

Volunteer Experiences True Impact of MOW

Lois Savage, Shillington, loves volunteering. For the past two years, she's been a Meals on Wheels volunteer through her employer Leisawitz Heller. She's also been a Friendly Visitor and volunteer grocery shopper. She even finds ways to incorporate giving whenever she hosts a gathering, billing the events as "Party with a Purpose." She asks guests to bring along an item that can be donated to an agency or for a cause. People, she says, love to help but sometimes just need to be asked.

Throughout all her efforts, she's always been the one donating her time and talents. A few weeks ago, however, she saw firsthand the importance

of the Meals on Wheels program and how it reaches far beyond delivering a nutritious meal.

"About two years ago I worked with Meals on Wheels to get my former mother-in-law, Frances signed up," Lois explains. "She is 92 and lives alone. I was so happy to have her getting regular meals, and most importantly, having a person stopping in there five days a week to check on her."

"One morning her son spoke with her and she didn't sound right, but she said a friend was coming over and insisted that she'd be fine. When the Meals on Wheels volunteer got there, she realized that Frances was not herself and tried to convince her to call an

ambulance. She refused, so the volunteer reported it to the Meals on Wheels office, who called her son Steve."

"When we got there, the doors were locked and Frances didn't come to the door. I pounded for about five minutes before I saw her walking slowly into the kitchen. When she opened the door, she appeared to be disoriented and wasn't coherent. I kept asking her if I could call someone and Frances said that she had called her son, but she wasn't sure when he was coming. She was just so out of it and blanking out with long pauses to answer me. I was reluctant to leave her, so I called Rachel Kline (Berks Encore-Wernersville Center Manager) from the car; I just felt like something wasn't quite right. We are told that if anything is wrong when we deliver a meal, that we are to call Rachel immediately. It was hot and even though we had more stops, I knew this couldn't wait," says Barbara Jacobs, the Meals On Wheels volunteer who delivered that day.

It turns out that Frances was dehydrated and was admitted to the hospital

for a few days so they could stabilize her fluids.

Barbara and her husband Nick have been Meals on Wheels volunteers for three years, and this wasn't the first time when they were concerned about a client and had to contact Rachel. The first time, the client was ill in bed, and had contacted a family member to come over. The Jacobs were still concerned, so they verified it with Rachel so she could make sure someone was on the way.

"You get used to people and how they behave and you know instinctively when there is something wrong," Barbara notes.

Lois and her family are thankful for volunteers like the Jacobs who take their roles as Meals On Wheels volunteers seriously.

"I really wanted to share this story to let everyone know how wonderful it was to have that extra check and input from the volunteer," Lois notes. "Your system truly works...not only do you save lives by providing balanced meals, but you may also have saved Frances' life. Thank you."

Gift Wrapping Volunteers!

It's never too early to start thinking about the holidays, and we are busily recruiting volunteers to assist with this year's holiday gift wrap fundraiser at the Berkshire Mall.

We will be wrapping gifts from December 10th thru December 24th, 10 am - 10 pm.

For more information, please call 610-374-3195, ext. 208.



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