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**Senior Centered**

By [Linda Covella](#) [Email the author](#) August 28, 2011

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## Celebrating 35 Years of Meals on Wheels in Santa Cruz County

Meals are rolling to a senior center near you five days a week, and a group of dedicated volunteers have been making it happen for 35 years.

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Meals on Wheels' motto is "Food from the Heart." And judging from the dedication of the volunteers who run the program, a lot of love and caring is served up with the meals.

Amy Weiss, Site Manager of the Carnation Café at the [Louden Nelson Community Center](#), has been with Meals on Wheels (MOW) for 21 years. She first joined the program because she was interested in working with the elder population.

"I've continued because I really enjoy working with the senior community," she said. "I feel honored to have this wonderful extended family of folks from many walks of life with such varied and rich backgrounds and experiences. I'm grateful for the lessons I've learned from them and the way in which they truly enrich my life."

Meals on Wheels offers an opportunity for seniors to not only receive a well-balanced and nutritious meal, but to socialize as well.

"Several lunch participants began coming in for the food, and ended up staying for the socialization and fun," Weiss said. "We often have live music and lively conversations. Things are often "hopping" around here!"

Over 900 meals per day (Monday through Friday) are served to seniors throughout the county. An organization like that requires a lot of help, and most of that help comes from MOW's 200-plus volunteers.

Lisa Berkowitz, Program Director who has been with MOW since 1979, said, "We have a lot of tricks to get these meals out."

She said MOW averages 32 different routes each day.

The meals are planned with the help of a dietician. The same meals are served at each of the participating senior centers (see list below). The August menu looks healthy, flavorful and filling with a nice variety of dishes. For instance, one meal consisted of lentil soup, carrots, spinach salad, pineapple juice, whole wheat roll and pudding. Another featured beef fajitas, pinto beans, green salad, Mexican rice and fresh fruit. Yum!

You must be 60 years or older to receive the meals, but there is no income requirement. However, if you're able, a \$2.50 donation is requested. You should call the dining center for a reservation one day in advance. If you need transportation to and from the center, call the center to arrange a ride from [Lift Line](#).

Besides the meals served at the various senior centers, you can also have meals delivered to your home. The meal is delivered frozen so you can

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8500 Highway 9, Ben Lomond 831-336-5366

[Louden Nelson Community Center](#)

301 Center St., Santa Cruz 831-427-0901

[Watsonville Senior Center](#)

114 East Fifth St., Watsonville 831-724-2024

[Live Oak Senior Center](#)

1777 Capitola Road, Santa Cruz 831-475-7177

[Scotts Valley Senior Center](#)

360 Kings Village Road, Scotts Valley 831-438-8666

**FYI: Date set for the next SENIOR TECH DAY:**

YouthServe volunteers will answer your questions on digital cameras, cell phones, Facebook and more. Saturday September 3 from 11am to 2pm at the Loudon Nelson Center. Read a [previous column](#) for more details or contact Woubzena Jifar at 831-427-5066 or at ys@scvolunteercenter.org.

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