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NEIGHBOURS

An exclusive magazine for the residents
of Southeast Oakville and Old Oakville

of Olde Oakville

Oakville Meals on Wheels:
50 Years of Feeding the Community

POWERED BY



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A Legacy of Care: 50 Years of Driving Care into the Community

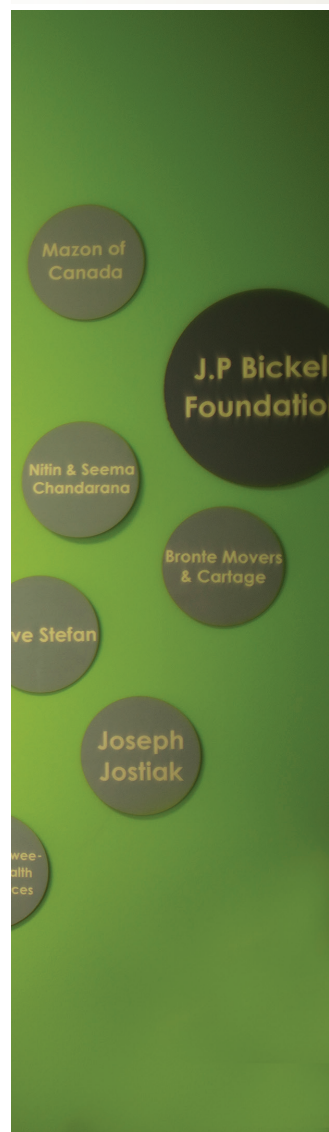
By Hannah Teichroeb | Above photo by Brenda Seymour

For nearly half a century, Oakville Meals on Wheels has been quietly yet profoundly supporting residents across the community. Established in 1976 as Kiwanis Oakville Meals on Wheels, the organization was founded on a simple but powerful idea: that access to nutritious food and human connection should never be out of reach. Forty-nine years later, that commitment continues to guide every delivery, every volunteer visit, and every meal served within Oakville's borders.

The roots of Meals on Wheels extend far beyond Oakville. The program first began in England during the Second World War as a response to food shortages and community need. It later reached Canada in

the 1960s, where local agencies began operating independent programs tailored to their communities. In Oakville, the Kiwanis Club played a pivotal role. Led by Tom Northcott, the Kiwanis spearheaded efforts to bring Meals on Wheels to the town, officially launching the program in October 1976. In its very first year, the organization delivered 1,000 meals at a cost of just two dollars per meal.

Over time, Oakville Meals on Wheels evolved into the independent organization it is today, supported by community partnerships, agencies such as the United



Way, dedicated donors, and a strong volunteer base. Despite receiving no annual government funding, the organization has continued to grow in reach and impact, fueled by local support and an unwavering commitment to service.

Today, Oakville Meals on Wheels operates with a small but dedicated team of five staff members, an engaged Board of Directors, and more than 80 active volunteers. Together, they deliver both hot and frozen meals to adults living within Oakville who require meal support for any reason. Eligibility is based solely on residency within Oakville, ensuring equitable access for those in need.

At the heart of Oakville Meals on Wheels is a mission focused on enabling independent living. With the support of volunteers, the organization provides access to nutritious meals and meaningful social interaction while supporting both physical and emotional well-being. Each delivery includes not only a meal, but also a friendly visit and an informal wellness check. This added layer of care offers peace of mind to families and caregivers while allowing clients to remain safely and comfortably in their own homes.

The impact of this work reaches far beyond food delivery. Food insecurity is an increasingly pressing issue, even in communities that may not outwardly appear to struggle. Rising grocery prices and limited access to food have left many individuals vulnerable,

including seniors, those with health challenges, and people living alone. Oakville Meals on Wheels addresses this need directly by ensuring clients are well nourished while also combating isolation through regular social interaction.

Volunteers play a critical role in this process. By delivering meals and spending time with clients, they help reduce feelings of loneliness and disconnection. These visits can be life-changing. On a weekly basis, the organization contacts family members to flag potential concerns such as changes to mobility, confusion, or difficulties with daily tasks. There have been instances where volunteers discovered clients in crisis situations and were able to call emergency services, underscoring the life-saving impact of the program.

Despite its success, Oakville Meals on Wheels faces ongoing challenges, particularly when it comes to funding. As a non-government funded organization, it relies heavily on grants, foundations, agency support, fundraising initiatives, and individual contributions. Community-driven efforts such as GiveOakville, smaller fundraising campaigns, and one-time contributions all play a vital role in keeping the program running. Every dollar raised helps ensure meals continue to reach those who depend on them.

There are also common misconceptions about Oakville Meals on Wheels. Many people assume it is a government-funded service or a food bank, when in reality it is a paid meal service offering multiple meal options along with personal interaction. Others are unaware that Meals on Wheels programs operate independently by municipality, often leading to confusion about how services differ across regions. While Oakville Meals on Wheels collaborates with other organizations in Halton, each program operates uniquely to best serve its local community.

One of the organization's proudest achievements is the scale and consistency of its impact. Since 1976, Oakville Meals on Wheels has delivered more than one million meals to residents across the community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization did not miss a single meal delivery, demonstrating resilience, dedication, and adaptability during a time of heightened need. Looking ahead, 2026 will mark a significant milestone as the organization celebrates 50 years of service in Oakville.

Plans are already underway to honour this achievement. The anniversary year will include a series of campaigns, events, and fundraising initiatives, culminating in a major celebration event in October, ahead of the official 50th anniversary on October 4th. Community members are encouraged





to follow Oakville Meals on Wheels on social media to stay informed and participate in the celebrations.

What continues to motivate the team is a shared sense of care and responsibility for the community. Staff and volunteers alike are driven by the knowledge that their work helps neighbours remain nourished, connected, and independent. Hearing volunteer stories and witnessing the difference a simple meal and visit can make reinforces the purpose behind every delivery.

There are many ways the community can support Oakville Meals on Wheels. Volunteering remains one of the most impactful ways to get involved, as all meal deliveries are carried out by volunteers who also provide wellness checks and friendly visits. Financial contributions are equally vital, helping sustain operations in the absence of government funding. Spreading awareness through personal networks and social media is another meaningful way to support the organization and ensure its mission continues for generations to come.

For Oakville Meals on Wheels, every meal delivered represents nourishment, dignity, and connection. It is a service built on compassion, sustained by community, and dedicated to ensuring no one is left behind.

More information can be found on their website at www.oakvillemealsonwheels.com



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