

# CITYMEALS ON WHEELS

**2018**  
**ANNUAL**  
**REPORT**







18,414

**MEAL  
RECIPIENTS**



2,080,931

**MEALS  
DELIVERED**



Founded in 1981, Citymeals on Wheels provides a continuous lifeline of nourishing meals and vital companionship to New York City's homebound elderly. Working in partnership with community-based organizations and senior centers, Citymeals prepares and delivers weekend, holiday and emergency meals for our frail aged neighbors throughout the year.



# DEAR FRIENDS,

Hardworking, talented, caring, courageous – these are just a few of the words to describe our meal recipients. The frail aged New Yorkers we serve were the fabric weaving our city together. Now, they rely on us.



The city is changing rapidly. You see it in the glass buildings rising high in Long Island City, new restaurants in Harlem, a hospital opening in Bay Ridge. With progress, it's all too easy to overlook the elderly who have called these neighborhoods home for decades. There are 1.4 million seniors across the five boroughs and the number is only growing. So too is the need.

We all plan for the future. We think we've saved enough or our health will be managed. But aging means uncertainty. We all hope someone will be there for us. But that is not always so. For the homebound elderly, Citymeals is their lifeline to nourishment – and for many, their connection to the outside world.

With the close of our last fiscal year, we delivered the 58 millionth meal since our founding in 1981. You'll see vividly

in these pages how your steadfast support made our work possible. From weekend, holiday and emergency meals to growing our Mobile Food Pantry to combating dangerous isolation, Citymeals fulfilled a promise made nearly 40 years ago, thanks to you.

Friends like you exemplify the best of the city and its endless capacity for generosity. Thank you for keeping your vulnerable elderly neighbors in your hearts and minds.

With deepest gratitude,



Gael Greene  
Co-Founder and Chair



Beth Shapiro  
Executive Director

# THE PEOPLE YOU HELP US NOURISH

BY THE NUMBERS



**85**

AVERAGE  
AGE



**57%**

LIVE  
ALONE



**40%**

RARELY OR NEVER  
LEAVE HOME



**33%**

LIVE BELOW THE  
POVERTY LINE



**14%**

LIVE ON JUST  
THE ONE MEAL  
A DAY WE DELIVER



**10%**

ARE  
VETERANS

# ENSURING MEALS 365 DAYS A YEAR

Citymeals on Wheels provides nutritious meals to 18,414 frail aged New Yorkers on weekends and holidays – when there is no government funding – and in times of emergency.



## WEEKEND MEALS

While the New York City Department for the Aging provides weekday meals, Citymeals believes the homebound elderly should never have to worry about going a day without food. So on Saturdays and Sundays, we hand-deliver nourishing meals and check on the well-being of our frail aged neighbors. In Fiscal Year 2018 we delivered 1,579,638 weekend meals to our isolated recipients.

## HOLIDAY MEALS

The holidays can be an especially lonely time for older New Yorkers. Citymeals delivers festive meals on major holidays and hosts special celebrations at senior centers for those who are able to leave their homes. From turkey with all the trimmings on Thanksgiving to Fourth of July gatherings with summertime fare, we prepare a special meal so those we serve are not forgotten. Last fiscal year we provided 89,229 meals for Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, New Year's Day, Lunar New Year, Mother's Day, Memorial Day and Independence Day.

## HOLIDAY BOXES

To prepare our meal recipients for long holiday weekends when centers must close, Citymeals provides boxes filled with nonperishable meals. Delivered in advance of Labor Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents Day and Independence Day, these packages are filled with nourishing food – including salmon, quinoa and applesauce – and special treats like low-sugar cookies. For Passover, Citymeals packs eight Kosher for Passover meals in boxes delivered throughout the city. In the last fiscal year we provided a total of 231,762 meals through our holiday boxes.

## EMERGENCY MEALS

Citymeals is there for older New Yorkers in emergencies of all kinds, whether it's a localized power outage, a winter blizzard or a storm of historic proportions. As the emergency responder for the city's most vulnerable population, our warehouse is always prepared with 6,000 nonperishable meals on hand to distribute to isolated elderly New Yorkers at a moment's notice. During the last fiscal year we delivered 19,288 emergency meals.





