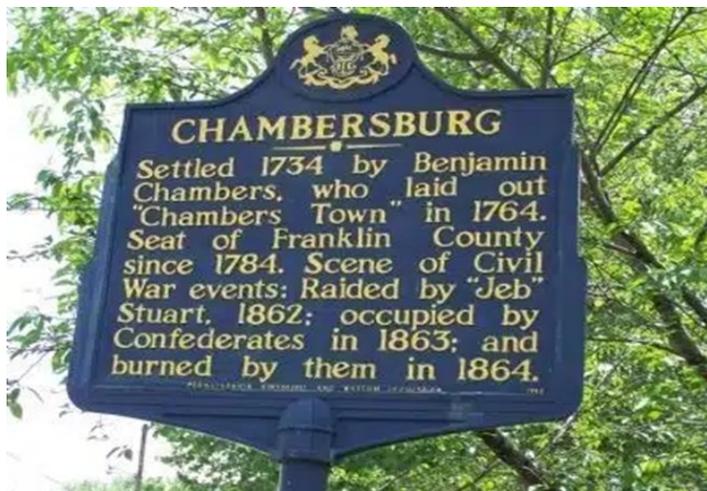


CHAMBERSBURG

"WE CARE"

April 2026 Newsletter



From Frontier Outpost to Crossroads Community: The Early Story of Chambersburg

In 1730, Scots-Irish immigrant Benjamin Chambers chose the meeting point of Falling Spring Creek and the Conococheague as the site of a new settlement. Drawn by the steady water power and the fertile limestone soil of the Cumberland Valley, he quickly recognized the potential of the land. Chambers built a sawmill and a gristmill; creating the essential infrastructure that allowed the small frontier community to take root.

During the French and Indian War, the settlement's remote location made it vulnerable, and Chambers responded by constructing a stone fort surrounded by a stockade. Known as Fort Chambers, it served as a refuge for area residents during times of danger. By 1764, Chambers formally laid out the town that would bear his name. Though still isolated, its position along routes leading West soon transformed it into a natural crossroads for agriculture, trade, and travel.

From these beginnings, Chambersburg grew from a fortified frontier outpost into a thriving community shaped by movement, industry, and resilience. The mills, the fort, and the land itself established patterns of growth that would guide the town for generations, anchoring a history that reflects the broader American story of conflict, rebuilding, and perseverance.

Why Volunteer?

We want to thank our current volunteers who make our wheels turn.

Chambersburg Meals on Wheels could not accomplish our mission without our wonderful volunteers. They drive their own cars to deliver hot meals to 10–15 clients every other week. They spend 1 to 2 hours twice a month and feel a sense of personal reward and an emotional lift that is hard to describe.

Volunteers fill the void of loneliness with our clients and deliver a nutritious meal while demonstrating that someone cares. Nothing can make you feel better. We are always seeking new volunteers. *We hope you'll consider joining us.*

Where Did We Come From?

The story of Meals on Wheels is a testament to the idea that a simple knock on a door can be a radical act of social care. What began as a localized response to the hardships of post-war Britain has evolved into a global movement, yet the core values of dignity, community responsibility, and holistic health remain as vital today as they were in the 1940s.



Board President
Drew McCarriar

The Origins: From Blitz to Breakfast

The concept was born out of necessity during **World War II**. In 1943, the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) in Welwyn Garden City, England, began delivering meals to service members and civilians whose homes had been destroyed or who were unable to cook for themselves during the Blitz.

The movement crossed the Atlantic in **1954**, when a group of Philadelphia residents—supported by a grant from the **Lankenau Hospital**—began delivering meals to homebound seniors. These pioneers recognized a gap in the social safety net: while medical science was helping people live longer, society had not yet created the infrastructure to help them live *independently*.

Enduring Values in a Modern Context

While the logistics have shifted from wicker baskets to thermally insulated bags, the underlying philosophy remains unchanged. Two key values continue to drive the organization:

- **The "More Than a Meal" Philosophy:** From the start, the founders realized that the delivery person was often the only person a homebound senior might see all day. Today, this "wellness check" is a critical frontline defense against senior isolation and undiagnosed health emergencies.
- **The Right to Age with Dignity:** The original mission was centered on the belief that poverty or physical frailty should not force a person out of their home. In an era of skyrocketing healthcare costs, the value of supporting "aging in place" is not only a moral imperative but a practical economic solution.

Why It Matters Today

In the 21st century, we face a "loneliness epidemic" that has been linked to health outcomes as detrimental as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. The history of Meals on Wheels reminds us that technology cannot replace human presence. The program's continued relevance lies in its simplicity: it treats food as a bridge to human connection. By providing a nutritious meal and a friendly face, the program honors the post-war promise that no member of the community should be left to languish in the shadows.

"The knock on the door is often the most important part of the delivery." — A common refrain among Meals on Wheels volunteers.

Chambersburg Meals on Wheels

Chambersburg Meals on Wheels prepares and delivers hot noon-time meals on weekdays to elderly and homebound residents of Chambersburg and surrounding communities.

