



Application Date: August 29, 2020

Applicant: Vashon-Maury Senior Center
10004 SW Bank Road
P.O. Box 848
Vashon WA 98070
www.vashoncenter.org

Project Title: Lunch Delivery Program

Project Description:

We are seeking your support to help island seniors stave off the negative consequences of isolation and poor nutrition many are experiencing during the coronavirus pandemic. Since early March, we have been supporting seniors on Vashon through our home lunch-delivery program. To our knowledge, the Senior Center is the only non-profit organization on Vashon delivering freshly cooked, complete meals directly to seniors.

This program delivers hot, nutritious lunches cooked on-site at the Senior Center to seniors all across Vashon and Maury three days a week. Each lunch contains a healthy entrée, salad, dessert, fresh fruit, and a healthy snack. We also have extras every day such as cheerful, handwritten notes of encouragement or fresh flowers donated and arranged by volunteers. The coronavirus crosses all socio-economic lines, so we are committed to serving any senior who asks us for assistance. The extended isolation can take a toll on anyone, and we are proud to be of service to any senior who needs help. Fifty-two volunteers have delivered nearly 4000 meals in the past six months.

Senior Centers are considered an essential service under Governor Inslee's list of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers "to ensure continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, specifically as *workers who provide support to vulnerable populations* to ensure their health and well-being, and *workers who support food, shelter, and social services*, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals."

(<https://www.coronavirus.wa.gov/what-you-need-know/essential-business>) Adults age 55 and older are considered a vulnerable population.

Seniors on Vashon are among the highest risk group for COVID-19 and are mostly self-isolating. The Vashon Senior Center Meal Delivery Program provides good nutrition and social engagement, both

critical to seniors' health. We are extremely grateful for your support over the years to the Senior Center and for the creativity in finding ways to support Vashon organizations while Granny's is facing a downturn in revenue.

Project Objective:

Our goal meets Granny's mission to contribute to the health care of Island residents by combating social isolation and providing nutrition to vulnerable seniors. We achieve this goal by delivering hot, nutritious lunches to anyone age 55 or older on Vashon three days each week. The project objective is to continue providing this much needed essential service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Needs Statement:

Vashon seniors comprise 49% of the population of our community. The most recent data provided by King County shows nearly 5000 adults age 55 and older living on Vashon, and of these, nearly 14% live with household incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level (\$1200/month or less). Since the Governor's Stay Home-Stay Safe order began, seniors of all income levels on Vashon have been heeding the public health guidelines and staying at home.

Growing older can be challenging at any time, but the COVID-19 pandemic has created additional barriers to continued good health. Seniors are part of the highest-risk population, and while staying safe means staying home, it also means losing companionship, conversations and social engagements. Many seniors have limited access to technology or the tools needed to utilize virtual programming that can connect them to others. According to studies published by the CDC, social isolation significantly increases a person's risk of premature death from all causes, a risk that may rival those of smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity. Social isolation is associated with about a 50% percent increased risk of dementia.

Isolation can have a negative impact on person's mental well-being and can lead to depression, which in turn can lead to lack of motivation, loss of appetite and skipping meals – or worse. Poor diet is directly related to poor health, falls, physical decline, and acceleration of pre-existing conditions. Isolation and a poor nutrition are a dangerous combination in the elderly.

We know the extended isolation has been hard – we hear over and over that many seniors are lonely, depressed, and afraid. Many have turned to the Senior Center to augment not only their meals, but also for a brief respite from being alone. Our lunch delivery volunteers are often the only other people many of our seniors see on a regular basis. A meal, a smile, and knowing that someone cares has proven to be a good antidote to loneliness.

Demand for lunch delivery has far surpassed demand for on-site meals. Before the pandemic, we served congregate meals at the Center four days each week, averaging 30-35 lunches a day. Since shifting from on-site meals to home delivery on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the response and demand for home delivery has surpassed our expectations, both in terms of the volume of requests and in the positive impact the program is having on isolated seniors. In the 26 weeks since closure we have delivered 3819 meals. (This is a 30% increase over 2019 – we served 2948 lunches on-site four days a week last year.) Requests for lunch delivery increased quickly from

15 per day to nearly 80 per day and show no signs of abating. We anticipate demand will continue through the winter.

For comparison:

	March – August 2019 4x/week (on-site)	March – August 2020 3x/week (delivered)
March	418	263
April	445	421
May	505	638
June	525	794
July	590	939
August	465	764 *
TOTAL	2948	3819

**The Center closed for the second week in August for organizational sabbatical. This number reflects three weeks rather than a full month.*

As mentioned earlier, seniors from every income level are affected by the pandemic and strongly urged to self-isolate as much as possible, especially those with underlying health conditions. While outward appearances may indicate a senior of means, we make no such assumptions. A big house doesn't necessarily equate to income, family support, or ability to cope with loneliness. We always ask for a donation of \$5.00 per lunch, but we never turn anyone away for inability to pay. Nearly 70% of our lunch recipients pay for their meals, but for seniors on a fixed income, we have been able to provide a hot, nutritious lunch three days a week at no charge.