## EMERGENCY FOOD PACKAGES

Harsh winter weather presents many challenges for our older neighbors and can delay regular deliveries. That's why our warehouse buzzes with activity each fall as staff assemble Emergency Food Packages for our homebound elderly. Packed with tuna, organic brown rice, oatmeal, canned vegetables and special treats like hot chocolate, each box contains eight shelf-stable meals. These welcome care packages fill bare kitchen cupboards to help ensure our recipients have food on hand when heavy snows or ice storms strike. In Fiscal Year 2018 we delivered 142,112 of these meals in advance of winter.

## MOBILE FOOD PANTRY

One in ten older New Yorkers face hunger. Among the homebound elderly we serve, there are those we have identified as particularly at risk for malnutrition. They often have no food on hand other than the regular meals Citymeals already provides and are too old and frail to walk to a food pantry. For them, Citymeals delivers an additional bag of hearty staples – soups, stews, brown rice and whole-grain breakfast cereal – to help them meet daily nutritional requirements. Last fiscal year we delivered 18,902 meals through the Mobile Food Pantry – a 13% increase over the previous year.





# ANGIE

## MEAL DELIVERER

Angelina – Angie to the meal recipients on her route – grew up in the same East Harlem neighborhood where she now delivers meals. Hoping to give back to the community that raised her, Angie became a volunteer deliverer five years ago, eventually joining the staff.

Her mornings begin at the local senior center and run like clockwork. As hot meals come out of the kitchen, she quickly packs and loads them into a small truck. Then she and her delivery partner Terry hit the road. Each day, their route brings Angie to the doors of 55 of her frail aged neighbors.

The people who rely on Angie face many challenges – illness, loss, isolation and often poverty. She knows who is especially lonely and in need of extra companionship. “I always try to stay in a positive place for them,” she says.

“How you doing, baby?” Angie asks, raising her voice to greet 101-year-old meal recipient Josephine.

The woman struggles to open the heavy door, before she replies, “I’m blessed!”

## “I ALWAYS TRY TO STAY IN A POSITIVE PLACE FOR THEM.”

For 50 years, Josephine lived in the same building with her late husband. “I love being here,” she emphasizes. Despite her aching knees and failing eyesight, she’s grateful for every day. Josephine admits it takes a long while



to get out of bed in the morning, but clings fiercely to her independence. “I don’t want anyone doing for me all the time.”

Josephine looks forward to the hearty lunch she receives each day, but Angie leaves the centenarian with more than a meal. “She gives the best hugs!” Josephine beams.

Going above and beyond is how Angie approaches her job every day. And she has a special greeting for nearly everyone on her route. She exchanges a few words in Spanish with one woman, and for a gentleman who is blind, she steps inside to leave his meal on the kitchen table.

Earlier this year, a 70-year-old meal recipient named Norbert answered the door and fell right to the ground in front of her. Realizing he was having a seizure, Angie immediately called 911, steadied his head and stayed by his side until the ambulance arrived. Since he returned home, Angie often gives Norbert another call in the afternoon to check in and see how he’s doing.

“It’s amazing what a few extra minutes can do. They are so grateful to even have a visitor,” Angie says. “I watch them brighten up right in front of me.”





# AUDREY, 88

## MEAL RECIPIENT

Audrey grew up an only child in quiet, tree-lined Middle Village, Queens. She remembers vividly her mother taking her to the spectacular 1939 World's Fair at Flushing Meadows Park. And every Sunday, she would accompany her father to Catholic Mass with its rituals and heavy incense.

Following high school, Audrey landed a job at NBC, first writing synopses of television shows like *Bonanza* and *The Jack Benny Program*, then as a photo researcher. She loved working with the producers and directors who were crafting the golden era of television. After work, she'd join colleagues at the top of Rockefeller Center for a cocktail. It was there she met her future husband Jack, a writer at the network. She was immediately taken with his quick wit and rakish smile.

What began as an office flirtation, quickly blossomed into a marriage proposal from Jack. There was a small celebration with friends, and Audrey laughs recalling how the simple affair turned into a boisterous roast of the newlyweds.

Audrey and Jack moved into an apartment just a few blocks from the hustle and bustle of Grand Central Station. She still cherishes the loving partnership they forged over many years together. Both were dogged Mets fans – smiling as she recalls cheering wildly with Jack when the Mets beat the Red Sox in the 1986 World Series.

