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Summer Newsletter



coal creek 
Meals on Wheels

Lafayette, Louisville, Erie & Superior



Nate Broeckert Is Selected As New Executive Director For CCMOW

Nate Broeckert began his new role as Executive Director at Coal Creek Meals on Wheels on May 13, 2024. Nate has served his whole career in either the public or nonprofit sector. Prior to joining CCMOW, Nate served as the Director of Programs at The Colorado Nonprofit Association, where he supported nonprofits across the state by helping them build capacity and effectively execute their missions.

Nate expressed his enthusiasm for his new role, stating, **“I am absolutely thrilled to join the incredible team at CCMOW and to contribute to the vital mission. With the demand for our services at an all-time high, I am eager to work closely with our dedicated staff, volunteers, and community partners to expand our reach and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.”**

Nate recently sat down with Brittany, CCMOW Development & Marketing Director, to answer some questions about himself and why he came to Coal Creek Meals on Wheels.

What drew you to Coal Creek Meals on Wheels? Can you tell me about your “why” for the work you do?

I believe that the path of least resistance to changing society is one community at a time - and I believe that food insecurity is a growing challenge for everyone. Gentrification is real in our communities and the state of Colorado as a whole - as communities like ours gentrify, we are often leaving behind the founding populations of these communities. We owe it to them to think about how we support and uplift them.

My wife grew up in Lafayette, and we currently live 15 minutes away from the communities we serve. In my last role, I really started to miss direct service and specifically impacting local communities, and the Executive Director role at Coal Creek Meals on Wheels seemed like the perfect way to do just that. I want to bring a strategic approach to direct service to better support the communities that I and many of our neighbors call home.

What is your vision for your new role and for Coal Creek Meals on Wheels?

We are at a crossroads at CCMOW where growth is not a suggestion - it's a requirement. We have outgrown our space both physically and from a staff capacity point. It is clear that in order to meet the growing demand, we need to expand our services - delivering more meals, serving more people - and also thinking about how we expand our services to ensure they don't just stop at serving seniors. We want to ensure we are serving everyone in our community who is struggling to access a hot meal every day. We know that schools are often the only time kids can rely on a healthy, hot meal - but that is an opportunity that many adults in our communities don't have - so how do we fill that gap? Additionally, we need to think about how we can grow in a way that is sustainable for our staff, our space, and the community, but growth will not be possible without the support of donors, corporate partners, foundations, and our community partners.

We know that reduction of SNAP benefits, rising inflation, rising housing costs, increased property taxes, and more have caused more individuals in the community to not know where their next meal is coming from or make difficult choices between purchasing food and other basic necessities. We have the ability and infrastructure to help bridge that gap. Now we have to think critically about how we reach those people and ensure they know that we exist and that they are eligible for our services. From February of 2023 to today, we have seen a 60% increase in demand for our services. However, we have not seen the equivalent growth in our fundraising revenue. Now more than ever it is critical that we have solid partnerships throughout our communities to ensure that we never have to turn anyone away who needs access to nutritious meals or other support services.

How did you get to where you are today in your career?

Like most people, I got into nonprofit work accidentally. I thought I wanted to be a teacher, but I found out quickly that I did not. My first adult job was running community centers for Jefferson County Public Schools. Community Centers acted as hubs for community resources - they had before/after school programs for youth, laundry services, nurses, ESL classes, and more. This work sparked my love for volunteerism and community based services. I did that work for five years, and it was extremely rewarding - I learned so much about community service and how people have amazing hearts. It became evident that if you present communities with a problem, they will come together to try to fix it. This is also where I developed a love for working with volunteers, which led me to City Year Denver where I worked for three years supporting their AmeriCorps program in Denver Public Schools. From there, I went to work at the Colorado Nonprofit Association because I was intrigued by the idea of thinking holistically about how we support nonprofits in our state. In this role, I was deeply engaged in the challenges that nonprofits like Coal Creek Meals on Wheels face each day. I supported local organizations in capacity building efforts including fundraising, staff development, board training, and more. Though my time at the Colorado Nonprofit Association was extremely rewarding, I was drawn back to serve my community and truly felt called to serve in this role as Executive Director at CCMOW.

