



# MORE THAN MEALS

**United Way program is giving seniors nutritious meals and valuable social connections**

For seniors like Kay, COVID-19 has forced upon them increased isolation in a world that had already become increasingly isolating.

“Can you imagine what it’s like to be months in your little apartment? Not able to go out, not able to get what you need?” said Kay. “I’m thinking about a neighbour down the way who just cried when her young people came by to deliver it and just said I can’t believe it, she was just so touched.”

Thanks to United Way’s More than Meals program, seniors are getting healthy meals delivered to their homes. Not only that – they are getting critically important social visits and connections with the outside world.

“One of the things we know is that as the pandemic has been evolving and seniors have been isolated for longer periods of time, their interest in cooking for themselves is not as great as maybe it was at the beginning,” said Glenys Cavers, Beacon Community Services’ Director of Volunteer and Seniors’ Services. “So a lot of our seniors could be down to the tea and toast type of meal so by providing these free meals it gives them a chance to have a well-balanced meal.”

Many seniors in the CRD experience extreme loneliness and isolation, malnutrition or food insecurity, mobility issues and limited income that greatly impacts their physical, mental and emotional well-being.

From this already worrying baseline, COVID-19 has compounded these issues. More than ever, seniors are facing acute stress and anxiety, increased isolation, and experiencing more challenges accessing healthy food and meals.

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“What we know is that with physical isolation, there’s a lot of people that are not seeing other people during the week and we also know that sometimes we’re the only phone call that they have and the only person they’re talking to,” said Cavers.

Thanks to United Way’s More than Meals program, seniors are getting healthy meals delivered to their homes. Not only that – they are getting critically important social visits and connections with the outside world.

“It helps them just a little bit, just that little warm embrace from Beacon, here’s some food it fills your belly and it fills your heart,” said Jennifer Van Es, activities and Rental Coordinator at the Shoal Centre.

Since launching More than Meals in May 2020, the program has grown from delivering 200 meals a week to 1,000 meals a week for seniors in the Capital Regional District (CRD). More than Meals has support from The Government of Canada’s Emergency Community Support Fund, but, current funding ends in October.

With an anticipated next surge of COVID-19 coming this fall, United Way is looking for contributions to keep this project going over the next two years.

“This program is reaching people, it’s reaching isolated seniors, it’s reaching people that don’t have the ability to cook for themselves regardless of where they live through the leadership of the United Way and the funding that they provide it’s enabling us to continue this program,” said Cavers.

Ultimately, this funding is made possible by generous donations from local community members and it’s those donations that make a real difference in people’s lives.



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