

coal creek  
**Meals on Wheels**

Lafayette, Louisville, Erie & Superior

455 North Burlington Avenue  
Lafayette, CO 80026

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**AUGUST 2021**

**THE  
SCOOP**

Get the "inside scoop" on what has been  
happening at Coal Creek Meals on Wheels!

## Coal Creek Café is open for business!



On July 2, 2021, we reopened our older adult congregate dining program at the Josephine Commons Housing Development, now called "Coal Creek Café." For the first time in sixteen months, the dining room at Josephine Commons was full of pleasant chatter and hugs as diners gathered to enjoy lunch together again, experience

CCMOW's new café-style atmosphere, meet new members of the community, and catch up with familiar faces. Since closing the congregate meal program on March 13, 2020, most of our "regulars" transitioned to our meal delivery service until we reopened.

Returning diners, like Patty B., were thrilled to finally be able to spend time and enjoy a meal with friends again after not being able to do so for over a year.

"I enjoyed the meal today very much and the fact that we can all eat together, spend time together, and be kind to each other is really a gift, so I'm grateful for that!"

The first hug I gave a couple of days ago at lunch was 110% more than I remember before, and it was very special because it was the first hug I could give now that we're allowed to spend time with other people and our friends," said Patty.

Coal Creek Café is made possible through a partnership with the City of Lafayette Senior Services. Meals are served Monday through Friday, between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Coal Creek Café creates opportunities for guests to socialize with friends and neighbors while enjoying the delicious and nutritious daily offerings.

CCMOW requests a suggested donation of \$3.50 per meal for café guests who are over 60 years old. Those under 60 are welcome to join for \$6 per meal. All are welcome and no one is ever turned away due to an inability to pay the suggested donation amount.

To learn more about Coal Creek Café and view the weekly menu, please visit [www.coalcreekmow.org/coalcreekcafe](http://www.coalcreekmow.org/coalcreekcafe).

## Plates for Pets Program

Did you know that one in four older adults lives alone, and relies on a pet as their closest companion and only source of comfort? Made possible through a partnership with the Colorado Pet Pantry and a grant from PetSmart Charities, Coal Creek Meals on Wheels was excited to enliven our Plates for Pets program this year. Clients who are enrolled in this program receive a supply of pet food (for cats, dogs, fish, and rodents) along with their meal delivery on the last Monday of each month.

According to Meals on Wheels America, "Many struggle to access the food or services needed to maintain their pets' health and sometimes will even sacrifice their own nutrition by sharing their delivered meals to ensure their pets are fed." Our Plates for Pets program helps ensure that our clients are not forced to give up their pets because of an inability to feed them.

Additionally, it has been demonstrated that pets reduce stress, lower blood pressure, increase social interaction, promote physical activity, and can reduce feelings of depression and loneliness.



## CCMOW Volunteers are a cut above the rest



When you walk into CCMOW's kitchen on a Wednesday morning, you'll find Ellen at the prep station donning her iconic "onion chopping goggles," diligently chopping her way through thirty pounds of onions (and additional pounds of other veggies) in preparation for the day's meals.

"I love cooking; I love prep work; so when Lew introduced me to CCMOW, I was like: 'Absolutely put me down to volunteer in the kitchen!'" said Ellen. "It puts me in a Zen type of mindset where I'm just doing what I need to do and not thinking about anything else. I have very little stress, but the little stress I do have is out of mind when I'm doing something else and helping someone else."

Ellen began volunteering at CCMOW four years ago after being introduced to the organization by CCMOW Volunteer and fellow Erie Chamber of Commerce Ambassador, Lew Miller.

Volunteerism and the importance of helping others have been near and dear to Ellen's heart since the age of twelve when she began volunteering with her mother at various human service organizations. Ellen says that volunteering and giving back to her community always makes her feel good.

"I'm so excited to be in the kitchen once a week. My schedule doesn't allow for any more time beyond that, but I'm happy for the time that I can be here. The people in the kitchen are phenomenal to work with, they're very helpful and are just great people to know, and so are the clients, so I love being here," she said.

When she's not volunteering at CCMOW, Ellen serves as the Vice President of the Erie Chamber of Commerce, is a member of the Boulder Rotary Club, and also runs her own nonprofit organization called Passing Hats, which she started in 2011. The mission of Passing Hats is to add warmth and comfort to every cancer patient through a hat made with love.

CCMOW's wonderful volunteers are truly the heart and soul of our organization, and the impact of their selfless labor resonates throughout the many households we serve. Ranging in age from preteens to 80+ years old, CCMOW has over 200 active volunteers who donate hours of their time by assisting with meal delivery, meal preparation and service, organizing and bagging meals for delivery, administrative and logistical needs, as well as special holiday and fundraising projects.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, we were no longer able to have volunteers working in the kitchen and had to transition to curbside pickup for our delivery volunteers and to contactless services for our clients. During this bleak time—when our services were needed more than ever before—the overwhelming support we received from our volunteers and donors helped keep our doors open and allowed us to continue providing meals to community members in need. The impact of CCMOW's volunteers cannot be overstated, and it is because of them that there are far fewer vulnerable local residents suffering from hunger and isolation and they are better connected to relevant community resources.

After sixteen long and arduous months, following guidance from the Boulder County Health Department, CCMOW was thrilled to welcome back Kitchen Volunteers like Ellen Miller this summer.

## Helping to make things a little easier



Before the congregate lunch program was forced to close in March 2020, many CCMOW clients like Ronald R. had been enjoying it since its opening at Josephine Commons in October 2015. Though many clients started using our meal delivery service while we were closed -- and were able to stay in contact with volunteers through our

"Friendly Callers" program -- the essential daily in-person interactions between clients, the kitchen staff, and our volunteers were irreplaceable and greatly missed.

Clients were exuberant once they were able to eat lunch together again, and even seemed to notice and enjoy the small improvements we made to the program to enhance their overall dining experience, such as adopting a new café-style atmosphere and volunteer servers in place of the former cafeteria model.

"The new system is awesome! I love the people; everyone is so nice and friendly; and they bring you your food and

coffee. It beats going to a restaurant! The food is good and they give you a lot of it. It tastes even better when you can eat with people you know," Ron shared one day after lunch.

When asked what he enjoys most about the café, Ron said "For me, it's easy: I don't have to get in a car and go. Getting my wife's walker into the car is a job for me, and just being able to walk over here from home to get a good meal is amazing. And the food is good. You get all kinds of variety; they don't serve the same thing every day."

The services we provide make access to daily nutritious and well-balanced meals a little easier for clients like Ron and his wife.

"We consider our lunch the main meal of the day and it's perfect because it saves me from having to make a big dinner. Also, where else are you going to get a meal for \$3.50?" Ron said with a chuckle.

In addition to food insecurity, many of our clients are often impacted by other factors including limited mobility, physical and cognitive health challenges, and chronic illnesses. By removing barriers related to transportation and access to healthy meals, CCMOW aims to alleviate the stress around how someone is going to put food on their table.