Tell me more about yourself.

I live in Frederick with my wife, Sara, and our son, Brody, along with our two dogs, Darwin and Lola. I serve on the board of the Ronald McDonald House and Write On Sports Denver. In my free time, I like to golf (very poorly) and root obnoxiously for the Green Bay Packers. Fun fact: 5 years and 20 pounds ago, I completed three Iron Mans!

Coal Creek Meals on Wheels is so excited to have Nate as a part of our team. Please reach out at any time if you'd like to join us for lunch or schedule a time to chat - Nate would love to meet you!



NATE BROECKERT



Buddy Program Provides Socialization And Genuine Connection For Clients

In January, Coal Creek Meals on Wheels launched a Buddy Program to provide additional socialization and connection for clients who were at risk for isolation and loneliness. Our Client Services Manager developed a social isolation screener, which is now included during the intake process for all new clients. Using this screener, she identifies our clients at the highest risk of isolation and invites them to be a part of the Buddy Program. Clients can also request to be a part of the program and are often referred by volunteers who deliver their meals.

During this time, our Volunteer Coordinator began recruiting volunteers to act as “buddies” for our clients. Many of our first “buddies” were current volunteers who were looking to get more involved with our programs and develop stronger relationships with our clients. Based on similar interests, volunteers are matched with a client and meet at least two hours per month outside of the clients’ regular meal deliveries. Many “buddies” spend time chatting, playing games together, reading, or just spending quality time together.

One of our Buddy Program matches is Ava and Cheryl. They meet once a week on Mondays in Cheryl’s home, often spending their time “chit chatting” as Cheryl put it. “I’m usually the one doing most of the talking - I’m kind of a motor mouth,” Cheryl said.

Cheryl and Ava hit it off immediately. Because she lives alone and doesn’t get out of the house often, having regular visits with Ava gives her something to look forward to. **“She’s very kind. Ava is fun to talk to and she listens to me - I enjoy asking her about how work is going and how she’s preparing for school that will be starting soon - I’m going to miss her when she’s no longer here. But I’ve been blessed with this friendship,” Cheryl said.**

Their meetups aren’t scripted affairs; they’re all about going with the flow. Sometimes it’s casual conversations about current events, sometimes it’s exploring Cheryl’s treasure trove of memories, like her life in Kansas and Nebraska or her dad’s Remington typewriter that he used to type out the Christmas cards each year. Each moment is precious, with each laugh a reminder of the magic that happens when we connect with one another. **“It’s good to have someone to bounce ideas off of and share stories with. But also to laugh with - that’s really important,” Cheryl said.**

As Cheryl looks back on her time with the Buddy Program, she’s overflowing with gratitude. “I appreciate getting the daily meals, but Coal Creek Meals on Wheels offers so much more than that with the Buddy Program. I’m sure there are so many other people who would enjoy having someone come in to chat and share stories together,” Cheryl said.

Along with volunteering for the Buddy Program, Ava also volunteers at the Coal Creek Cafe. “I’m just having a wonderful time because everyone is so kind and sweet,” Ava said. **“What you’re doing goes further than just the immediate impact, and I appreciate being a part of that.”**

In the heartwarming tale of Cheryl and Ava, we see the true essence of the Buddy Program—a simple idea with a profound impact. It’s about more than just meals and meetups; it’s about spreading joy, forging friendships, and making the world a little brighter, one connection at a time.



PATTY & MILLIE

Plates for Pets Provides More Than Just Pet Food

Coal Creek Meals on Wheels believes in the importance of the relationships we build with our pets. That's why we started our Plates for Pets Program—to ensure that our clients and their pets were receiving adequate nutrition and resources to live happy and healthy lives.

It has been proven that pets reduce stress, lower blood pressure, increase social interaction, promote physical activity, and can reduce feelings of depression and loneliness. By providing monthly supplies of pet food along with our clients' delivered meals, we can ensure they are not forced to give up their pets due to an inability to feed them.

