

WEATHERING THE STORM

Veteran Robert Burns survived not only the Vietnam War and a typhoon but the echoes of battle playing in his mind ever since. Today, he has found healing in staying connected.

“Them booms. Some days I still hear them.”

Robert joined the U.S. Navy at 17 years old, just out of high school, inspired by the military service of his grandfather and many family members. The deepest water he had been in, until that point, was only 12 feet. During his first tour in the Vietnam War, he experienced the ultimate force of nature: a typhoon. Off the coast of Japan, he and his fellow sailors faced 30-foot waves, running from one side of their destroyer to the other to balance the ship.

Robert weathered the storm. One of his roles on the destroyer involved manning and firing the guns from inside the turret. He was right beside the naval guns as they shot off—the force of the explosion ricocheting through his body and ringing through his ears, blast after blast after blast. “Them booms. Some days I still hear them. Some days they’re really, really loud,” he says.

When Robert returned home in 1975, the booms came with him. There were no answers for him and other veterans who were physically fine but fighting their own mental battles. “I spent a lot of my time by myself just trying to ask God to not let my brain erupt,” he recalls.

In 2004, he finally had a diagnosis: post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury from the blasts.

Robert started sharing his struggles with others about five years ago, finally able to slow his mind down. He can now focus on managing his mental and physical health and even learning new things—and Robert loves to learn new things. When Meals on Wheels offered classes on digital skills through the Digital Connect Program, he jumped in.



Robert Burns

Older adults in Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky take four foundational classes on how to navigate the internet through their tablet, and upon completion, they earn a tablet of their own to keep.

Now, Robert stays connected with his family through his tablet. He also uses his tablet to join a veterans group through Televeda. Every week, he logs on to an hour-long virtual program—by vets and for vets.

Robert says he is grateful to finally open up and connect with fellow veterans, and he wants others to find that relief too: “I just think about so many vets that have to live with these chronic conditions that nobody can see.”

This story was shortened for print. To read Robert’s complete story and to learn more about his experience with the Digital Connect Program, visit muchmorethanameal.org/news.

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BREAKING GROUND

A Letter from Meals on Wheels CEO Mike Dunn

DEAR FRIENDS,

These are exciting times at Meals on Wheels. As I wrote in our last newsletter, we publicly launched our \$30-million “Driving Into The Future Campaign” back in April. And as you can see in this Friends At The Door Newsletter, we have broken ground on our new 51,500-square-foot headquarters, starting with an exciting ground-breaking ceremony that took place on Oct. 29. If all goes to plan, we hope to be in our new home by the end of 2026.

Make no doubt about it: This is a very significant undertaking we have embarked upon here at Meals on Wheels. It starts with the Campaign which has grown to almost \$25 million in giving thus far... Thank you!

It takes all levels of giving to be able to hit such a large milestone, but I do want to take this opportunity to shout out the following for their leadership support:

- An anonymous lead donor
- The Farmer Family Foundation
- The Yung Family Foundation
- The Carol Ann & Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation
- State of Ohio Capital Funding
- The Harold C. Schott Foundation
- United Dairy Farmers
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- The R.C. Durr Foundation

We are appreciative of all the funders who have supported this important community project thus far, but we are going to need additional support to finish out the Campaign. Scan the QR code near the bottom of this page to learn more and to make a gift.

The new headquarters will be the engine which will allow us to better serve an ever-growing senior population with increasing needs—this is really the exciting part. Demographic data tells us today’s challenges to deliver essential services that promote the independence and well-being of seniors are going to grow exponentially in the short- and long-term. Meals on Wheels has made the very intentional decision to be prepared to take these challenges head on.

Thanks for all that you do to support seniors in our community. I hope you and your families have a wonderful holiday season!



“It’s a little three-bedroom house that I have lived in for 62 years, and that’s where I want to stay. Programs such as this have allowed me to stay in my home and stay independent.”

— Mary Mitts, a Meals on Wheels client, describing the impact home-delivered meals have on her life



Meals on Wheels leadership, “Driving Into The Future Campaign” leadership and representatives from Campaign and community partners symbolically break ground.



A group of attendees tour the building, formerly known as the John Nolan Ford dealership, which will become Meals on Wheels’ future headquarters and meals production center in late 2026.

Scan to make a gift. Your generosity will help us improve the quality of life for thousands of seniors, caregivers and families.



