

The New Haven Register (nhregister.com), Serving New Haven, CT

Program delivers meals, and more?

Tuesday, August 3, 2010

By Patricia Villers, Register Staff
pvillers@newhavenregister.com

ANSONIA — For 10 years, resident Sam Porcu has enjoyed having Meals on Wheels delivered to his door.

Porcu, 87, a widower, said Thursday that Training, Education and Manpower's Elderly Nutrition Program is a lifesaver. He looks forward to getting a delivery Monday through Friday.

"It helps both timewise, and financially," Porcu said. "I give them a donation every month. It is a big, big help to me."

Porcu, who retired from the Department of Public Works, is a World War II Army veteran.

On Thursday Derrick Evans of Derby handed Porcu a hot lunch that included stuffed shells and vegetables. Derrick, 15, was helping Meals on Wheels driver Chuck Albea of Ansonia. Derrick is participating in a youth employment program this summer.

Albea said he has known Porcu four years. "He is one of our best clients," Albea said. "He is a big-time Ansonia football fan, and I coached Pop Warner (football), so we connected."

Albea delivers meals to 51 seniors in Ansonia, Seymour and Derby.

He said he always asks his clients how they are doing. "If someone doesn't seem right, I let them know at TEAM. My clients and I bond. I treat them like they're related to me," he said.

"A little patience comes in handy," Albea said.

Albea said he is told not to deliver if weather conditions are too dangerous. But he tries his best to complete his route.

"I put myself in their place," he said. "They are waiting for us. I just came from a house where the couple was sitting at the table waiting for their meals. If I don't come (on time), I hear it," Albea said with a smile.

"With the summer help it's a lot of fun," Albea said, referring to Derrick. "It teaches them how to give back, to learn that it's not about them."

The Meals on Wheels program delivers meals directly to Valley residents 60 and older who cannot shop for food or prepare meals on their own.

"Hundreds of Valley seniors on limited income, declining health, and/or without regular care from family members rely on Meals on Wheels not only for a balanced meal, but, as a critical link between that person and his or her family," said Richard Knoll, TEAM CEO/president.

"The Meals on Wheels drivers serve as a watchful set of eyes that can provide a much-needed level of comfort to an out-of-town daughter or a working son.

"For many of the homebound people we serve, human contact, conversations, and laughs may be all too infrequent," Knoll said. "In fact, some program participants do not see another human being other than a (Meals on Wheels) driver all week. The importance of the daily visit is immeasurable."

TEAM also provides Senior Community Cafes meals at Derby Senior Center, Doyle Senior Center in Ansonia, the Rev. A. Callahan House in Seymour and Griffin Hospital in Derby.

Participants in the meal program can socialize while enjoying nutritious meals. Nutrition education is also available.

In addition to noon meals, the Griffin Hospital Senior Meals Choice Program provides meals at 5 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

"The Senior Community Caf  meals offer a healthy and convenient option for anyone over 60," said Kevin George, TEAM elderly services manager.

Participation is free; a contribution of \$3 is suggested. Donations are used to supplement and expand services.

If a person is unable to make a contribution, service is not denied, TEAM officials said.

For information about the Meals on Wheels or Senior Community Caf  programs, contact Kathleen Ayala, TEAM Elderly Services coordinator, 203-736-5420, ext. 225.

URL: http://www.newhavenregister.com/articles/2010/08/03/bb4vameals_video080310.prt

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