



## Meals on Wheels Fairbanks 2022 Year-End Giving Campaign Freezing Out Senior Hunger

November 22nd, 2022

Dear Valuable Community Member,

There are few things more challenging than the day when loved ones can no longer cook for themselves, or become unable to afford meals that contain the vital nutrition needed to support healthy aging. Fortunately, in the Fairbanks Area, help is available. Since 1973, the Fairbanks Senior Center has provided nutritious meals to senior citizens in the Fairbanks North Star Borough through the Meals on Wheels program, which allows seniors to continue to live with dignity and independence in their own homes.

Now more than ever, Meals on Wheels and local seniors need your support to help keep this vital service in our community. **That's why I urge you to help us meet the important challenges in the year ahead, by making a generous, tax-deductible gift in the amount of \$100, \$250, \$500, or \$1,000 by December 31 to support the Fairbanks Senior Center's Meals on Wheels program.**

In 2021, thanks to your generous support, and with the help of local businesses, Meals on Wheels Fairbanks was able to provide healthy meals to hundreds of local senior citizens while keeping costs low, and creating a network of supports and services for our precious and vulnerable elder population.

**Together we have:**

- **Delivered delicious, nutritious meals to our elderly and disabled neighbors;**
- **Served more than 74,000 meals; and**
- **Organized volunteers to make an impact on our community through over 8,000 hours of service.**

Three years ago, the Fairbanks Senior Center completed a Senior Needs Assessment with our friends at Agnew Beck, and gathered data to paint a picture of the projected needs in our fast-growing senior population.

**The assessment highlighted the fact that if growth continues at the current rate, our elderly population will double and even triple in some areas over the next ten years.**

Alaska's large population of aging "Baby Boomers" guarantees strong growth for Alaska's senior population. Born between 1946 and 1964, this generation that ushered in decades of growth and change in the Interior, is also the generation whose need for services will be higher than ever in the decade to come. In 2021, approximately 18,200 seniors age 60 and older lived in the Fairbanks North Star Borough and that number will grow to more than 21,000 in the next 9 years. However, the population of older seniors, who require the most intensive services, is expected to grow significantly faster. Specifically, the number of people age 80 and older will almost triple from around 1,700 today to more than 5,000 in 2035. That's less than ten years away!

More than half of seniors, 80 and older, live in the City of Fairbanks, which is a great concentration in the city limits, compared to the general population. The rapidly increasing senior population, coupled with the fact that there are only 250 nursing home and assisted living beds in the Greater Fairbanks Area to serve nearly 18,200 seniors, creates a clear crisis. Based on these numbers alone, the impact on senior living cannot be underestimated. As the number of seniors increases, it will take a community of support to help keep all of our seniors happy and healthy.

A solution to this situation lies with the "aging in place" movement. Rather than seniors leaving their homes for nursing or assisted living facilities, aging in place focuses on providing the services and supports seniors' need to be independent and remain living in their homes.

The financial savings to our community and the state through home-based independent living programs is well documented. In a 2021 Cost of Care Survey for Alaska - <https://www.genworth.com/aging-and-you/finances/cost-of-care.html>, it is estimated that the annual cost for a nursing home is approximately \$378,000, while a home-based waiver program is estimated to cost \$5,720 a year. Fairbanks has the highest cost of assisted living in Alaska. This is due to Fairbanks being in a remote location, and low temperatures. Successful aging in place provides significant savings to our community because seniors living independently at home report being happier, and often enjoy overall better health.

The Fairbanks Meals on Wheels program, and other attributable services that help individuals "age in place" with the assurances that seniors are able to receive healthy meals though out the year. In our 2022 survey of Meals on Wheels recipients, 99% of seniors in the program agreed that Meals on Wheels helped them to live more independently. 97% saw improvement in their nutrition and health, and 100% stated that Meals on Wheels added value to their community.

**These are just some reasons why it's critical that you rush to send your most generous year-end contribution in support of Meals on Wheels. Please act swiftly to join the team! Every dollar of your donation will remain in the Borough to support Meals on Wheels, and the Fairbanks Senior Center as we organize and mobilize like never before to meet the needs of our pioneers.**

Without the meals provided by our Meals on Wheels program, our seniors could be subject to malnutrition and hunger, and potentially placed at-risk by not receiving crucial daily face-to-face wellness checks, also provided by home-delivered meals.

Seniors are vital to the future of Alaska. By sharing their lifetime of experience, knowledge, and wisdom, seniors enrich the lives of all Alaskans, young and old. The economic impact of senior dollars in Alaska must also not be disregarded. Seniors bring a very noteworthy cash flow into the state's economy from their retirement income, health care spending, other income, and job earnings that total an estimated \$2.4 billion annually.

**Please help us continue to serve those who are homebound, need nutritional support, and/or may be financially unable to contribute toward the cost of a hot meal.** Even more than a hot meal, your support will help these individuals maintain their dignity and much desired independence by allowing them to remain in their homes and our community.

The Fairbanks Senior Center's Meals on Wheels program is the only Meals on Wheels program serving home-delivered meals to our friends and neighbors in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. **Please support our seniors and our community by making a tax-deductible donation to Meals on Wheels today!**

Sincerely,



Pat Ivey, Board President

P.S. To make an immediate gift donation, please contact the Fairbanks Senior Center at (907) 452-1735.

This program is brought to our community with the help of the North Star Council on Aging, also known as the Fairbanks Senior Center. All donations are tax-deductible minus the costs of goods and service.

Please complete this section and return with your check or credit card information in the enclosed envelope.



# Fairbanks Senior Center's 2022 Annual Year-End Giving Campaign Freezing Out Senior Hunger



Yes, I can help by making a tax-deductible donation (please circle one)

**\$100**                      **\$250**                      **\$500**                      **\$1,000**                      **Other**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Billing address (Required for Credit Card) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment:**

My check is enclosed, made payable to: \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge my Visa/MC # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVC \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like my donation to benefit:**

- Meals on Wheels Fairbanks Program Only
- The Fairbanks Senior Center
- Please contact me. I have other thoughts to share