

Neighbor Spotlight:
A Family Affair

Dee Selheim, Patti Brown, and Jim Walsh are three siblings who were raised in Manasquan with volunteering and giving at the forefront of their family values. Each of them described how their family grew up volunteering and that giving back to their community came naturally



Dee Selheim (left) and Patti Brown (right)

to them. Interfaith Neighbors is lucky to have all three as faithful and valued volunteers for our Senior Nutrition/Meals on Wheels Program. Dee started in the Spring of 2022 after retiring from her job as the Associate Director of Brookdale Community College, Wall Campus. She currently assists the program by coming in twice a week to answer phone call inquiries for Meals on Wheels and clear the voicemail box. The calls from clients vary, ranging from questions or concerns, to newcomers hoping to sign up for the delivery program. Dee described that one of the best parts of volunteering with IFN is feeling good when she leaves knowing that she helped a senior in need. “So much of the communication can be an endless loop, and it feels good to actually get in contact with the clients and address their needs” she explained.

Dee was introduced to Interfaith Neighbors and Meals on Wheels by her sister Patti. She and Patti, as well as their brother Jim, spoke about how Meals on Wheels is much more than the meals—it is a wellness check for the seniors they service as well. Patti started delivering meals in 2018 after retiring from teaching Kindergarten. Her brother Jim introduced her to Meals on Wheels and after riding along on his delivery route with him, she was drawn towards volunteering. Since 2021, she has been the site coordinator at Manasquan, helping facilitate delivery routes and delivering meals on an as-needed basis. Patti said her favorite part is chatting with the clients upon delivery and giving them a friendly face. Patti has been a jack-of-all-trades, and has also assisted with answering phones, like her sister Dee. She and Dee both agree that one of the most challenging parts of the job is dealing with those who don’t qualify due to living with family members or not being completely homebound.

The starting point of this family volunteer chain reaction was Jim Walsh, Dee and Patti’s brother, who has been volunteering, delivering meals, with Meals on Wheels for about 20 years. He is still employed full-time in sales, and with his job requiring more travel as of late, he volunteers when he can. “There is so much need in the world. I do what I can, and I feel that if everyone pitched in even just a little it could really create change,” Jim described.

Interfaith Neighbors is extremely grateful to have this wonderful family dedicated to helping those in need. Dee, Patti, and Jim are “three of a kind”, and we thank their parents for raising them to give back to their community. If you are interested in volunteering for the Meals on Wheels program, please contact Jennifer at jenniferg@interfaithneighbors.org or 732-637-2146.

Save the Date!
35th Anniversary Gala

Interfaith Neighbors
Neighbors Helping Neighbors

You are invited to join us on Thursday, May 18, 2023 at the Eagle Oaks Country Club to celebrate thirty-five years of Neighbors Helping Neighbors!

Interfaith Neighbors is celebrating our 35th Anniversary. We will take this moment to honor Peter Cancro, Founder & CEO of Jersey Mike’s with our Outstanding Citizen Award and Rabbi Sally Priesand, President of Interfaith Neighbors’ Board of Trustees.

The event will include dinner, dancing, entertainment, auctions and special recognition of those who have supported Interfaith Neighbors *Meeting the Moment Capital Campaign*.

Underwriting, sponsorships, and digital ad journal opportunities are available, as well as tickets.

Visit www.interfaithneighbors.org/gala for more information or contact us at 732-775-0525 ext. 220 with questions.

Want to get involved at Interfaith Neighbors?
There are lots of ways you can help!

GIVE • LEARN • VOLUNTEER

To learn more about the community issues we address or for more information about volunteering, joining our team, or ways to give, visit: www.interfaithneighbors.org or call 732.775.0525.

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Interfaith Neighbors
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
March 2023

Program Spotlight:
The Power of a Knock

A knock at the door might not seem like a big deal to many of us. But, to a homebound senior citizen, it could signal the arrival of the only person they might see all day, or all week long. It brings hope. It brings health. It brings the nutrition and care that will completely make their day. A knock from an Interfaith Neighbors Meals on Wheels representative means nourishment for the body and soul.

Every weekday Interfaith Neighbors’ employees and volunteers knock on doors and deliver meals to homebound seniors throughout Monmouth County. Many of these senior citizens would face food insecurity and/or malnutrition without our services. According to Meals on Wheels America, 7.2 million senior citizens are either food insecure or facing hunger in the US. There are layers of examples and stories behind these numbers, and Interfaith Neighbors aims to provide long-lasting positive effects on the seniors we serve through our Nutrition/Meals on Wheels Program.


Interfaith Neighbors began operating the Monmouth County branch of Meals on Wheels in 1991. Our organization delivers over 1,100 meals every weekday. Powered by employees and hundreds of volunteers, we make sure these meals are delivered to the doorsteps of homebound seniors and six municipal congregate sites for seniors who need it most.

