



Providing high quality services that address the basic transportation and nutrition needs of its community



January 2024

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Partner Agency



A Note from our CEO:

In past newsletters I have thanked our many dedicated employees who work for VAC.

Dedicated is a key word in that statement because in today's work environment, it is rare to see employees who cross 15, 20 let alone 25 year anniversaries. On average, our employees have worked for VAC 8.6 years, more than twice the national average of 3.5 years for the social service sector. I want to recognize one of our employees who decided it was time to retire, after 25 years of service for VAC, Nancy Hicks.

Nancy joined VAC full-time as the site coordinator of our DeKalb Grove Street location. There she was instrumental in building new relationships and partnerships that strengthened the program and the agency as a whole. She soon took on the responsibility of oversight of other locations. When the decision was made to reduce service days at the Grove Street location, Nancy took on the responsibility as site coordinator for TSP, while still overseeing the Grove Street operations.

When ARRA funds became available, Nancy helped launch the community dinner program. This program provided dinner with all welcome. She coordinated volunteers and raised funds for it. (Unfortunately, the program had to end, long story). She was responsible for the very popular county-wide senior luncheon and helped plan the annual volunteer events. From poodle skirts to Halloween costumes, no matter the theme you could always count on her to dress the part. Nancy was an integral part of agency fundraising, including the golf outing and Meals for MOMs.

When COVID hit, Nancy joined the MOW team, eventually becoming the manager. She was instrumental in eliminating the waiting list and guiding the program through some very challenging times. Nancy also represented VAC in the community and with other providers. Each location Nancy took on became better. Nancy not only has given of her time she has been one of the most generous staff contributors.

Thank you Nancy for giving VAC your all for more than 25 years. We wish you well in your retirement.

One more employee I wish to recognize is Barb Nadeau. Barb has also decided to join the retiree crowd. For the past 5 years she has been the person behind the scenes developing and publishing these newsletters. Barb also started the much admired Bingocize program (an exercise program) for seniors at our Sandwich Fox Valley Senior Center. She has been involved in many community organizations in the Kendall County area, making sure VAC is represented. Thank you Barb and I wish you a wonderful retirement.

Sincerely,



We are happy to show off the results of a process improvement collaboration with 3M and the Taproot Foundation, which has transformed their Sycamore Kitchen, the heart of the Meals on Wheels program.

To enhance the quality and efficiency of our meal services, VAC teamed up with 3M, for a 3M Impact Local partnership opportunity to provide our Meals on Wheels kitchen a process improvement analysis and recommendation. Under their guidance, VAC staff rearranged and streamlined elements in the kitchen to make it more functional, sustainable, and better equipped to serve nutritious meals to those in need.

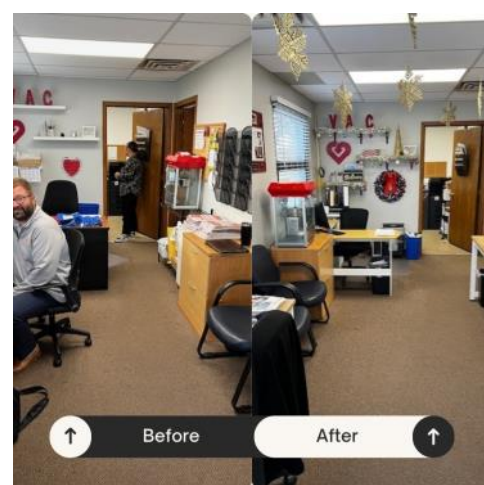
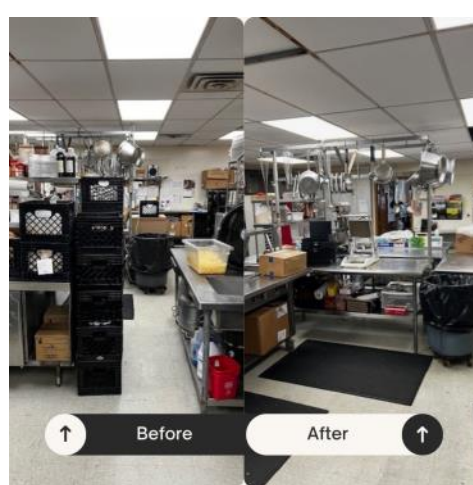
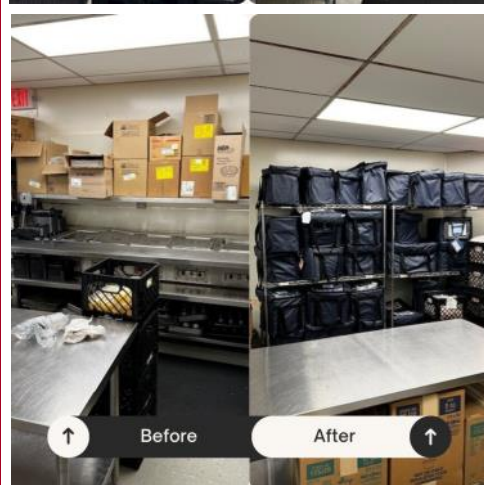
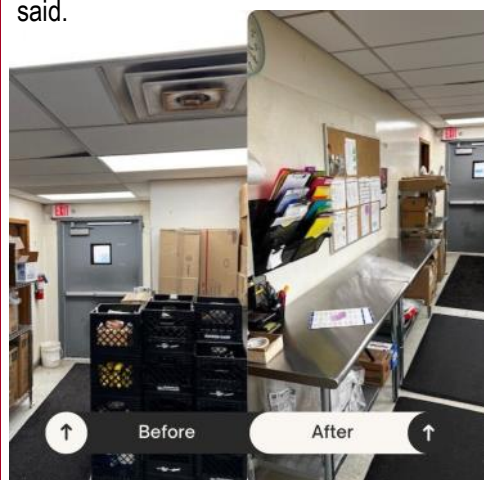
"We worked directly with 3M workers on this 3M Impact Local project," said Amber Godinsky, Meals on Wheels Assistant. VAC's objective was to address capacity and consider how to create more efficiencies within the confines of our existing workspace. The 3M team analyzed the entire program from inventory through production and staging for deliveries. The team of VAC and 3M staff met weekly through the fall months discussing strategies for maintaining meal temperatures longer, improving efficiency and doing more with the same number of resources, and to reduce congestion and improve workflow in the kitchen.