After retiring, she and Jack stayed in touch with many of their old pals, meeting up for drinks and hosting dinner parties. Each year, Audrey looked forward to attending the annual luncheon for the network's retirees.

Five years ago, Audrey's world changed. She returned home from an errand and found Jack collapsed on the kitchen floor. Audrey quickly called 911 and rode in the ambulance with him to the hospital. She visited him daily as he

struggled to recover from the stroke. One night, as she put on her coat to return home, Jack pulled her close for a long kiss. That evening, the hospital called to tell Audrey he had passed just moments after she left.

**“THE MEALS ARE A GODSEND. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO WITHOUT THEM.”**

Audrey has struggled with a great loneliness ever since. “I cry a lot,” she admits. After Jack died, one of their mutual friends used to call her every night to chat. But he too has since died, leaving Audrey his beloved yellow parakeet. “Without that bird, I'd have no living thing around me.” In fact, she's lost more than a dozen other friends in recent years.

At 88, Audrey's thin frame is stooped and she struggles to walk. She leans on the furniture for balance as she makes her way around the apartment she once shared with Jack. After physical therapy, Audrey regained some strength in her legs, but it was too costly to continue. In the last six months, she's had two bad falls that landed her in the emergency room. Audrey struggles to get by on her small fixed income and laments that ambulance bills have cost her a fortune.

Audrey does not get out much, other than to refill her prescriptions. But for the last five years, she's relied on nutritious home-delivered meals from Citymeals. “The meals are a godsend. I don't know what I'd do without them,” she says.



# BRINGING COMPANIONSHIP TO THEIR DOORS

Citymeals relies on New Yorkers from all walks of life to provide our recipients with a connection to the outside world, a reminder they are cared for and not forgotten. Last fiscal year 24,742 volunteers lent their support – an 18% increase over the previous year – giving 80,627 hours of time to our mission.

## MEAL DELIVERY

Volunteers support our professional staff, knocking on doors and delivering meals to 18,414 meal recipients across the five boroughs. From corporate and community groups, to individuals and families, they share a commitment to helping frail aged New Yorkers who can no longer get out to shop and cook.



## FRIENDLY VISITING

The majority of our meal recipients live alone, having outlived friends, family and often their own children. Nearly 10% have nobody to speak with on a regular basis other than their meal deliverer. This isolation can have detrimental effects on both their physical and mental health. Our Friendly Visiting program pairs dedicated volunteers with their isolated neighbors for weekly visits in their homes. Volunteers are carefully screened and trained before being matched to an older neighbor with whom they share a common bond or interest. With the opportunity to create new relationships, our recipients develop meaningful bonds that enrich their lives and help sustain them for years to come.





## HANDMADE CARDS

Our meal recipients came of age at a time when putting pen to paper was the most meaningful kind of exchange. Our handmade card program continues this tradition. School children and corporate groups from across the city create cheerful greetings that are then delivered along with a meal to homebound elderly New Yorkers. Taped on refrigerator doors or resting on bedside tables, these colorfully decorated messages continue to remind our recipients someone still cares about them. Last year our volunteers created 65,823 cards to acknowledge birthdays, holidays and a host of other special occasions throughout the year.

## SENIOR SCRIPT AND SENIOR CHAT

Each day we receive many letters from meal recipients who reach out. Often they just share their appreciation and thanks. Other times they talk about their day-to-day circumstances or provide personal stories about their past. Our volunteers respond to every one – sometimes establishing a regular correspondence. Volunteers also connect by phone with lonely recipients who would enjoy a weekly chat with a warm familiar voice. These exchanges remind our frail aged neighbors they are still valued members of their communities.

# NEIGHBORS LOOKING OUT FOR NEIGHBORS

When you're a member of the Citymeals family, there are plenty of ways to give back. Through volunteering, planned and monthly giving and professional groups, our caring friends make a direct impact on the lives of their elderly neighbors.

In 2013, Lorraine Gant, now Secretary of the Citymeals Young Professionals, began delivering to homebound New Yorkers on Saturdays and immediately felt a deep connection. "When you see how happy the recipients are to receive their meal – the appreciation on their faces – you realize how important what we do really is. You get to be part of the mission in a tangible way," she reflects.