Connie is a long-time volunteer with CCMOW. When the Humane Society took on a devastating hoarding case where many animals had to be removed, Connie decided to help with rehoming the animals. With her connection to CCMOW, she knew our clients would be the perfect fit for providing a safe and loving home.

Our Administrative Assistant, Molly, connected Connie with Patty, who had recently lost her dog Weilo. Molly knew Connie was looking to rehome an 8-year-old poodle mix and had a feeling Patty would be the perfect match—and she was! Patty felt an instant connection with Millie, who had been rescued from the hoarding situation.

"I'm on a small income and am 81 years old with some health issues, so the pet food program helps me give Millie good food so I can give my rescued girl a loving happy life" Patty said. "Millie is my best friend. She gives me tons of love—we really saved each other."



EMMA & PAT

Meals on Wheels: A Story of Love & Legacy

In the heart of Boulder County, there's a family tradition that goes beyond family ties—it's a legacy of love and compassion woven through generations. Emma, the Client Services Manager at CCMOW, started her journey with Meals on Wheels long before she stepped into her current role.

Emma's Aunt Pat, a beloved figure in the Boulder community since the 1970s, was the cornerstone of this familial connection to Meals on Wheels. After years of diligently hand-sewing tea bags at Celestial Seasonings, Aunt Pat felt a pull to give back even more to her community. In 2004, she found her calling with Boulder Meals on Wheels, lending her baking skills to craft delectable desserts for Tuesday and Wednesday lunches. But her dedication didn't stop there—she assisted with meal preparation and packaging, always ready to step in wherever needed. And on Thanksgiving, Aunt Pat's kitchen became a sanctuary of warmth as she lovingly baked pumpkin pies for the entire Meals on Wheels community. **"I was proud to be associated with Meals on Wheels," Pat said. "It's a wonderful organization. A big bonus for me were the great people I met over the 19 years I volunteered."**

For Emma, memories of family gatherings at Aunt Pat's house are intertwined with the aroma of homemade meals and the echoes of laughter. These moments, filled with warmth and togetherness, shaped her understanding of the power of food to nurture both body and soul. **"Food has always been more than just sustenance in our family," Emma reflects. "It's a language of love, a bond that connects us all."**

Driven by the desire to share these cherished experiences with others, Emma found her purpose within Meals on Wheels. Her journey from family dinners to community service was fueled by a deep-seated commitment to ensuring that every individual served by CCMOW feels the same sense of belonging and care.

As Emma continues to carry forward Aunt Pat's legacy of compassion, her words resonate with heartfelt sincerity: **"Every meal we deliver is more than just food—it's a reminder that someone out there cares, that they're not alone. And in that simple gesture, we're building a community of love and support."**

In every dish prepared and every door that is knocked on, the spirit of family lives on, nurturing not only bodies but also hearts. Together, through Meals on Wheels organizations across the country, we weave a tapestry of compassion that spans generations—a testament to the enduring power of love and connection.

Pages of Connection: Coal Creek Meals on Wheels Book Club

Coal Creek Meals on Wheels kicked off a new book club this year, all thanks to a generous grant from Meals on Wheels America. This initiative has blossomed into a cherished group gathering, igniting joy and connection among its members.

Once a month, the group meets at Josephine Commons, offering more than just discussions on the latest page-turner. It's an opportunity for friendships to be forged, stories to be shared, and connections to be made. For those facing mobility challenges, CCMOW extends a helping hand, providing transportation to ensure no one misses out on the enriching experience.

At the helm of this initiative is the dedicated Annie Palius, a beloved volunteer whose passion for storytelling knows no bounds. **"When asked to facilitate the book club, I said yes before I blinked! I've been a voracious reader since childhood – mysteries, like Nancy Drew, were my favorite, and I continue to read them today."** With her guidance, the group delves into the depths of each book, unraveling its mysteries and exploring its themes. Annie, with her keen intuition and deep empathy, carefully helps the group select each month's read, ensuring it resonates with the diverse perspectives within the group.