3M applied a 5S Lean Workplace model, Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain, to VAC's production process, with staff planning what they need and how to organize and maintain the facility.

Their recommendations included freeing up workspace by removing excess utensils and supplies and rearranging the production line, reducing steps, and creating efficiencies in the process from cooking to packaging and staging for meal on wheels deliveries. "We were able to make these changes within the confines of a small kitchen at a relatively low cost," stated Nate Kloster, CEO. "They identified ways we could declutter and rearrange our workflow, helping us to relieve some of our growing pains in a kitchen that is too small for the volume of work we do here. 3M also provided a \$5,000 grant to help cover the cost of a few new pieces of kitchen equipment and expenses in moving electrical outlets," Kloster added.

"It has been exciting to see the collaboration. 3M has a huge business model, bringing them into something smaller like Meals on Wheels has been fun," Godinsky added. "3M asked our staff to be involved in the project, both the ideas, and the solutions."

After months of collaboration the project ended in December with participants meeting to discuss the project, and future. This collaboration exemplified a shared commitment to the well-being of the community. "We are grateful for their support and belief in our mission," Kloster said.





thank you

Joel and Helen Maurer

Your \$25,000 donation to VAC significantly impacts our Meals on Wheels and TransVAC programs. We are grateful for your support.

A monumental thank you to our VAC Board President Joel, and his lovely wife Helen, Maurer for their generous gift of \$25,000 to Voluntary Action Center Meals on Wheels and TransVAC programs.

This impactful contribution ensures that we can continue delivering warm meals and comfortable rides, our primary essential services, to those in our community. It is gracious benefactors like you who make our mission and vision come alive.



MEALS ON WHEELS COOKBOOK **FOR SALE**

A compilation of recipes from Meals on Wheels, our clients, staff, and volunteers!

With the help of the Meals on Wheels kitchen, clients, staff, volunteers, and our nutrition intern this holiday season, we have compiled a 58-page Meals on Wheels Holiday Cookbook!

The cookbook was distributed to Meals on Wheels recipients, with one couple sharing: "We were amazed at the quality and content, could not believe the number of recipes, and great organization."

Are you interested in having a copy yourself? Use this QR Code to connect and purchase your copy today for just \$5!

Or visit online at <http://tinyurl.com/MOWCookbook> to order your copy!
(You can choose to have it emailed or mailed.)



Our LaSalle Nutrition Program celebrates 20 years of service to the communities of LaSalle, Putnam & Bureau Counties this year.

With three kitchens servicing the largest county in Illinois, our LaSalle Staff and volunteers amaze us with their dedication and determination. We currently operate a main kitchen and office in LaSalle, with additional kitchens in Ottawa and Streator.