We charge \$5.00 for lunch, but our actual cost per meal is \$10.38 (food costs, staff time, program coordination, volunteer management, background checks on volunteers, etc.). Nearly 30% of all meal deliveries are without charge. We have been fortunate to have received community support through a one-time grant from the Vashon Rotary Foundation, Thriftway's food drive and Espresso Bar tips, and Vashon Be Prepared, however we will need to find additional sources of revenue for the upcoming months. We have received donations from generous individuals to support the meals program, but it has not been enough to keep the program afloat.

Our lunch delivery program could not operate without volunteers. We currently have 52 volunteers who deliver lunches in five same-household teams of two. Each shift takes a team two hours to pack lunches, load lunch bags into cars, and make deliveries. Each delivery team has 12-15 houses on their daily route. On delivery day, that equates to ten volunteers donating 20 hours. To date our volunteers have donated more than 1,500 hours of their time to the program. If we had to pay staff for this work at a rate of \$15/hour, that would equate to \$22,000.

Our volunteers also share with us when they are concerned about a senior. Regular visits often reveal red flags that a senior may be struggling. That gives us a chance to follow up, pay a little extra attention with phone calls, or unfortunately, call Adult Protective Services when we see signs of neglect.

We are committed to helping seniors through this pandemic. It is unlikely that we will be able to re-open the Center for meals and activities until Phase 4 of the governor's reopening plan. Projections are showing that the winter months will be worse, compounded by the flu. We cannot risk the health of our members and other community members until it is safe to open our doors again.

Our commitment to serving seniors during COVID-19 is putting a major strain on our resources. Your assistance will help seniors stay healthy by supporting good nutrition regardless of ability to pay and provide at least one social interaction each delivery day. This funding will help us stay on sound financial footing and provide the means to continue the meal delivery program to seniors in need until we can reopen the Center.

We are mindful of the need all communities are facing at this time. COVID-19 has not spared Vashon. Unemployment is nearly currently 12.4%. Many seniors live alone, with family unable to visit or provide support. We hear over and over that seniors are struggling. People are lonely. Our ability to respond to any senior who needs help is vital to the health of our small community. A grant from Granny's will help us be a resource to those who need us.

We operate on a tight budget and are mindful of every expenditure. We have no full-time employees, and we rely heavily on our volunteers. Many of our fundraising activities are not possible during the pandemic, so we have lost that income stream. We haven't been able to rent our facility to outside groups to generate income or hold our staple fundraisers like BINGO. This year, more than ever, we need community organizations such as Granny's to supplement our budget through grants.

Most of you are aware that the Center recently received a multi-year award from King County to create a virtual villages program on Vashon. We recognize that the timing of this award comes when many Vashon organizations and businesses are struggling with economic hardship, and we are grateful for this opportunity to increase support for older adults in our community in new ways. We want to emphasize that this award is for a new program – it doesn't fund the things we already do. Our existing services still need ongoing support. We are so very grateful for all the contributions we have received from our friends, members, community organizations, and other supporters, but we know the rest of this year – and possibly longer – will be challenging. We still need to lean on our community to help us take care of seniors on Vashon.

Project Timetable:

We are currently running the lunch delivery program, but our budget has been depleted. The increase in demand and projections that senior centers will not be able to reopen until late winter 2021 leaves us with a critical need for funding. With support from Granny's, the lunch delivery program can continue until we can re-open.

We anticipate that we will deliver 900 meals each month for the next six months (total: 5400).

Program Budget:

Meal Program Budget 9/2020 through 3/2021

Revenue

Donations	2,000.00	Based on current donations
Meal Purchases	18,900.00	900 meals @ \$5 = \$4500/mo x 6 mos = \$27,000 x 70%
Thriftway Contributions	2,500.00	Espresso bar tips and 1% cash register receipts

Total Revenue **\$ 23,400.00**

Expenditures

Background Checks on Volunteers	800.00	
Kitchen Maintenance & Repair	350.00	
Credit card fees	200.00	
Food Purchase	24,000.00	
Mileage Reimbursement	250.00	Trips to Costco and Cash & Carry for food purchases
Wages (Directly Attributable to Meals)	26,500.00	
Supplies	4,000.00	To-go containers, latex gloves, disinfectant, disposable masks

Total Expenditures **\$ 56,100.00**

Total Revenue (Loss) **\$ (32,700.00)**

Amount Requested:

The Center respectfully requests \$20,000 to support our COVID-19 lunch delivery program. We will be fundraising to cover the additional costs of operating the program.

Thank you for your consideration.