Heroes Among Us! Celebrating our SJCS Veterans

Karen Stevens left home at 15, supported herself with two jobs, and enlisted in the National Guard at age 21, where she served as a Medic and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) for 17.5 years. Karen cared for dozens of people stranded at Boston’s Commonwealth Armory during the blizzard of ’78, and became injured while transporting gas cans at Fort Drum, ending her career in the National Guard.

Karen, now a disabled veteran and volunteer veteran’s advocate, still found a way to care for others after her injury, from supporting her husband and son to acting as a caregiver for her mother-in-law.

Karen loved to ride the Meals on Wheels van to Bingo games at the Carpenter Center, where she met many companions, including a fellow veteran who became her cribbage partner. Karen appreciates the community and socialization that Meals on Wheels provides, and watches the clock for when her drivers will arrive with her meal.

Karen, thank you for your service and the light you continue bring to our Meals on Wheels community!

Letters to the Heroes

Young students from Group B at Hudson Memorial School wrote letters to our SJCS veteran heroes to thank them for their service. A letter from Braedan reads:

"Hello to whomever is reading this. I’m in 6th grade. I am 11 years old and I am writing this letter to you. I can't thank you enough for your
sacrifices to this country. Without you and your bravery and courage we would not have the freedom of the USA. You are what helped this country and never gave up on what America stood for. Well I hope you enjoy the rest of your life. Plus I hope you like this letter. I tried my best. Well any way, thank you very much for your services."

Below are some other letters and pictures from Hudson Memorial School 6th graders written to veterans in honor of the holiday. The cards will be delivered to SJCS Veterans in the coming week.

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Dear Veteran,
I would like to thank you for always being there for our country. You probably hear this a lot, but you should. I am very grateful to have veterans like you in our country. Thank You!!

Love
Thank you to everyone who came together to provide heartfelt letters to our veterans! Special thanks to Souhegan Valley Happy Hour Rotary Club, Community Based Interact Club, Stay United Affinity Group, United Way of Greater Nashua, State Representative and Alderwoman, Trish Klee, and the 6th Graders of Group B at Hudson Memorial School. A big shout out to Sam Cassista for coordinating this important giving program!

SPIRIT OF NH!

CONGRATULATIONS to our SJCS volunteer drivers and site support volunteers. You have just been selected by Volunteer NH as the Spirit of NH winners in the Group Category! Volunteer NH has been hosting the Spirit of NH Awards as an annual celebration of volunteerism since 2003. This event recognizes those who go above and beyond the call to serve throughout the Granite State, shining a spotlight on the often unsung heroes among us. And there is no doubt that our volunteers fit that description!

Jillian Schucart, Assistant Program Director noted in her nomination that even during the pandemic, “Our volunteers have not skipped a beat, they have continued to deliver meals and make a tremendous impact on our clients.” She described that some even took on additional volunteer work during COVID and have gone way above and beyond to ensure our folks continue to receive meals... even offering to do last minute shifts when we have been short-staffed.

Pictured above are sisters Aline and Lorraine, who have been volunteering five days a week since the start of the pandemic. Prior to that, they were volunteering once a week! They are part of an amazing volunteer crew, whose selflessness truly evokes “the Spirit of NH.”

Congratulations and THANK YOU to each and every SJCS volunteer who help to make our programs happen!!

We are in serious need of new volunteers. Please see our volunteer section below to learn how you can help!

A FOND FAREWELL

*The Breakfast Exchange Club of Nashua Winds Down*
At the heart of a community’s health and wellness is a broad and caring network of volunteers. Working on behalf of a wide range of causes, they raise funds, create awareness, and selflessly give of their time—all in support of those less fortunate.

One such organization is the Breakfast Exchange Club of Nashua. And while unfortunately the Club is disbanding, it is leaving behind a legacy of support which won’t be forgotten anytime soon.

“Earlier this year we made the difficult decision to discontinue our club,” said Barbara Walden, club member and former president. “We were seeing a decline in membership which was having an impact on our work. That factor, along with the challenges of COVID-19, led to our decision.”

Their work will be greatly missed.

Going back several years, the Club and St. Joseph Community Services has had a long partnership. “We are so very thankful to the Club for their kind and generous support of our clients,” said SJCS President, Jon Erriquezzo. “They played a major role in helping us keep seniors in need healthy and safe.”