As this anniversary year develops, several special events will be held throughout the three counties to promote awareness of our program and to thank supporters and volunteers. Look for updates in coming months!



15th Annual TACO NIGHT & BAKE SALE

Fundraiser for Meals on Wheels



THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024

4:00 - 7:00 P.M.

OGLESBY ELKS

800 E WALNUT ST

Dinner Tickets \$10.00

Three freshly fried tacos with seasoned beef, cheese, lettuce, tomato, sour cream, hot sauce, chips & salsa, dessert, lemonade/coffee

and
Door Prizes!
50/50!
Raffle Baskets!

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT!

Dine-In or Carry Out

Call 815-883-3630 to purchase tickets

Save these important dates to help us celebrate our 20th anniversary of service throughout the LaSalle, Putnam & Bureau County region!

Streator celebration
March 21, 4:30—6:30 PM,
at Park Place

Taco Night
April 18th, 4 - 7 PM,
at the Elks Lodge Oglesby

Ottawa Celebration
May 23, 4:30—6:30 PM,
at the Ravlin Congregate Center

Putnam County celebration
July 18, , 4:30—6:30 PM,
at the Putnam County Community Center

Spaghetti Dinner
August 8, 4 - 7 PM,
at the Elks Lodge, Oglesby

LaSalle Celebration coming in October
Stay tuned for details!





A big shout-out to our dedicated TransVAC and Kendall Area Transit drivers facing challenging weather and roads this month.

Your hard work is truly appreciated!



Despite the chilly weather, our Meals on Wheels team, the dedicated staff, and hardy volunteers have faced January's brutal weather too.

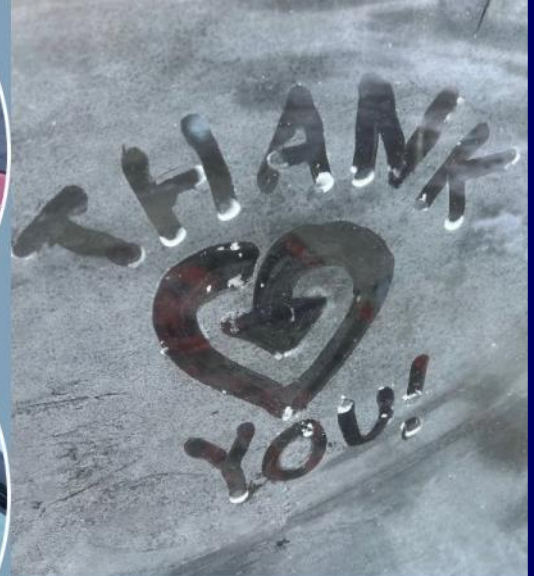
We are so thankful for you all.

We know our clients at home are thankful at each and every delivery too!

Your commitment to Voluntary Action Center has not gone unnoticed. We truly appreciate it.

Thank you!

#VACstrong



BABY, IT'S COLD OUTSIDE!



Become part of our Meals on Wheels delivery team and make a positive impact!

BENEFITS OF BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

- Community Connection
- Physical Activity
- Flexibility
- Contributing to Public Health



FOR MORE INFO

815-758-3932 x232

nhicks@vacdk.org

Voluntary Action Center is thrilled to join
The Lincoln Inn @ Faranda's
 in becoming a community partner for their
 2024 Lenten Fish Fry series!



FISH FRY
 Partnership

Lincoln Inn
 at Faranda's

&

VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTER
 of Northern Illinois

**PLEASE TELL YOUR SERVER
 YOU WANT VAC
 TO BENEFIT FROM YOUR
 DINING!**

**Lincoln Inn at
 Faranda's is
 donating
 10% back to the
 local community!**

**Fridays
 4:00 - 8:00 p.m.
 Feb 9, 16, 23
 Mar 1, 8, 15,
 22 & 29**

**320 Grove St
 DeKalb**

In 2019, The Lincoln Inn @ Faranda's was able to donate over \$2000 to local community partners through their Lenten Fish Fry series, and they are hopeful that this year's Lenten dinner series will also be a fantastic hit for our local community!

10% of all dinner revenues will be donated back to our local community. Guests will be asked to specify which local non-profit organization they would like to benefit from their dining.

Fish fries are planned for eight consecutive Fridays, beginning February 9, and continuing on February 16, 23, March 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29.

Please join us and remember to mention VAC as your favorite charity!

Dinner is served from 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm on a walk-in basis. Reservations are not required, but guests are invited to come closer to the 4:00 pm hour to avoid lines.