Chambersburg Meals on Wheels—April 2026 Newsletter

In our 58th year serving the community

Chambersburg Meals on Wheels

43 West Washington Street, Chambersburg, PA 17201

717-263-7228 Email: cburg.mow@gmail.com

Website: www.chburgmow.org

Chambersburg Meals on Wheels promotes healthy, independent living through home delivery of nutritious meals.

The Board of Directors

Neil Brown, Patrick Collins, Gary Dickinson, Craig Fisher, Bernie Goldberg, Linda Jent, John Keogh, Mary Kerr, Alice Moyer, Drew McCarriar (President), Neil Ober, Jane Peterson, Brenda Sciamanna, Sue Stempien, Donna Snyder



Board members Brenda Sciamanna, Patrick Collins and Drew McCarriar, and Head Cook Melissa Izer receive Christmas favors for our clients from Cub Pack 128



Volunteers Janel and Mikaela sanitize our Meals on Wheels delivery totes every Monday.



Meals on Wheels Board members and Staff receive a generous donation from the John H. Shook Foundation, represented by Barbara Law, Executive Director, and Jan Collier, Board President.

Introducing Renee Berkey - Assistant Cook

Behind the Scenes with our Meals on Wheels Kitchen Team—where every meal begins with Dedication

For the past three years, Renee Berkey has been an essential part of the Meals on Wheels kitchen team. As Assistant Cook, she works closely with Head Cook Melissa and a dedicated group of volunteers to prepare roughly 140 meals each day for our clients.

A native of Johnstown, Renee moved to Chambersburg in 1996 when she and her husband, Rodger, began pastoring Antrim Assembly of God in Greencastle. She has continued to serve the congregation faithfully since his passing in 2007.

When she's not in the kitchen at Meals on Wheels or working at Act II in Marion, Renee enjoys decorating and sewing. Many in the community also know her for her face-painting talents—she recently spent a day painting children's faces at the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum during a special event.

Renee's two sons and their wives live in Greencastle, and she treasures the time she gets to spend with her seven grandchildren, whom she sees regularly.

What she loves most about Meals on Wheels is the opportunity to make a meaningful difference. Helping provide a hot meal to those who can't get out is deeply rewarding to her, and she looks forward to coming to work each day knowing she is contributing to the well-being of her community.



Thanks For the Gifts!

Many thanks to the members of **Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church**, **Zion Reformed United Church of Christ**, and **Trinity Episcopal Church** in Chambersburg for preparing Christmas gift bags for our clients. Many were assembled by children and filled with snacks, pens and pencils, notepads, small games, and toiletry items.





AND



OUR MEALS ON WHEELS CLIENTS

Zach Berkstresser—Volunteer Since 2021

Zach Berkstresser was born and raised in Chambersburg and has been married to his wife, Jessica since 2017. He joined us as a kitchen volunteer in 2021 when he was introduced to Meals on Wheels through his mother, Jackie, who held the volunteer position during COVID. Zach was not familiar with the phrase “food insecurity” and hopes it will inspire others to volunteer. He recently introduced his 14 year old nephew, Kelvyn, to Meals on Wheels so perhaps we have our next generation volunteer!!

Zach has a background in computer technology but has been involved in the family business, Berkstresser Realty Group, since he was just 12 years old. He maintains a commercial drone license for marketing Berkstresser’s real estate properties and enjoys videography. He has created videos for several non-profit organizations and several local and State politicians. Chambersburg Kiwanis Club hosts an annual Blueberry sale that supports and benefits young people and through Berkstresser Realty, Zach has been active in that effort since 2010.



Zach made a special friend in Jakob Fries, a foreign exchange student from Sweden, during his junior year of high school. In 2003, when he was just 17 years old, he traveled to Sweden to visit Jakob and said it was the “opportunity of a lifetime”. The two men still enjoy a long distance friendship.

In his spare time, Zach enjoys cooking for his wife Jess and spending time with their dog Winnie. His specialties are Mexican and Italian cuisine.

Thank you—Volunteers!

Chambersburg Meals on Wheels Volunteer Luncheon
Friday, April 24, 2026
Chambersburg American Legion—12:00 PM

VOLUNTEERS PLEASE SIGN UP BY APRIL 10TH

Happy Birthday Bertha Henry

Bertha (Brechtbill) Henry of Fayetteville will celebrate her 100th birthday on March 1, and she continues to enjoy every meal she receives from Meals on Wheels.

Bertha grew up in a farmhouse that still stands along the edge of Letterkenny Army Depot. Her Amish father delivered her during a winter sleigh ride, though her twin sister sadly did not survive. Bertha remembers him as a wonderful man who always carried a pocketknife. Her mother passed away when she was young, leaving Bertha—one of 12 children—to help care for her siblings and work the farm. She tended horses, plowed fields for corn, and learned the value of hard work early in life.



A family acquaintance encouraged her to seek steady work and helped her secure a job in food preparation at the South Mountain TB Center. She recalls once being stuck in an elevator during a power outage, bouncing between floors until the electricity returned.