Lorraine has seen firsthand how greeting a stranger at their door with a smile and a nourishing meal changes your perspective. As former Volunteerism Chair, Lorraine ensured every new member spent time volunteering. Connecting with peers and aged neighbors alike has given her a stronger



sense of community. "Citymeals is an extension of my heart," Lorraine says. "It's just the way my heart chooses to give back."

## SINCE OUR FOUNDING, EVERY DONOR DOLLAR – 100% – HAS GONE DIRECTLY TO OUR MEALS.

Like Lorraine, volunteering brought Esra Ozer to Citymeals after she moved to New York. While climbing the career ladder, Esra's commitment to Citymeals continued to deepen, first as a member of the Citymeals Young Professionals, then as a founding member of the Friends of Citymeals.

Since 2016, Esra and the Friends have engaged their social and professional networks to raise awareness and funds for the Citymeals mission. The group's signature event, Fall for Truffles, brings together chefs, foodies and other





professionals for an evening of delicious Italian fare. “We want to make a direct and immediate impact on the community we call home.”

For Sue Berlin, a member of the Month of Sundays Club, giving back has meant a monthly gift to Citymeals for nearly a decade. A senior herself, Sue has lived in Washington Heights nearly all of her life. “I understand the importance of being someplace that feels like home.” With her membership, Sue is guaranteeing homebound elderly New Yorkers – some just steps from her door – the same independence and connection to community she cherishes. In the last fiscal year, Month of Sundays Club members like Sue funded the preparation and delivery of 64,000 meals.

John Raphael – a longtime supporter of Citymeals – sees elder hunger in the numbers. “It’s a growing problem and it’s only going to get worse.” A successful money manager with four decades in the industry, John appreciates knowing exactly where his gift is going. More than that,

he wants to be sure his donation is having an impact. “I know my support is going to feed the 18,000,” he explains. In fact, since our founding, every donor dollar – 100% – has gone directly to our meals, not administrative expenses.

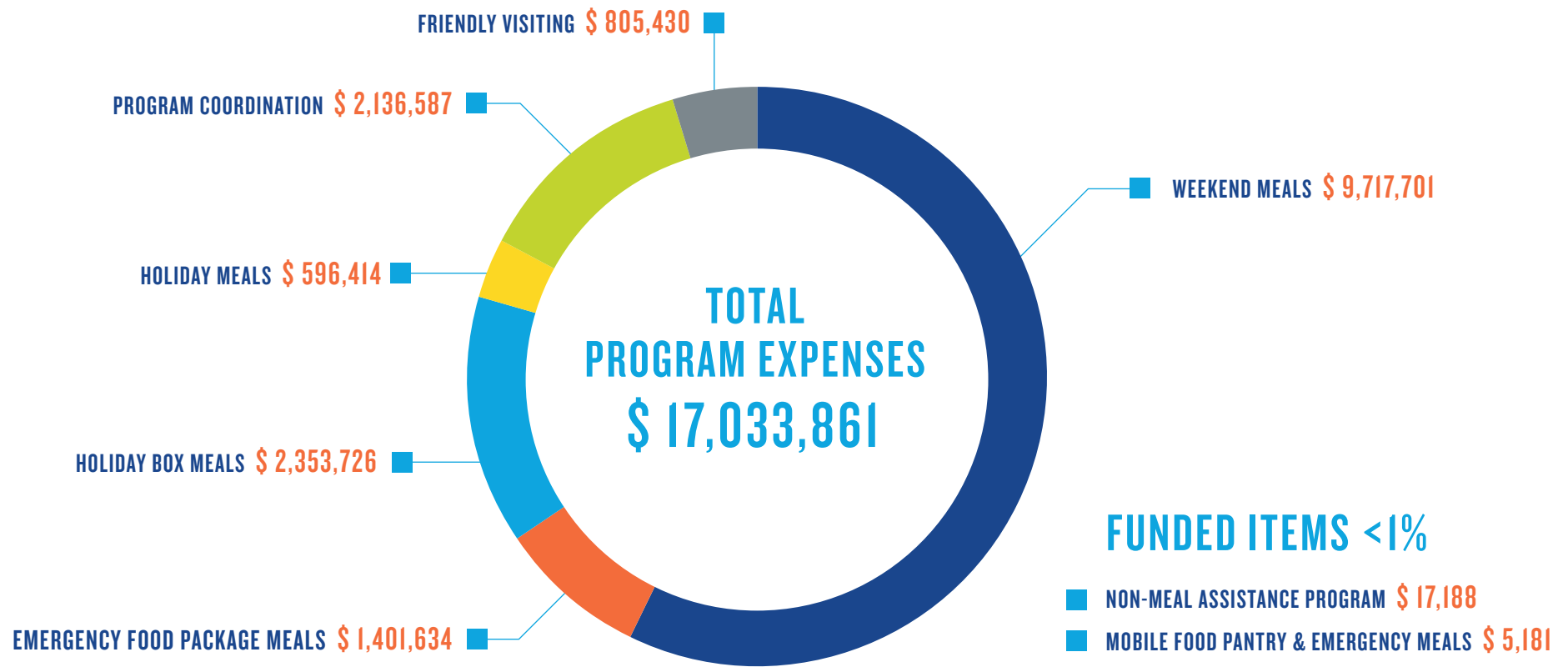
Every year, he hosts several dinner parties for friends and colleagues through Citymeals Dineout. But John’s support extends far beyond our events – he is creating a legacy of compassion through planned giving. “When you put an organization in your will, it can feel like an act of faith. But I know Citymeals isn’t changing its stripes.” By including Citymeals in his will, John will guarantee Citymeals can continue fulfilling its promise to the city’s most vulnerable population.

