

The SUN Shine

PUTTING THE “NEW” IN NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first edition of SUN's newsletter, The SUN Shine! This newsletter will go out twice a year. This newsletter will highlight what SUN does, who we are, what we need, and how you can help or how you are already helping.

If you want to know more about any subject or article, come in for a visit, give us a call, or send us an email. We will be happy to talk with you. You can also find our active Facebook page and see a new post at least once each week.

A GENERAL THANK YOU!

Before writing anything else, it felt right to just say thank you in case you have not heard that lately or often enough! Seniors United for Nutrition is supported by the community and volunteer driven!

SUN operated without an Executive Director for 2 months from September to November of 2023. Some things like a Volunteer Thank You event could not take place as they normally would. Please do not interpret that as a lack of appreciation!

Many stepped up to help SUN get through the transition, including staff, volunteers, members of the Board of Directors, generous donors, and community members who talk about SUN, or keep us in thoughts and prayers. Thank you for however you supported SUN in 2023 and we look forward to continued support in 2024!



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

If not me, who?	2
Spring 2024 Grant Plan.....	2
Annual Campaign Record	3
Coming Attractions.....	4
Contributions Matter.....	4
Come dine with us	5

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- We can always use more volunteers!
- Word of the Year is “Adapt”
- Full Donor Lists by county
- Key Stats and Figures on back page



IF NOT ME, WHO? IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

This famous quote is often repeated. I heard it for the first time the morning that I was interviewing with Seniors United for Nutrition. It helped me decide that this position was the next challenge I wanted.

I hope that some who read this will keep it in mind and consider volunteering with SUN in some way in 2024.

SUN really cannot keep it all going without volunteers. Even once a week or once in a while can help our core staff and volunteers to not burn out. Contact us if you can share any time to drive or for a committee!

We look forward to hearing from you. If not you, then who? If not soon, then when?

-Andrew Hodgson, Exec. Director

“SUN serves more than a meal. Congregate meals provide socialization. Home delivery includes a “wellness check” and a chance to see a friendly face. Meals on Wheels also help seniors stay in their own homes longer.”

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN DONORS (IOWA)

\$1000 and over

Everett Thomas

Iowa County Cattleman's Association

Grace Lutheran Church

Karl and Carla Pustina

Anonymous Online Donor 1

Anthony and Julie Hook

Grace Lutheran Church Project Love

Joanna Schindler

Larry Stenner

Hallada Motors

Avoca United Methodist Church

Hennessey Implement

Ritchie Implement

United Church of Muscoda Presbyterian Good Work

(continues on page 3; some names share lines to fit everyone; sorry the font got small!)

SPRING 2024 GRANT WRITING PLAN

In 2024, SUN is setting high goals for fundraising. Over the next five months, we hope to submit grant applications to nearly 20 local and national organizations. In total, we will apply for around \$99,000 to support SUN programming, general operations, and a new meal delivery vehicle.

In January, we already submitted and received two small grant requests. The first asked for funding to purchase traction devices for meal delivery volunteers. Our drivers could definitely use some extra gear as they navigate winter conditions. The second seeks to replace outdated first aid kits at our meal sites.

An exciting project we are currently working on is securing funds to create activity kits for use during congregate meals. The kits will give patrons an opportunity to play games such as Wheel of Fortune, The Price is Right, and Family Feud. An escape room activity is also in the works!

To wrap up the Spring, we will apply for three larger grants through Meals on Wheels of America and Otto Bremer Foundation. We will request around \$70,000 from these grants, so our spring success will be weighted heavily on these three. -Evelyn Kirner, SUN Spring Intern, UW Madison Student



Executive Director Andrew Hodgson receives a check from members of Grace Lutheran Church in Dodgeville, most of whom pictured are also SUN volunteers.

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN BREAKS RECORDS

Prior to 2023, SUN's annual campaign would bring in \$10,000 or less. In 2022, the grand total was **\$9,022**. From October 2023 through early January 2024, **\$30,097.69** were received, with another \$500 pledged. That is an incredible jump from one year to the next, representing a **337%** improvement! How does that happen?