The Club provided socials for seniors at risk, donations of gift cards and clothing and as part of its “heat up, cool down” program – donated fans in warm weather months and provided fuel assistance in the winter.

“There are things that most of us take for granted that are real needs for many seniors,” said Barbara.

In addition to a history of financial support, the Club has made donations of carnations to SJCS clients on Valentine’s Day, small flags in honor of Veteran’s Day and donations of food items and necessities around the holidays. Recently, they awarded SJCS volunteers with a Golden Deeds award and brought breakfast for the volunteers working out the Nashua Senior Center. And if that weren’t enough, the Club made one final donation to SJCS along with other area non-profits as it closed down operations this fall.

“We always sought to make a difference for older adults in the community,” said Beth Todgham, who served as past president of the club as well as, more recently, its secretary and treasurer. “That was at the core of our mission and we were pleased to support the fine work of St. Joe’s along the way.”
We are deeply grateful to the Breakfast Exchange Club of Nashua and will truly miss their partnership and good will on behalf of our clients and other older adults in the Nashua Community.

Take a "Shot" at the Flu!

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov), last year's flu season was associated with more than 35.5 million illnesses, over 16.5 million medical visits, 490,600 hospitalizations, and over 30,000 deaths.

The better news is that now is the perfect time to talk to your healthcare provider about getting a seasonal flu vaccine.

Covered by Medicare and most insurance plans, flu shots can be administered in your doctor's office, some pharmacies, and at some urgent care centers.

In addition to guidance on the [2020-2021 flu season](https://www.cdc.gov), the CDC includes immunization advice for all adults.

EVENTS YOU CAN'T MISS!

**A Festival of Fives!**

Beat the cabin fever blues and join us for our socially distanced event “A Festival of Fives – an Evening of Wine Tasting and Jazz,” December 8th, 6:30-8:30 PM at Labelle Winery, Amherst NH to
Enjoy five wine pours, five appetizers and five dessert choices while you listen to the sultry sound of Cat Faulkner and the Rhythm Boys and their Jazz/Americana vibe (with a few Holiday tunes thrown in). Embrace the holiday atmosphere and make a bid during the silent auction or take a chance at the wine pull for even more festivity!

This will be a socially distanced event: restaurant capacity is 50%; tables are distanced; you will be seated only with your party (table limit of 6); all food and beverages will be served at your own table by restaurant professionals; masks are required when not seated at your table; and hand sanitizer provided at multiple stations. Join us for a fun, safe, and enjoyable holiday evening while raising funds for a phenomenal cause! Seating is limited! Non-alcoholic beverages will be provided under the ticket cost for those who are not doing the wine-tasting. Cost: $75 per ticket.


SJCS First Annual Virtual Ugly Sweater Contest!
It's not too early to start asking...

Have a ho-ho-horrible sweater you want the world to see? You know you have one...hiding in the back of your closet, waiting to make its embarrassing once-a-year appearance. This year, give it new purpose! Let its ugliness shine and enter it in the SJCS Meals on Wheels first ever virtual Ugly Holiday Sweater Contest!

Winners will receive gift cards in the following categories and even better... bragging rights!

~ "So Ugly it Works" ($25)
~ "Most Originally Ugly" ($50)
~ "Should Never Ever be Seen in Public" ($75)

Where else can you be the best by being the worst? Winners will be chosen both by number of Facebook likes and the votes of an SJCS panel of ugly sweater-wearers.

Contest starts on Monday, November 16th and runs through Wednesday, December 16th at 4:30 PM. Winners will be announced on Friday, December 18th and will earn a coveted spot on the SJCS Facebook Ugly Sweater Wall of Fame. Check out our website event page on November 16th when the contest goes live!

All proceeds will benefit the St. Joseph Community Services Meals on Wheels Program.

Other Exciting Events!
Now through December 8th: **Holiday Gift Program** - Each year, the SJCS staff, with tremendous help and support from our community, collects needed items and puts together gift bags for all of our Meals on Wheels participants--approximately 1300-1400! The outreach begins in late October and culminates in a gift bag packing event on December 8th with delivery to our folks soon after. This year we are asking specifically for the following items:

1) Warm clothing items--Gender neutral and one size fits all (Specifically: hats, gloves/ mittens, scarves, fuzzy socks w/ rubber grips)
2) Plug-in night lights
3) Mini first-aid kits
4) Hand sanitizers (secured in Ziploc bags)

Donations will be collected at our office until **December 2nd**. For more information, please call Joan at 603-424-9967 or email jbarretto@sjcsinc.org.

