



CLIENT PROFILE

When an Accident Knocks Judy W. Off Her Feet, SOSMOW Steps In

Judy W. was nearly through the crosswalk on her way to the bank when a car making a left turn plowed into her. She remembers seeing the silver bumper as she fell—and then, “I won’t tell you what my leg looked like,” she said. “But it was broken in two places.”

It was 2021—and time for SOSMOW to become a lifeline for this 72-year-old widow. Judy had been living alone in her San Lorenzo home, but the accident changed all that. She’d need to undergo major surgery and be bedridden for months, so she moved in with her daughter and accepted her son’s suggestion to try Meals on Wheels.

Nearly three years later, she’s back at home, receiving meals, groceries and check-ins from friendly SOSMOW volunteers.

“They come five days a week. The food is good, and I make soup out of the vegetables and rice and whatever I

passions, realistic pencil drawings and time in her garden. She likes watching butterflies and birds chase each other through her fruit trees—and trying to keep up with her 3-year-old granddaughter.

“She’s a bundle of energy. As soon as her feet hit the ground, she’s off,” Judy said. “We play hide-and-seek. I’m slow as a turtle, but I’m doing a lot better than I thought I would.”

don’t finish from the meals,” she said. “I couldn’t cook at all before. Now I can stand there at least long enough to heat up the food and do dishes.” Judy is also glad to get back to her



NEWS FROM OUR KITCHEN

New Audiences Mean New Meals and a ‘New’ Kitchen

The term “dietary diversity,” used by health organizations to describe a balanced, nutritional diet comprising several food groups, has more than one meaning at SOSMOW—especially since we’ve expanded services to residents in Southern Alameda County.

At 5:30 every morning, the kitchen begins to buzz with what Director of Operations Cadre Mandy calls “energetic, positive” activity that energizes him, too. Upgrades are underway to kitchen equipment and technology to make packaging more efficient, give cooks more time to explore new recipes and ingredients, and tailor meals to new and existing clients’ needs and preferences.

“We’re really focusing on the quality of our meals. We’re bringing in kitchen nutrition software so we can develop, test and scale recipes more quickly than in the past. We’re diving into the quality of our products, too, using fresh goods and more scratch cooking so our clients feel more satisfied after they eat,” Mandy said.

More demand ... and even more diverse options

SOS staff work with a registered dietary nutritionist to produce culturally diverse menus to appeal to the tastes and preferences of our ever-growing clientele because we want people to eat food that’s familiar and they enjoy.

“We have always been mindful of the cultural diversity in the communities we serve, and now we have the opportunity to serve more East and South Asian American seniors than ever before,” said Charlie Deterline, SOSMOW Executive Director. “So we’re getting to know them and what kinds of meals will be most appealing.”

The team’s enthusiasm about changes in the kitchen and the south expansion in general is palpable.

“We’re special in that we’re innovative. It’s in our DNA. We want and need to provide options to everyone, and we need support to do that,” Mandy said.

“In the next 10 years, a larger percentage of Alameda County residents than ever before, will be over 60. We want to feed every one of them three nutritious meals a day that they’ll enjoy eating.”

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Frank M., Fremont

When I started delivering meals, the people were all older than me. Now I’m older than they are!”



Meet Frank Martin, an SOSMOW volunteer in Fremont who has been delivering meals to homebound older adults for 22 years. Though he’s now 87, Frank’s enthusiasm for this service is as strong as when he began.

“I was working for a family-owned company, and the owner’s wife was a Meals on Wheels volunteer. When I announced my retirement, she said, ‘You should volunteer somewhere. In fact, you can take my Meals on Wheels route!’ So I rode with her the week I stopped working and got hooked,” Frank said.

His daughter and son-in-law started volunteering because of the stories Frank shared about people on

his route: the talkative man who loves sports, the concerned woman who asked him to double-check her heater after it was serviced, and a very talkative older gentleman.

“Some just take the meal, say thanks and close the door. But most like to talk. You get to know them a little bit and look forward to seeing them,” Frank said. “Some can’t leave their house, and some are immobile and can barely get to the door, but 90 percent are fun to talk to. They’re very friendly and ask about you..”

Delivering meals before and after SOSMOW’s expansion to South Alameda County feels the same to him and the people he delivers meals to, Frank said. He had a twice-weekly route in the days when his wife, Norma, was his co-pilot; she died four years ago. Now, a weekly route lets him travel more.

“Delivering meals is very rewarding. You end up feeling good after you do it. You meet a lot of different personalities and some very funny people, and you get to visit with people who like to have someone to talk to. It’s never boring.”