More letters were sent out and that letter was more urgently written, SUN was more visible in local press and on Facebook, and SUN did better at explaining where donations go and taking them in new ways. But truly, it comes down to more individuals and groups deciding to support this program!

86 total donations: **61** from Iowa County and **25** from Lafayette County.

The average Iowa donation was **\$304**, with a high of **\$5000** and a low of **\$5**. Half of Iowa donations were at or below **\$100**. **\$100** was most common.

The average Lafayette donation was **\$245**, with a high of **\$1500** and a low of **\$30**. Half of Lafayette donations were below **\$150**.

\$18582.13 were contributed to Iowa County by Dec 31, with **\$5382** coming after January 1, 2024. **\$6133.56** came from Lafayette County, all by Dec 31.

Grace Lutheran Church held a very successful fundraiser among their congregation. Hidden Valley Church will be doing the same for SUN in February 2024.

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN DONORS (IOWA)

\$101-500

Peace Lutheran Church Women
 Jim and Patti Blabaum
 American Legion of Mineral Point (% John Lawinger)
 Highland Lions Club
 Anonymous Online Donor 2
 Curt and Gerianne Fellows
 Elmer Biddick Foundation
 John M. Myers, Carl Tunestam
 United Congregational Church of Christ Benevolence Fund
 Howard, Rita, and Doug Wilson
 Judith and Allen Pincus
 Compeer Financial
 Michael and Debra Finkelmeyer

All others up to \$100

Andrew and Nikki Mumm
 Charlanne Fitzgerald in memory of Mary Fitzgerald
 Bob's Electric, Dorothy Radke
 Catherine Palzkill, Dorothy Palzkill
 Farmer's Savings Bank
 Grace Lutheran Kids Jar
 Highland State Bank
 John and Nancy Myers in memorial to Bob McNeill
 Iowa County Retired Educators
 John Beattie, Judy Booth
 Katie Marzahl
 Ron and Mary Benish
 Singer Lumber Co
 Steve and Therese LeMaster
 VFW Auxillary of Mineral Point
 Kathleen LaPoint
 Dodgeville Chapter 39 Order of the Eastern Star
 Josi Wergin, Charlene Mingst
 Chery Swingen, Daniel Nankee
 Don's Tire, Esch Insurance Agency
 Janet Giffey, Justin O'Brien
 Kathie Swanson
 Randy and Barb Sudmeier
 Tom and Nancy Howard
 Pecatonica Educational Foundation
 Cecile McManus, Janice Ketelle
 Angel and Angel SC
 Doug Richter, Mary Glindinning
 AR Hodgson, Doris Brennum
 Dodgeville United Methodist Church
 Hollandale Blue Ribbon 4-H Club
 Melissa Weier, Andrew Hodgson

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN DONORS (LAFAYETTE)

\$500 and over

Virginia Bean

New Hope Lutheran Women's Group

Anonymous Donor 1

St. Vincent DePaul

Mary McKnight

Lester and Lynn Andrews

\$101 and over

Town of Monticello

Benton State Bank

Weber's Processing Plant

Karen Averkamp

St. Patrick Catholic Church CCW

Robert Boyle

Marian Seffrood

All others up to \$100

Neil Swiggum

Immanuel Church of Christ-Women's Guild

Ila Llean White

Gail Thoreson

Chris Andrews

Fred Blackburn & Sons

Don Arnsmeier

Woodford State Bank

First National Bank at Darlington

Betty Williams

Jill Knight

Mound City Bank

If you feel you were left off this list for either county in error, please reach out to us. Some online donations may have deposited into SUN accounts with no identifying info.

COMING ATTRACTIONS FOR SUN'S UPCOMING "BLOCKBUSTERS"

We are launching a voucher program with restaurant partners. The first partner will hopefully be in place by April (with a formal announcement sooner). Seniors can request vouchers and then enjoy a "cashless" meal out. This will give seniors more options for where to get a hot nutritious meal.

In June, we will seek to partner with local businesses for coordinated community fundraising. There will be deals and "shop for a cause"

events that chip in for the SUN program. We will contact many businesses to try to find new friends.

