

# SILVER PAGES

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF COA

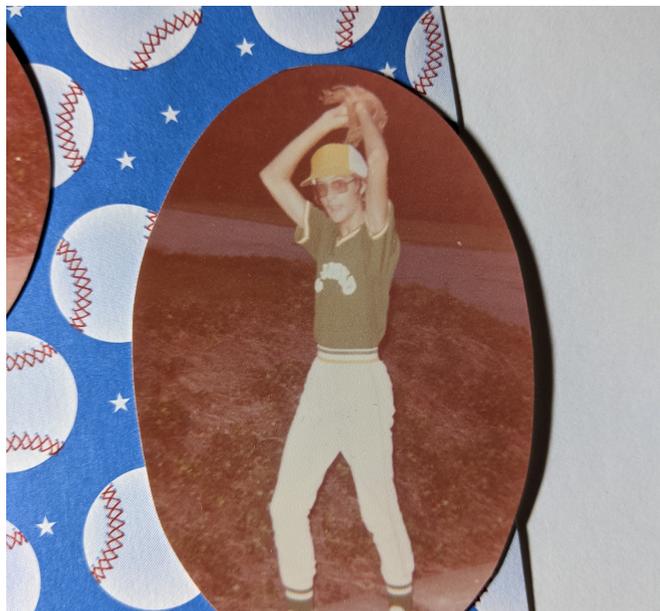
MARCH 2021



## MARCH FOR MEALS

The annual March for Meals celebration commemorates the signing of the 1972 amendment of the Older Americans Act (1965) that included a national nutrition program for seniors 60 years and older. Since 2002 local Meals on Wheels programs (like COA) across the country have joined forces each March to celebrate this successful public-private partnership, and garner support to fill the gap between the seniors served and those still in need.

March for Meals recognizes local businesses, organizations, governments and volunteers who contribute so generously to support homebound seniors in a variety of ways to make America both stronger and healthier.



## FROM KEITH LOGAN...

As a lifelong baseball fan, I have always loved this time of year. Spring training is in gear, the boys of summer are preparing for another season, and hope is in the air. The warmth of spring in the desert or in Florida, the smell of fresh cut grass, the pop of the ball into the glove, the crack of the bat, and the knowledge that every team is starting the season from the same point: no wins and no losses. A World Series championship is in every team's sights.

Hope abounds even more prominently this year after dealing with a global pandemic for the last 12 months. It has been a challenging year, filled with restrictions, cancellations, and, for many people, heartbreaking losses. However, COVID-19 cases have been shrinking and vaccinations are beginning to reach a larger portion of the population. As we look forward at what could be, there is a sense that relief and a resumption of normalcy may be on the horizon. Opportunities abound.



## WE ARE WELCOME. THANK YOU.

The Council on Aging may be more than 50 years old and a fixture in Western North Carolina...but we just got "welcomed" by the Welcome Club of Henderson County and boy do we feel special!

The Welcome Club is a social organization with a mission to welcome and include new residents to establish friendships through activities and events which support local charities. The Council on Aging was selected by the Club as the "it" organization of the year, and we are the fortunate recipients of their largesse (a \$1,000 check). Not only did we receive a generous donation (shown above as presented to COA's executive director, Keith Logan, but we will also benefit from their hands-on volunteering and donations of items to our two Thrift Stores. We will sell those items (at a bargain!) to generate revenue to support Meals on Wheels. Mary Kay Krokowski, president of the Welcome Club, said they chose COA this year, "Because of its work to provide five days of nutritious meals each week which makes it possible for people to remain in their homes as they age. To learn more about the Welcome Club, visit their website: [www.hcwelcomeclub.org](http://www.hcwelcomeclub.org).



## WE'RE GOLDEN!

You may recall (from our last issue) that we secured a Silver Medallion of Transparency from Guidestar in December 2020. That was pretty cool. Guidestar is a widely acclaimed and recognized clearinghouse for nonprofit organizations. Well, we did not sit on our laurels. We strived for more and achieved it--the Gold Medallion. What does it mean? It means that the Council on Aging meets a number of threshold requirements that assure open and accurate reporting of our finances, personnel, and policies. Taken together, these give peace of mind to donors and supporters who can trust that their donations are accounted for and used as promised. In one sense, earning this designation is like the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval...it means we're a trusted and reliable organization. So, when and if you feel the urge to make a donation, you can do so with confidence because we're golden!

## KEITH CONTINUED...

For nearly a year, we have been serving homebound older adults with weekly deliveries of frozen meals. The pandemic "afforded us" the opportunity to expand and meet the increasing need in the community. Pre-pandemic, we were serving about 290 meals per day. Now, we have five new routes and we're serving an extra 50-60 clients each week. On top of that--thanks to CARES Act funding--we're serving 75 additional older adults with meals shipped directly to their homes. In sum, we're serving 40% more homebound older adults with nutrition needs!

However, shipped meals, weekly deliveries, social distancing, contactless delivery, and masks have made social isolation a bigger problem than it already was. Meals on Wheels is about More Than a Meal® (MTAM). It is also about the social connection and the safety check that is offered when a friendly volunteer visits each day.

