Wheels. Thank you for this yearly giving event. This group of women stand up to the task and help to brighten the lives of recipients.

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Just click on the **Support Us** link and then the bright red Donate Now button in the bottom-left corner of the page. Contributors can securely use PayPal or a credit card.