For fall, we are exploring an event called "The Tour de SUN." This would include a 5K route and both longer and shorter routes highlighting local features. Registration fees for riders, walkers, and runners would support SUN. The theme would be "active aging" with supporting materials and vendors.



WHY DOES EVERY CONTRIBUTION MATTER?

Every meal contribution is so valuable to us! Those contributions not only keep the program going, they also keep you and your neighbors in your own homes. Not every senior can afford to pay for their meals, but these nutritious meals are vital to the senior community.

SUN is *not* a government program. We are a non-profit company that receives only partial government funding. The rest is in your hands. This is why every contribution is important to us and we appreciate every amount we receive, no matter how big or small. When you help support SUN, you help support your aging community. Our dollars stretch farther and we can serve more meals to more seniors!

-Melissa Weier, Department Assistant

2024 SUN WORD OF THE YEAR: ADAPT

Choosing a word of the year is similar to a New Year Resolution. SUN's 2024 word is "Adapt". The mission will stay the same, but the program may look very different by the end of 2024.

SUN must not only do the same things better than before but must try new things and may need to reconsider the familiar. There will not be change for the sake of change, nor will SUN rush into decisions before ready.

We ask for trust and a little hope as we adapt and find the right path to meet today's community needs, funding, regulations and every challenge.



“At \$6.50 suggested contribution, a year of meals delivered to a senior’s home costs around \$1,500 compared to \$2,000+ for one night in the hospital or \$4,500 average for one month in a senior care facility!”

COME DINE WITH US! CONGREGATE MEALS

SUN receives government funding in two main categories: congregate meals and home delivered meals.

In 2024, SUN has much more funding available for congregate meals. Home delivered meals must be prioritized for those who truly need them, which is home-bound seniors who cannot otherwise feed themselves.

Congregate meals are a chance to meet with friends and socialize. If you still drive, then congregate meals are where we need you to come for your senior nutrition! This helps us provide Meals on Wheels to those who are most in need.

SUN has 8 dining sites in place, but

we are also working to add more restaurant options for those who might want to go out to eat with their family or a smaller group.

We are also looking to spice up our activity offerings. We will keep classics like BINGO and Birthday celebrations, but are exploring other new and exciting options.

SUN wants to create dining experiences that appeal to everyone. Our funding simply will not stretch to send meals home to everyone who requests them. We also cannot send out carryout meals— those count against our home delivered meals. Please come dine with us at a congregate site if able!



SENIORS UNITED FOR NUTRITION

Established as a 501c3 non profit organization on January 1, 1980 after 3 years as an Iowa County department, SUN is still going strong. In 2023, 81 total volunteers and 31 different paid staff helped to serve 46,546 total senior meals to 667 seniors. 78,690 miles were claimed or logged by SUN volunteers and SUN vans in Iowa and Lafayette Counties.

SOME KEY 2023 STATS AND FIGURES

34% of all SUN hours were from volunteers
8117 volunteer hours: 4995 in Iowa County and 3122 in Lafayette County
2 office staff are Full Time and 6 Site Managers average 20+ Hrs per Week
11.2 Full Time Equivalents per week, with 7.3 from staff and 3.9 from volunteers
79.97 meals per Full Time Equivalent: it takes 1 hour to produce & serve 2 meals
\$120,000 payroll savings from volunteer hours (estimated from \$15/hr)
The month with the most meals served was May
23,709 people live in 768 mi^2 in Iowa County, 16,608 people live in 635 mi^2 in Lafayette County (our service areas are rural small towns)
1.7 logged miles per meal served; # of Stop Lights in Lafayette County: 0
70 meals served on average for each senior in the program
Full cost per meal including all salaries, supplies, rent and other overhead:
\$16.18 in Lafayette, \$14.30 in Iowa, \$13.34 is the Wisconsin overall average

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sunprogram@iowacounty.org



PLEASE PLACE STAMP HERE

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Mailing Address Line 2
Mailing Address Line 3
Mailing Address Line 4
Mailing Address Line 5