Bertha met her future husband on a double date at Mont Alto State Park. Her date was respectful and kind, and the two later married. They raised one child and lived in several places before settling in their Knob Hill home in 1964, built by her husband Roy.

Roy served in the Navy in Japan after World War II. Exposure to radiation eventually damaged his lungs, and despite care at Hershey Medical Center, he passed away too soon.

Today, Bertha lives with the support of her devoted “Team Gram”—her daughter, granddaughter, and grandson. She has received Meals on Wheels for about eight years and says she has “never gotten a bad meal.” She even widened her driveway so volunteers could easily deliver to her back door.

Bertha’s kindness, gratitude, and spirit brighten every visit. We are honored to serve her.

Who Suffers from Food Insecurity?

You may know someone who suffers from food insecurity. It is quite common among the elderly and people who live alone or are homebound. Many times, they are unable to shop or cook for themselves and are deprived of a daily nutritious hot meal. All too often they don’t have local family, friends or neighbors who are aware of their situation. Even if they are aware, they may not know how to help.

Meals on Wheels supports homebound and food insecure people every day. We cook and deliver a daily noontime, hot meal five days a week to people who cannot fend for themselves.

We make the meals affordable to everyone so money isn’t a barrier. We believe that no one, regardless of circumstance, should be deprived of daily nutritious hot meals. If you are aware of someone who may be food insecure, please have them call us, (or call yourself) at 717-263-7228. We are there to help and we care!

Upcoming Events—2nd Quarter 2026

- 04/01 Passover Begins
- 04/03 Good Friday (no meals delivered)
- 04/05 Easter
- 04/15 Tax Day
- 04/24 Meals on Wheels Volunteer Luncheon
- 05/05 Cinco de Mayo
- 05/09 Fandom Fest
- 05/10 Mother’s Day
- 05/16 Armed Forces Day
- 05/25 Memorial Day
- 06/14 Flag Day
- 06/19 Juneteenth
- 06/21 Father’s Day



Where Your Donations Make a Difference

Chambersburg Meals on Wheels operates on a simple belief: everyone deserves reliable access to nutritious food, especially our older neighbors who often face the greatest challenges. To protect that mission, we choose not to accept Federal or State funding. Public dollars come with regulations and reporting requirements that can limit flexibility and slow down the support our clients depend on. Instead, our strength comes from the generosity of community members who share our commitment to fighting food insecurity.

Your contributions have a direct and immediate impact. Thanks to consistent donor support, we have kept client meal costs stable for nearly a decade—and recently reduced the price so that no one pays more than \$3.00 for a hot, nutritious meal. Donations also make it possible to provide free birthday meals, no-cost emergency meals for weather closures, and additional complimentary meals throughout the year. In 2025, your kindness allowed us to deliver three months of free meals to every client.

Our organization runs lean by design. With only four paid staff members—a cook, assistant cook, volunteer coordinator, and client coordinator—your dollars go where they matter most: directly to the people we serve. Each day, more than 120 clients, most over the age of 80, count on these meals for nourishment, safety, and connection.

To help sponsor a day of free meals, visit www.chburgmow.org or call 717-263-7228.

I told my friend I felt like I'd gotten out of shape, so my doctor said I should join a fitness class. I signed up for senior aerobics and was ready to bend, twist, jump, and sweat for an hour ... By the time I got my leotard on, the class was over.

Our service area covers Chambersburg Borough, some adjacent neighborhoods and much of the town of Fayetteville.



Don't Be Fooled or Mised

Many similar organizations may contact you from time-to-time requesting a charitable donation. Some imply that contributing to these other organizations will benefit us in the Chambersburg area. **This is not true.**

Please be aware that Chambersburg Meals on Wheels receives no Federal or State funding. You might receive solicitations in the mail from the National Meals on Wheels program. While this is a worthy cause, please be aware that any contribution you make to them does not reach us.

Should you want to donate to us, please address and send to Chambersburg Meals on Wheels, 43 West Washington Street, Chambersburg, PA 17201. Remember you can also safely use a credit card on our website at www.chburgmow.org. All contributions come directly to us.

Gift Hot Meals to Someone You Love!

This year, give the gift of Meals on Wheels to someone you love for Mother’s Day or Father’s Day. Add cash to your loved one’s account to cover his/her cost of meals.

Adding \$25 or \$50 or more to cover meal costs is very easy. We’ll add cash to their account and send a card telling them about your generous donation. Visit www.chburgmow.org or call 717-263-7228 to gift Meals on Wheels.



The ideal gift for Mother’s or Father’s Day!

Volunteer Fifth Year Anniversaries

- Zach Berkstresser
- Joel Happel
- Peg Hollar
- Dan Kennell

- Tom Loughran
- Mary Ann Murtha
- Neil Ober
- Ron Schlecht

- David Sciamanna
- Karen Wagner

Please Donate

Your time and/or money allow us to continue serving the food insecure in our area!



Go to www.chburgmow.org or
Call 717-263-7228 to contribute

Donate your Time by volunteering—Call 717-263-7228
 Delivery Meal Preparation