



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY! MEALS ON WHEELS LONG BEACH IS 45 YEARS OLD!



Founded by Soroptomist International of Long Beach in 1971, MOWLB has filled a need in Long Beach and surrounding areas by providing nourishment, comfort and protection to those in our community who are unable to shop or cook for themselves.

In celebration of our 45 years of service and to help kick-off our new pilot program to feed low-income, homebound veterans at the Villages at Cabrillo Long Beach, we are planning two opportunities to engage with our supporting community.

The first event is a 5K RUN, WALK, ROLL & STROLL to be held at Long Beach City College's Veterans Stadium. This event will take place on Saturday, August 6<sup>th</sup> from 7am to 1pm. Please stay tuned for details!

Our second event will be a 45<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party to be hosted by the Red Leprechaun Pub and Eatery in Long Beach. This event will honor several of our original MOWLB volunteers and we will be offering craft beer and appetizer pairings, along with live music, and the opportunity to participate in a silent auction. The date of this birthday celebration will be in October.

We will be providing more information in the coming months on our website, [www.mowlb.org](http://www.mowlb.org) for both events. For all our supporters, volunteers, and clients, happy birthday to all of you!

Bill Cruikshank  
Executive Director

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## MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

As the new president of the MOWLB Board of Directors, I want to welcome all who participate in the mission of the MOWLB – the staff, volunteers, supporters, and clients – to our first MOWLB newsletter for 2016. The newsletter is named "The Visitor" to reflect the importance of the personal food delivery as well as the personal interaction between our volunteer "friendly visitors" and our clients. We intend to continue publishing "The Visitor" to let our community know who we are, what we are doing, and introduce the stories of our volunteers and clients. We want to "tell our story."



Our feature article (above) announces our plans for celebrating our 45 years in Long Beach. We hope to engage the community in fun events that allow us to accomplish our mission to "Nourish, Comfort, and Protect the homebound in our community." I hope that you will plan to join us because your support makes Meals on Wheels Long Beach possible.

The stories in this newsletter reflect the personal experiences and feelings of our many volunteers. As you read the stories that follow, you will notice some similarities. They reflect individuals' attitudes about why they volunteer at MOWLB. As volunteer Tony states, he may not have a lot of money to donate but he has time to help. Delivering two healthy, nutritious meals, five days each week not only provides needed nutrition to the client, but also develops a relationship between volunteers, particularly the friendly visitors, and the clients who depend on them. The food is distributed from the three MOWLB sites, and each site (Downtown, East, and North) has their own dedicated volunteers who make the deliveries. These stories reflect the thoughts of volunteers from each of these sites.

The preparation and individual delivery of meals on a five-day-per-week, 52-week-per-year schedule, depends on a faithful community of MOWLB volunteers. We hope that their stories communicate what they receive from volunteering. We are always in need of volunteers. Perhaps you can help us or know someone who can. Thank you!

Richard D. Conant  
President, MOWLB Board of Directors

## VOLUNTEERING AT THE DOWNTOWN SITE



Bill & Claire Marmion

To talk or write about Meals on Wheels volunteers would take days or pages. Now, as I write, being a 12-year friendly visitor (and sometimes driver), I would say this definition of VOLUNTEERISM applies:

*noun: use or involvement of one's time, talent and skill in*

*community services...*

AND I would continue to say that most MOWLB volunteers exercise dedication and exemplify quality commitment to this service.

Which leads me to my most recent fellow volunteer/driver: Bill Marmion who has been an entertaining side-kick, wealth of worldly knowledge, and powerhouse of Long Beach history and happenings. As so many of the 'seasoned' volunteers are retirees, they (including Bill) never stop giving back to the city, community, church and special causes. Having been in the field of education with the LB Public School District for 35 years, Dr. Marmion graduated from Wilson High School, Cal Berkeley (Undergraduate in History), CSULB (Masters in History) and Claremont College (PhD in Urban School District Education).

To say "local boy makes good" doesn't come close to recognizing Bill's dedicated time and contributions to: MOWLB (since 2007 as driver and three years on the Board); Long Beach Parks & Recreation Department (eight years on the Board); Long Beach City College Foundation (Board Member) and St. Mary's Medical Center Foundation (Board Member). There's more, but enough said.

Yes, it is about 'giving back', but pay attention and listen to your fellow driver or friendly visitor. You will be amazed at the wealth of talent, education, experience and trivia in that car seat next to YOU!!

Elaine Wood  
Downtown Site Volunteer

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## VOLUNTEERING AT THE NORTH SITE



Tony Sasso

I was no stranger to Meals on Wheels when I joined the North Long Beach Site volunteers in 2013. My folks had once been clients. Before that time, I had worked 34 years at an ocean transportation company called American President Lines. When they outsourced my job to Denver, I had no choice but to accept

the layoff, stay in Long Beach, and take care of my ailing parents.

Since my retirement and my parent's subsequent passing, I found myself in a quandary. What could I do to continue to help homebound seniors, like my Mom and Dad, who still wanted to live their lives independently? I didn't want to donate money (I would if I could but I was now on a fixed income), so I decided to donate my time instead. It was then that I remembered the Meals on Wheels program and the assistance they provided my own folks. I called the local office and told them I was available. That was three years ago and since then, I never looked back.

I won't delve into the personal satisfaction I get from MOW. That's a given. More than just throwing money at some charity, I am connecting with the very same people I want to help. Plus, I still have time for the other things I enjoy. Staying healthy is a priority (I work-out every day), but music, movies and the arts are my true passion. I've also had a long-time hobby of buying and selling vintage movie posters and at one time turned this pastime into a home business. Above and beyond all of this, I am grateful for my family and the people in my life, and that includes all my MOW friends.

Tony Sasso  
North Site Volunteer

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## VOLUNTEERING AT THE EAST SITE

Donna Coutts is one of a number of "friendly visitors" who works her route once a week on Tuesday. Over the years she has been known to not only deliver hot lunches provided by Meals on Wheels but she can't seem to resist taking the opportunity to do a little extra. For example one of her long time clients was lamenting that his outside plants weren't getting the attention they deserved. So she made him a little mini succulent garden in a large oval pot; something she explained wouldn't require so much attention. She delivered it on one of her subsequent Tuesday deliveries.



Donna Coutts

During the Christmas season she bakes little loaves of zucchini bread and distributes them to all on her East Long Beach route. She finds plenty of excuses to deliver little forget-me-not items like the animated solar operated flowers and animals; you know, little Easter Chicks for Easter that rock back and forth as long as there is sunlight.

It doesn't matter whether it's St. Patrick's Day or Valentine's Day she says the Dollar Store is often her source for these timely amusing and entertaining little items.

I guess it would be fair to say that the people Donna sees each Tuesday have become part of her extended family.

Bob Coutts  
East Site Volunteer