November 4th - 11th, **Veterans Day Recognition** - Each year around Veterans Day, with the help of local students, youth groups, and community partners, SJCS provides homemade cards to our participants who served in the military. This year, we are grateful for support in this project from multiple groups. Please see the pictures and articles above for a listing of our partners.

December 1st: **Giving Tuesday** - This is a well-known nationwide online fundraiser, traditionally held on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, to help kick off the giving season. After Thanksgiving, there is great excitement for Black Friday and Cyber Monday--this is a chance to get excited about Giving Tuesday. SJCS is looking forward to being onboard this year! More info to come!

December 8th: 6:30-8:30 PM: **A Festival of Fives- an Evening of Wine Tasting and Jazz**, Labelle Winery, Amherst, NH. See details above. This is our first live event since COVID-19 forced us to cancel our Step-UP 5K and Smokin' Wheels, and we could really use your support! Tickets are $75 per person and are on sale on our website at [https://www.mealsonwheelsnh.org/festival-fives-form](https://www.mealsonwheelsnh.org/festival-fives-form).

**DONOR CENTRAL**

Heartfelt thanks to Curt Marcott from Mrs. Budd's for another amazing donation of 600 chicken pot pies! Curt and his company have been long-time supporters of SJCS/Meals on Wheels, and this is the second time in the past
few months that Curt and his
team have donated his delicious
pot pies to our Meals on Wheels folks, to rave reviews!

We are so grateful to Cathy Putnam and her amazing crew at Mi-Box. We began our partnership with them last year for our Holiday Gift program when they donated a large Mi-Box for storage of our thousands of gift items. During the first few months of COVID, Cathy again intuitively knew we might need extra storage and again offered us a unit. Last week, they brought an even bigger unit to again house our Holiday Gift Program items as we prepare for the large-scale giving program. This is a tremendous help to us and we are so thankful!

A shout out to one of our other “favorite Curt’s.” Curt Simpson and his band Stone Hill Station. The band did another benefit concert, at High Tide Take Out in Hillsboro, NH and collected funds for SJCS. Curt has also been a volunteer driver and he and his band have been extremely generous supporter of ours.

October 2020 Donors

CORPORATE/FOUNDATION/ ORGANIZATION SUPPORT

CAF - Charities Aid Foundation of America
CDM SMITH

INDIVIDUALS

Leanne Appleton
Meghan Brady and Paul Bergeron
Steven and Lori Jean Blanchette

Richard and Constance Langlois
Rachel and Elaine Lavallee
Jennifer Lawson
Kristin Lewotsky
David Mack
Mark Maloney
Gerald McHugh Jr.
Joseph E. Murphy III
Carol and Robert Murphy
Daniel and Helen Daigle  
Frank Davis  
David and Joanne Emus  
Jonathan Eriquezzo  
Michael and Julie Galvin  
Louise Gomes-Casseres  
Ami Grenier  
Andrea Guidoboni  
Ronald Jost  
Kristin M. Kostecki  
James and Marguerite Laliberte  
Mike Neacy  
Paul and Nanine O'Rourke  
Jill Pickett  
William Proskow and Mary Stubbs  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Reisert  
Alan and Kristen Retter  
Norman Sirois  
Teri Spangler  
Tom and Elise Thornton  
Tim and Gail Wiegand

October $500+ Donors

CORPORATE/FOUNDATION/ORGANIZATION SUPPORT

Elizabeth and Hollis E. Harrington Sr. Family Fund  
RH Murphy Company, inc.  
The Shanklin Foundation  
United Way of Greater Nashua  
The Tufts Health Plan Foundation  
Rotary Club of Nashua West

INDIVIDUALS

Mike Simco

Our heartfelt thanks to all of our donors, including those who chose to remain anonymous. Your gifts mean so much and we could not do this work without you!

Please Note: Our donor lists may run 1-2 months behind depending on a variety of factors. Thank you for understanding.