We are actively exploring a return to daily hot meal deliveries. But there are many challenges. Surprisingly, via a recent survey, more than half our clients have expressed a preference for weekly frozen meals. Before we react, we need to understand their desires and capabilities as well as our logistical capability. If we are to continue with weekly frozen meal delivery, we need to determine if there are other ways to continue to meet the MTAM philosophy. Through the pandemic, we operated with fewer than half the volunteers that used to serve on a regular basis. If we return to daily deliveries, we will need to bolster the volunteer ranks to serve a larger number of clients than before the pandemic. Finally, CARES Act and Families First Act funding run out by the end of September. We will need new streams of revenue to continue to serve the number of seniors that we've been able to serve during COVID-19.

So, while hope abounds, challenges remain. But thanks to the creativity, dedication, adaptability, and resiliency of our incredible staff and volunteers, we know we will prevail to continue to serve our community well. After all, it is spring. And spring means baseball is just around the corner. And any team can win it all. Together, we can be that team.



## YOU JUST NEVER KNOW...

Who doesn't have an old desk or junk drawer with a bunch of stuff you haven't seen in years...or maybe ever? You know what I'm talking about--a neglected box or pile in your attic, garage, or hall closet. It taunts you. You ignore it. Don't! Why? Because you might find the next treasure trove that nets our Thrift Stores and, ultimately, Meals on Wheels, a big payday. The vintage hunting licenses you see above were found in a junk drawer along with old pencil stubs, dried up bottles of glue, and shreds of paper. I can almost smell it. After gleaning through the pile, these rare North Carolina hunting licenses (buttons you would pin and wear in the field) were discovered. They date from 1931-1936. Thanks to our crack staff at the Thrift Stores, they were recognized as valuable and pulled for resale. They sold for >\$500 which, you should know, feeds 100 people a nutritious meal. Now that's what I call "Big Game!" If there are smart collectors out there who can be on call to help us evaluate such items, you could help us sleuth through such diamonds in the rough and help support our mission. It's fun, educational, and worthwhile. Let us know...because you just never know.



## WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES

LEFT: Candace "Candy" Hamel is not new to COA, but she is a new COA employee. Candy has been our contracted Meals on Wheels driver--collecting prepared meals from the hospitals for packing and delivery. Now she's ours! Born a Hoosier, she became a Floridian at age 3. She started a family and raised her three children there before the whole gang (including her parents) came to Hendersonville in 2010. Now her kids are having kids and Candy is a new "Granny." Congratulations!

RIGHT: Clarissa Williams is our new Associate in the Etowah Thrift Store. Born and raised in Transylvania County, Clarissa grew up with a family who instilled in her an ethic of caring for the elderly. She is the oldest of 7 children, so responsibility comes naturally to her--evidenced in the valedictorian honor at her high school graduation. Clarissa has an Australian Shepherd dog, enjoys photography, visiting historic landmarks, and... drum roll...is getting married this spring. Best wishes!



## An Anniversary...Of Sorts

A year ago (March 15, 2020), COA shuttered its thrift stores in Hendersonville and Etowah for two months. Not only did the pandemic disrupt our retail operations, but our revenues—which we use to support Meals on Wheels—also took a hit. We were able to keep all employees on the payroll during that time and, fortunately, a few months after the shutdown we were able to gradually reopen with reduced days and hours. The store managers (Angie Baney in Hendersonville and Louise Solomon in Etowah) and their dedicated teams of employees and volunteers have done a tremendous job of keeping our stores safe, clean, and well-stocked. And, thanks to loyal donors and thrifty shoppers, our sales in the past few months are exceeding forecasts.

More than 200 shoppers visit our stores each day. They find good merchandise at great prices...and more. Meals on Wheels is more than a meal," so is shopping at our thrift stores. Every \$5 spent buys a meal for one of our clients. And when we deliver it, we're making sure "No one ages alone." See for yourself. Visit our stores and find some treasures. Call to arrange a furniture pick-up, or drop-off gently used items at the stores. And, of course, do some "window shopping" in advance by following the stores on Instagram: [hvlthrift](#) and [etowahthrift](#). **PS: Welcome back to Glee Letterman as a "new" Associate in the Etowah Thrift Store. She has been both staff and volunteer for us, and we tapped her talents again. Glee for Glee!**

## MORE THAN ONE WAY TO BEAT COVID-19

A year ago, we were facing a pandemic that would change our lives and how we do business. We adjusted and...we're winning. Wearing masks, social-distancing, handwashing, and now—vaccines—are keeping us safe from the coronavirus. Those practices and innovations also helped COA deliver 350+ meals/week to homebound aging adults in Henderson County. We had to switch from daily hot meals to weekly frozen meals, but we did not lose a step. In fact, we're serving 40% more clients today than before COVID-19 hit. Thanks to all who helped us pivot to that amazing solution.

A component of our success in maintaining those nutritional services is federal funding via the CARES Act. That's the good news. The bad news is...that funding runs out soon. We must replace that funding or discontinue service. The last thing we want to do is curtail or cut off service to people who need what we can deliver. There are ways around that hurdle. We are actively pursuing grants, and we are focusing attention on how our Thrift Stores can maximize revenues in support of Meals on Wheels. And, of course, we have been fortunate to receive donations from private individuals in the community.

There is one more way we would like you to consider—and that's what to do with your upcoming stimulus check. Some of you need that check, and we understand. Use it in good health. If you don't need it—or all of it—we ask that you consider donating it to the Council on Aging. We can do a lot of good with it. The same goes for any tax refund you might get. That, too, is a great way to put money to work right here in our own community. When you do, you'll be helping a neighbor...maybe even someone you know.