

# Adventist Health Hospitals Nourish Bodies While Feeding Souls

Jesus said, “Man does not live by bread alone.” That is a fact for those fighting a chronic disease or seniors with limited mobility. Several Adventist Health hospitals are teaming up with their local communities to provide free or low-cost nourishing meals to those who need them most.

Feather River Hospital in Paradise, Calif., is a strong supporter of its local Meals on Wheels program, which delivers hot and cold meals each weekday to people — mostly seniors — who are unable to prepare their own. Volunteers make and box the food at the hospital and then deliver the meals throughout the community, along with a smile and some friendly conversation.

“The satisfaction you receive from bringing joy to our community through a short visit and a meal is priceless,” said Rebecca Williams, Feather River Hospital’s manager of volunteer services. Williams oversees a team of more than 70 volunteers who give an hour of their day — sometimes weekly, sometimes every day — to deliver meals. Without Meals on Wheels, it’s estimated that half of all participants would need to move into an assisted living facility or hire costly help to cook their meals.

Castle Medical Center in Kailua, Hawaii, recently added another route to the Hawaii Meals on Wheels to serve people who had



*Nancy Cook, a 12-year volunteer at Feather River Hospital, delivers a meal to a local resident.*

been on a long waiting list. “Nothing lifts one’s spirit like volunteerism,” said Ruby Hayasaka, the hospital’s nutritional services director. “Our associates and the community volunteers who deliver the meals have hugely inspirational stories.” CMC provides 18,250 noon meals a year through their home delivery program.

Staff at St. Helena Hospital Clear Lake, in Clearlake, Calif., were inspired in another way.

For them, “meals on wheels” has a different meaning. For the last two years, staff members who share an enthusiasm for motorcycles have spearheaded a community fundraising motorcycle ride called “Ride for the Cure.” This year they donated the \$1,000 they raised to the Food of Love program, a community partnership that seeks to enhance

healing by providing nutritious, organic meals to cancer patients. The food is cooked by teen volunteers and a chef at a commercial kitchen in St. Helena and then provided to patients going through cancer treatment at the Napa Valley hospital’s Martin O’Neil Cancer Center. The meals are customized to meet the patients’ special nutritional needs.

“This was a fantastic opportunity for us to enjoy fellowship and raise money for a great cause to benefit people in our own community,” said Claudia Helmes, director of the emergency department at SHCL, who began the annual motorcycle fundraiser.

Laura Grinnell, a registered dietician at the cancer center in St. Helena, agreed. “Good nutrition is extremely important in treating cancer, yet eating well can be especially difficult during that time. Generous donations like this one allow us to provide the meals to patients without charge. It truly makes a difference in how well treatment works. This program provides a connection to healing for everyone involved.”

*Beth Martin*



*Ride for the Cure participants present a \$1,000 check for the Food of Love program to the Martin O’Neil Cancer Center at St. Helena Hospital Napa Valley.*