Senior populations are some of the most at-risk when it comes to food insecurity. About 33% of older adults

The Power of a Knock... (continued)

admitted to the hospital may be malnourished and up to 50% of community-dwelling older adults may be malnourished (Meals on Wheels, 2020). The nation's growing senior population, expected to double by 2050 to 112 million, will exacerbate this need. Meals on Wheels services are needed now more than ever.

COVID-19 has had lasting negative effects on senior hunger and malnutrition as well. According to Meals on Wheels America, the proportion of seniors 60 years and older who sometimes or often did not have enough to eat rose to 4.9% in 2020 from 2.8% in 2019, a 75% increase. Not only did seniors suffer more from hunger due to the pandemic, but they also reported higher rates of anxiety or depression.

 **1 IN 4 ADULTS** aged 65 and older reported **ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION** during the pandemic.*

**This was substantially higher than the 1 in 10 (11%) older adults with Medicare who reported depression or anxiety in 2018.*

Many of our Meals on Wheels recipients reported being extremely lonely during the pandemic, causing their mental well-being to decline. We continue to experience COVID spread in our communities resulting in our seniors continuing to feel isolated and fearful of exposure to the virus.

We fulfill the need for social interaction and nutritious meals for homebound seniors. Frankly, our Meals on Wheels deliveries are much more than a meal, and numerous seniors have expressed how much our drivers' friendly faces mean to them.

March marks a special time for the Meals on Wheels nationwide organization, March for Meals. The March for Meals Campaign shines a light on the need for

 **1 IN 4 SENIORS LIVES ALONE**
1 IN 4 FEELS LONELY

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The Power of a Knock... (continued)

funding to continue addressing growing isolation and hunger, through community-based programs such as the one IFN facilitates.

Approximately 350,000 meals are prepared and delivered annually by Interfaith Neighbors Meals on Wheels for seniors and disabled persons. We operate 75 routes covering the 665 square miles of Monmouth County, delivering hot lunches, and for many participants, their daily breakfast. Each day our kitchen team, drivers and up to 125 volunteers make our program work. No one is required to pay for their meals, but donations are appreciated from recipients who are able and from the broader community.

MARCH FOR MEALS - JOIN US!

- Volunteer - give an hour and change a life.
- Make a Donation - help underwrite meals and transportation
- Advocate - speak up for our senior citizens!


Neighbors Spotlight: Meet Sade Mills

Employed by Interfaith Neighbors for just over a year, Sade Mills has already risen above and beyond, and exceeded her own expectations. Sade started in the Meals on Wheels program as a part-time meal delivery driver in January 2022. In that role, she delivered meals to congregate sites in Middletown and Keyport, where senior citizens can come to the Senior Centers for lunch. After returning from delivering meals, she would assemble meal bags to be distributed on door-to-door home routes.

Her role has since changed, and changed again! After showing her dedication and abilities, she took up the position as the Howell Senior Center Site Manager, which entailed managing the kitchen and serving the meals to seniors who came to the center. She began to learn the Meals on Wheels software system in

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Mills...(continued)



Sade Mills

her role as site manager at Howell, adding new clients and managing the home delivery routes. This led to her next role, another promotion, working in the main Interfaith Neighbors office assisting the Nutrition Program Director, Beth Paterno. Sade enters client information into the system and coordinates delivery routes for the county-wide program, while also delivering meals on an as needed basis.

“It means a lot for me to be employed by an organization that many people are even just excited to volunteer for,” Sade explained. She described how great a feeling it is to help people, and that she is so grateful for the Interfaith Neighbors leadership team for believing in her and allowing her role to grow.

“My favorite part is getting to tell people that I am helping to make a change in people’s lives when they ask what I do for a living,” Sade stated with a smile on her face. She went on to explain how delivering meals gives seniors not only nourishment, but also social interaction and a friendly face.

Sade’s dream is to acquire her degree in Sociology and to become a social worker and/or to open her own daycare. She loves children and helping people, and feels like Meals on Wheels and Interfaith Neighbors is a great fit for her.

Become a Meals on Wheels Community Champion

Meals on Wheels of Monmouth County, operated by Interfaith Neighbors, invites you to become a **Meals on Wheels Community Champion**. By making a gift today, you can show your support of Monmouth County senior citizens and invest in their health and wellness.

Community Champions who make a gift at the \$250 level or greater will receive a 2’ x 1’ banner they can proudly display in their place of business or home that demonstrates their support for Monmouth County senior citizens.

Gifts of any size are gratefully accepted. Gifts at the following levels will receive a banner to proudly display your support:

- \$1,000 - Community Champion Gold
- \$500 - Community Champion Silver
- \$250 - Community Champion Bronze



Use the enclosed envelope or visit www.interfaithneighbors.org/march-for-meals/ to give securely online.

Questions? or to receive your banner, please contact Christie Cancro at Interfaith Neighbors, Inc. at 732.775.0525, ext. 226 or via email at christiec@interfaithneighbors.org.