The group has read a variety of books, from the gripping intrigue of "The Rose Code" to the serene journey of "Go As A River." Each book, a doorway to new worlds and perspectives, has captivated the minds and hearts of its members. Among them are individuals who, due to various circumstances, find themselves often confined to their homes. The book club has offered solace and companionship - a lifeline connecting them to the outside world. Annie shared that **"our regulars voice a variety of opinions about our books which contributes to the fun we have!"**

As the pages turn and discussions unfold, the book club transcends its role as a mere gathering of readers; it becomes a beacon of hope, a testament to the power of community and the transformative magic of literature. In the exchange of ideas and the shared moments of laughter and reflection, bonds are strengthened, loneliness dissipates, and hearts are nourished.

For the Coal Creek Meals on Wheels book club, each meeting is not just about books—it's about belonging, understanding, and the enduring beauty of human connection. Maria, a current member, shared how the book club has brought much needed connection and joy to her life. **"I have been homebound for the last five months, and being able to share my feelings and thoughts on the book has been truly therapeutic. Even though I'm unable to attend the meet ups, I'm updated with notes after each meeting. I can't wait for the day that I can actually attend a meeting."** As the members eagerly await each new read, they do so with hearts brimming with anticipation, knowing that within the pages of their next literary adventure lies the promise of friendship, empathy, and endless possibilities.



Nurturing Hearts and Homes: Ted's Story

Our community is filled with humble community champions. One of those champions is Ted, a host home provider (HHP) who opens his home and heart to individuals with disabilities who either lack familial support or require specialized care that their families cannot provide.

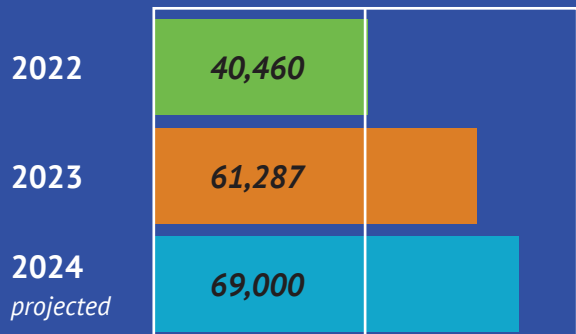
Ted's specialty lies in caring for those with physical aggression, a challenge that he approaches with grace and resilience. **"I'm hard to hit and impossible to make angry,"** he quips, a testament to both his physical presence and his unwavering patience.

Currently, Ted serves as the foster parent for two adult men, Tom and Sam. For Ted, caregiving isn't just a duty; it's a calling. He invests his time, energy, and love into providing a safe and nurturing environment for Tom and Sam to thrive. And this includes providing nutritious meals from Coal Creek Meals on Wheels. Ted receives daily meal deliveries for himself, Tom, and Sam. These meals have been instrumental in Ted's ability to provide the level of care his residents deserve.

Ted's schedule is nothing short of hectic. But amidst the chaos, one thing remains consistent – the nutritious and thoughtfully prepared meals provided by CCMOW. These meals not only save Ted valuable time, but also alleviate financial strain, allowing him to focus on what truly matters: the well-being of Tom and Sam.

Ted beams with pride as he shares the progress he's witnessed in his home. **"Tom has even started to eat vegetables!"** he exclaims, a small victory that speaks volumes about the impact of proper nutrition and care. Caregiving can take many forms, and Coal Creek Meals on Wheels is here to offer support to anyone needing access to nutritious meals, social connection, and more.

Total Meals Served By CCMOW



TED



Your support will ensure our neighbors in need can access nutritious meals and the support they need to thrive.



Scan the QR code or visit www.coalcreekmow.org to donate online. You can also send a check with the included envelope.

www.coalcreekmow.org | 303.665.0566
info@coalcreekmow.org
CoalCreekMealsOnWheels [f](#) [in](#) [@](#) [v](#)
455 N Burlington Ave, Lafayette, CO 80026