The menu includes Faranda's Favorite Fried and Baked Cod, Fried Walleye, Fried Shrimp, and more! Meals come with Soup, Salad, and Dessert Bar. A cash bar is available to purchase beer, wine, mixed drinks and soda.





BABY, ITS COLD OUTSIDE, BUT IT'S WARM AND COZY HERE!

**JOIN US FOR A VALENTINE'S LUNCHEON
WITH SALLIE AND HER AMAZING KITCHEN CREW!**

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 14TH

LUNCH IS SERVED AT 11:30 AM

**INCLUDING CHICKEN KIEV, RICE PILAF,
BABY CARROTS, DICED PEACHES, AND DESSERT.**

Valentine's Day Activities provided by Fox Valley Community Services.

Lunch at 11:30 AM provided by Voluntary Action Center.

Reserve your meal by calling 815-787-6219 ext. 2.

Suggested lunch donation \$6.00.

The VAC congregate lunch program is donation based.

Lunch is available to all seniors regardless of inability to contribute towards the cost of their lunch.





Board of Directors

- Joel Maurer, President
- Keith Foster, Vice President
- Tasha Sims, Secretary
- Cindy Green-Deutsch, Treasurer
- Michael Haines, Immediate Past President

Members at Large

- Kate Noreiko
- Elizabeth Bass
- Lynn Borio
- Steve Curatti
- Linda Linden
- Melody Mitchell
- Phil Haugen
- Maria Lombardo
- Dawn Roznowski
- Steve DeVlieger
- Marcy Billington

Administrative Staff

- Nate Kloster, CEO
- Ellen Rogers CDO
- Tracy Smith, COO
- Justin Dooley, Finance Director

Memorial Gifts

Remembering our dear ones through the kindness of your donations.

Honor Your Loved One.

Donate a Memorial or honor an important milestone.

Return this form with a donation to see your memorial printed in our newsletter.

Please send check to Voluntary Action Center, 1606 Bethany Road, Sycamore IL 60178, or pay with credit card at our website link

<https://vacdk.networkforgood.com/projects/101300-main-giving-page>

Name of Deceased person:

Name of Person's event to be honored:

Donor's Name:

Donor's Address:

Phone Number

Who should receive notification of your donation?

Address:



You can support VAC through



Did you know when you donate items through our Voluntary Action Center of Northern Illinois Meals on Wheels Wish List, you are making a big difference in the lives of people in need in your community.

Honors and Memorials

In Memory of Joseph Wettengel

By Joe & Linda Wettengel

In Memory of Charlotte Gallagher

By Mary Ann Ehmke

In Memory of Scott Morras

By Shelly Ruby

In Memory of Gil Silverstein

By Michele Silverstein

In Memory of Bob Brayfield

By Mike & Sharon Wadle

In Memory of Lyle "Smitty" Smith

By Thomas & Donna Alford

In Memory of Mary Lou Schaeffer

By Robert & Linda Russell

In Memory of Mom & Dad

By Kelly Abell

In Memory of Yvonne Johnson and Tom & Jeanne Zucker

By Ellen Rogers

In Memory of Dorothy Crawford

By Rose Christoff

In Memory of Roy & Dorothy Wiesbrock

By Mary & Hank Kolak

In Memory of Richard Christensen

By Charles & Connie Christensen

In Honor of Sycamore VFW Post 5768

By Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5768

In Honor of Susan Linden

By Linda Linden

In Honor of Jeana Linden

By Linda Linden



*Thank you for your gift to VAC in honor of others
and remembering lives well lived.*



Voluntary action Center
of Northern Illinois
1606 Bethany Road
Sycamore IL 60178

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**Providing high-quality services that
address the basic transportation and
nutrition needs of the community.**

Voluntary Action Center receives Title III Older Americans Act and State of Illinois General Revenue Funds in support of its senior programs through the Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging and the Northwestern Illinois Area Agency on Aging, Voluntary Action Center receives DeKalb Township funding and is a United Way Partner Agency.

The Fine Print:

VAC newsletters are published by Voluntary Action Center of DeKalb County. The opinions, findings, and recommendations expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the VAC or the counties served.

**Sandwich Satellite
Location**

1406 Suydam Road
Sandwich IL 60548
815-787-6219



Voluntary Action Center

1606 Bethany Road
Sycamore IL 60178
815-758-3932



Voluntary Action Center

Kendall Area Transit

109 W Ridge Street
Room 002
Yorkville IL 60560
630-882-6970



**Voluntary Action Center
LaSalle-Bureau-Putnam**

1840 Saint Vincent Avenue
La Salle IL 61301
815-883-3630