With 1 in 10 older New Yorkers facing hunger, the generosity of Esra, Lorraine, Sue and John is vital. Thanks to these caring friends – and many more – Citymeals can plan to meet the growing need.

# RESTRICTED FUNDS SPENT

100% of all contributions to Citymeals on Wheels from the general public are used exclusively for the preparation and delivery of meals. The graph on this page represents how these general donations were used in Fiscal Year 2018.

All funds needed to cover administrative and fundraising expenses are raised separately and specifically for those purposes. Administrative grants come from Citymeals on Wheels board members, foundations, corporate sponsors, and the City of New York.





# NUMBER OF MEALS FUNDED

WEEKEND MEALS	1,579,638
EMERGENCY FOOD PACKAGE MEALS	142,112
HOLIDAY BOX MEALS	231,762
HOLIDAY MEALS	89,229
MOBILE FOOD PANTRY	18,902
EMERGENCY MEALS	19,288

**TOTAL MEALS SERVED**  
**2,080,931**

# STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

<b>TOTAL SUPPORT &amp; REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 21,725,554</b>
<b>PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>	
Weekend Meals	\$ 9,717,701
Emergency Food Packages	\$ 1,401,634
Holiday Box Meals	\$ 2,353,726
Holiday Meals	\$ 596,414
Mobile Food Pantry & Emergency Meals	\$ 5,181
Program Coordination*	\$ 2,136,587
Friendly Visiting	\$ 805,430
Non-Meal Assistance Program	\$17,188
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$17,033,861</b>
General & Administrative Expenses	\$ 2,140,000
Fundraising Expenses	\$ 2,352,037
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 21,525,898</b>
Total Assets	\$ 46,006,232
Total Liabilities	\$ 11,086,488
<b>NET ASSET BALANCE</b>	<b>\$ 34,919,744</b>

\*Includes Client Intake, Senior Chat, Senior Script, and other Program Services.

Information extracted from the audited financial statement provided by  
RSM US, LLP, certified public accountants.

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JULY 1, 2017 – JUNE 30, 2018

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\*\*Past Presidents





Last year, Citymeals lost one of its most dedicated supporters and Vice Chair of the Board, Joan H. Tisch.

Wife of our Founding President, Preston Robert Tisch, and mother-in-law of Board Member Lizzie Tisch, Joan was a champion for our city's frail aged. Her support guaranteed a lifeline of daily meals and companionship to growing numbers of New York's homebound elderly – all while inspiring many others to follow her lead. As the city's population of seniors in need continues to grow, Joan's steadfast commitment to them helped Citymeals prepare and sustain itself for the demands of the future.

We remain grateful for Joan's immeasurable generosity that will make a difference in the lives of our homebound elderly for years to come.



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