

Meals on Wheels warms bodies and hearts with nutritious meals

From Staff Reports

Meals on Wheels of Asheville and Buncombe County, Inc., delivers hot and cold nutritious meals to 550 homebound seniors five days a week throughout the area.

Each weekday, volunteers load up picnic coolers and deliver food and drink to clients on each of the 38 routes. The program is so popular that there are 73 individuals on the waiting list.

One of the problems the organization faces, however, is keeping the food at a safe temperature. With the high volume of clients and the distance of the routes, a meal cooked at the MOW-ABC kitchen might take one - four hours before it reaches the client. The picnic

coolers currently used are failing at keeping the food at healthy temperatures - putting the elderly at risk for botulism, food poisoning, or illness due to improper food handling and possible bacteria growth.

To fix this crucial problem, the organization has started a new meal transport system in which NSF-approved meal transporters are used to hold safe temperatures for both hot and cold foods.

"We cover a 660-square mile area to serve over 500 homebound seniors a hot, nutritious meal," said development director Terri Bowman. "When traveling to the most rural sections of the county, our current system of store-bought coolers don't always hold the

food at a safe temperature. In our efforts to help our seniors, we wouldn't want to be the cause of anyone getting sick but there was simply no room in our budget to make an expenditure this large. The impact of this grant from the WHO Foundation will be felt for several years in the lives of thousands of homebound seniors across Asheville and Buncombe County."

The WHO Foundation is pleased to grant MOW-ABC with a \$26,000 grant to purchase 76 coolers and hot/cold packs as well as additional resources.

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