For more information on how you can support the “Driving Into The Future Campaign,” please contact Mike Hogan, Chief Advancement Officer, at 513-244-0672 or mhogan@muchmorethanameal.org.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

In September, Meals on Wheels hosted an event at Pine Hills Lake Park with the Asian American Coalition of Ohio (AACO) as part of our Swipe 'N' Dine program. This program includes partnerships between Meals on Wheels and restaurants in the Cincinnati area where older adults can enjoy group meals together, free of charge.

Twin Dragon, a West Chester restaurant, has been a Swipe 'N' Dine partner for more than two years. Owner Katie Huang, the Meals on Wheels team and the AACO have collaborated to enroll more than 200 Asian American older adults in this social (and nutritious!) program. At this event, youth volunteers with AACO assisted older adults with translating and navigating annual re-enrollment. Guests enjoyed music, arts performances and forging new community connections.

Thank you to our Swipe 'N' Dine partners, the AACO and the volunteers who helped make this an engaging event for our seniors!



If you would like to learn more about Meals on Wheels' Swipe 'N' Dine Program, contact Breanna Williams at bwilliams@muchmorethanameal.org.

A NEW HOME FOR OTR SENIOR CENTER

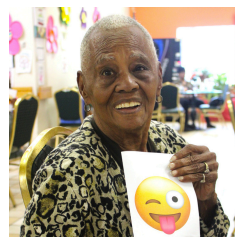
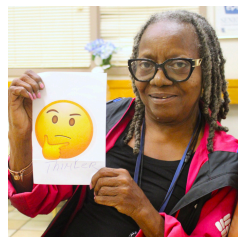
In June, the Cincinnati Metro Housing Authority opened Logan Commons, a brand new senior housing community and apartment building. It is located in the Findlay Market district. Logan Commons will also be the new site of Meals on Wheels' OTR Senior Center come December. The building is just two blocks away from our current senior center on Race Street and will include a new kitchen and dining area, gathering space, patio and garden. The photos below were taken at the Logan Commons grand opening.

Meals on Wheels manages the OTR Senior Center, which is the only remaining senior center in downtown Cincinnati. This welcoming environment is open five days a week, serving breakfast and lunch. Older adults receive group transportation to and from the Center so they can enjoy nutritious meals, social events, activities and access to resources to improve their well-being.



THE ART OF DIGITAL EXPRESSION

Did you know 10 billion emojis are used every day around the world? Seniors at the OTR Senior Center learned trivia like this and more in celebration of World Emoji Day over the summer. They got into the spirit of the day by choosing the emoji that best represents their personality!



A BIRTHDAY 100 YEARS IN THE MAKING



The Anderson Township Senior Center celebrated one of their own in September when Jean Carstens turned 100 years old! Friends, volunteers and staff gathered for a celebratory luncheon, live music, birthday cake, trivia that looked back at the last 100 years and more. Jean even serenaded the group with a few songs.

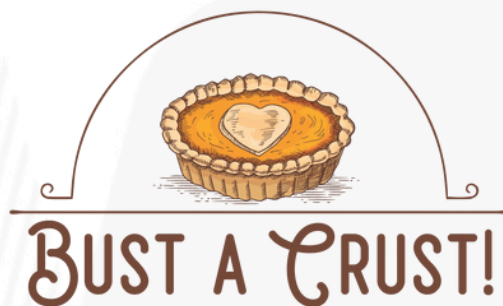
Meals on Wheels partners with the Anderson Township Senior Center to provide congregate meals during the week. We were honored to be a part of this celebration.



BAKED WITH GOODNESS

The annual Bust-a-Crust Thanksgiving pie fundraiser supports Meals on Wheels' mission to provide seniors' with essential services. All proceeds directly benefit the 10,000+ older adults we reach every year.

Thank you to our 2025 sponsors!



PRESENTING SPONSOR



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\$7,500



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BENEFITTING



MEALS **on** WHEELS
SOUTHWEST OH & NORTHERN KY

MARCH 18, 2026
6 TO 9 P.M.
CINTAS CENTER

It's game time! Get into the thrill of March Madness at the Third Annual Meals Madness Gala. All proceeds benefit our mission to promote the independence and well-being of seniors. Scan the QR code to visit the Meals Madness event page and to purchase your tickets.