We appreciate all of our donors and have taken great care to compile this list, although we do sometimes make mistakes. If you have made a donation and do not see your name on this list, or your name is misspelled, please contact Joan at jbarretto@sjcsinc.org.

Your Donor Dollars at Work

Meals Provided: August-September 2020

<table>
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<th>Home Delivered:</th>
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<tr>
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<td>September--31,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 472</td>
<td>Total: 62,403</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Meet Bob McSweeney, a former combat marine and volunteer Meals on Wheels driver. Bob enjoys the camaraderie of the team at the Carpenter Center in Manchester as well as the interactions with clients. “For some, I might be the only person they see in a given week. That’s why those interactions—even for just a few minutes—are so important to those we serve,” says Bob.

At the Carpenter Center, the wheels are always rolling. According to Center Coordinator Frank Carpentino, on a given day more than 500 meals are provided out of the Carpenter Center.

Bob’s volunteer role includes packing and delivering meals. He says a side benefit is the exercise he gets, estimating he walks about 5 miles a week taking meals from the distribution center to his car and delivering them to those need.

Site assistant coordinator Jessie Pinkham said that volunteers like Bob help form the backbone of the agency’s work. “They’re truly an amazing group and through what they do each day, they are making people’s lives better.”

“I really enjoy what I do,” Bob says before heading off to make deliveries. “It’s a great feeling knowing the impact we have on our clients.”

We thank Bob for his service to our country as well as his volunteerism!

To learn about St. Joseph Community Services and how you can get involved, please email Jillian, Assistant Program Director
SJCS Meals on Wheels- Volunteer Call to Action

*If you’re looking for something to change your life, we have the “job” for you!*

Our older, homebound and disabled friends and neighbors throughout Hillsborough County need your help now more than ever. The winter months are always the most challenging for our clients but the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded those challenges, and created the need for many more volunteer drivers, especially in the Nashua and Manchester areas.

You have risen to our challenges before but the need has never been greater. It takes so little time to enrich both their lives and yours. Ask yourselves:

- Do you have a few extra hours each week?
- Would you like to make a positive impact in your local community?
- Can you help SJCS curb the impact of social isolation?

If you answered "yes," please reach out to become a volunteer driver!

SJCS Meals on Wheels provides nutritious meals, wellness checks, and friendly visits throughout Hillsborough County. Meals on Wheels drivers not only feed some of the most vulnerable people in the county, but they also combat social isolation through their wellness checks and friendly visits. Volunteers report that they get as much as they give from their involvement in our program.

Most volunteers serve on a weekly basis. Deliveries occur Monday through Friday, between 10:00am – 1:30pm, but most routes take less than two hours to deliver.

*If you have more hours to give, we do offer paid driver positions in Hillsborough County.*

If you are not able to volunteer at this time, we would still appreciate your help spreading the word to your family members, friends, or colleagues if you think they might be interested.

Please email Jillian, Assistant Program Director at volunteer@sjcsinc.org to learn more about how you can help our local homebound friends and neighbors! You may also call (603) 424-9967 or visit our website: www.mealsonwheelsnh.org to learn more.

Thank you for your continued support and consideration in meeting
“Meals on Wheels has made a difference in my life from the beginning. The volunteers care about me. I live by myself and know that Fran or Bob will not leave until they know I am O.K. Thanks for all you do.” Paul W.

“I watch the clock for my drivers every day and love talking with them.” Karen S.

AMAZON SMILE PROGRAM

Shop online and make a difference! Register through Amazon Smile and designate St. Joseph Community Services, Inc. as your charity of choice. Every time you shop, Amazon will donate a portion of your purchase! Give back with a smile!

CELEBRATE AN OLDER ADULT!

As part of the celebration of her 25 years with SJCS Meals on Wheels, former President Meghan Brady has asked that our friends and stakeholders consider honoring a beloved older adult who has made a difference in their lives. Read more about the fund at: https://www.mealsonwheelsnh.org/celebrate-an-older-adult, where you can make a donation and upload a story of your loved one.

STAY CONNECTED!

To keep up with our latest news and information, please visit our digital news platforms:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/mealsonwheelsnh/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/MoWSJCS
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/st-joseph-community-services-b3ab9b9a/

Have a Safe and Happy Thanksgiving!