

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



Fara Waugh

This month, we are celebrating one of our own volunteers, Debbie Rickabaugh, who was named the recipient of a national award through Meals on Wheels America. While Debbie was named The Power of a Knock Volunteer of the Year, the kind, compassionate service this award represents could have come from

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HEROES AMONG US

In a segment that was cut from the videotaped interview with Meals on Wheels America for the *Power of a Knock Award*, Jill Smith was asked if she could name other volunteers who, like award winner Debbie Rickabaugh, had gone above and beyond in service to their homebound clients.

She told the interviewer about Pete, who drove the same gentleman to dialysis several times a week and then stayed to keep him company. When the pandemic struck and SourcePoint's medical transportation program was suspended, Pete continued to take his client to dialysis on his own.

And Frank, who was transporting a client to an appointment when she suffered a medical emergency. He pivoted and took her to the hospital, then stuck around the waiting room for hours. When she was finally released, he drove her home.

Also, Vicki, who, after receiving devastating news, still finished out her shift in the kitchen so meal production wouldn't fall behind.

Heroism doesn't only happen out on the road. Inside the walls of SourcePoint, our volunteers change lives by creating an environment that encourages older adults to abandon isolation and have a meal together, take a class, get fit, or just enjoy some social time. The intrinsic value of our onsite volunteers who break seniors out of isolation is impossible to measure. In the words of Marilyn Clark, membership coordinator, "Volunteers are all saving lives in different ways. Some help keep seniors alive; others give seniors a reason to live."

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Debbie Rickabaugh receiving the Meals on Wheels America Power of a Knock Volunteer of the Year Award.

THE AWARD THAT ALMOST WASN'T



During the pandemic, volunteer appreciation events were supplemented by masked staff members passing out treats and thanks to our volunteers. During one of those treat-passing events, Debbie Rickabaugh, a 16-year meal delivery veteran, demonstrated a new hand sign she had taught herself to communicate with Dennis, a Deaf client on her route. Since the masking mandate, Dennis couldn't lipread, and Debbie was concerned that he wasn't benefiting from the same friendly greetings that the other clients were receiving.

Fast forward a few years and a new volunteer award – Meals on Wheels America Power of a Knock Award – came to SourcePoint's attention. This award was intended to celebrate a special connection between a volunteer and a meal delivery client. Jill Smith Checked in with Debbie to see if she and Dennis had continued their efforts at communication and learned that Deb

was continually improving her fluency in American

Sign Language (ASL) with Dennis as her coach. A special relationship, for sure! There was only a week before the nomination was due and the competition was sure to be fierce, but with \$50,000 in unrestricted funding and national press coverage as the prize, it was worth the effort to quickly pull together a nomination letter and video. With one day left to submit, Debbie, Jill, ALS interpreter/care consultant Heather Endres, and social media coordinator Lisa Brammer arranged to meet to create a video of Dennis and Debbie interacting. Since Dennis was at the beginning of her route, Debbie planned to deliver his meal, then meet the group at his house after her route. Traffic issues, a long client list, Debbie being alerted to fire alarms going off at her house, and other challenges plagued Debbie's route and the group's rendezvous back at Dennis' house was delayed. By the time all players were fully assembled, Dennis had dozed off and there was no way to rouse him. The group went their separate ways – except for Debbie. When she eventually got Dennis' attention, the other participants pivoted and made their way back to Dennis' house. The film was made, and nomination submitted in the nick of time!

To everyone's amazement, the touching story of Debbie and Dennis beat out 90 other submissions from across the country. On Aug. 17, Debbie flew out to Phoenix, Arizona to accept the Power of a Knock Volunteer of the Year Award at the national Meals on Wheels of America conference. The accompanying video debuted to a crowd of Meals on Wheels professionals from across the country. 2023 Power of a Knock™ National Volunteer of the Year: Debbie.

SourcePoint is proud of Debbie and all our volunteers who perform acts of kindness everyday, just be being themselves!



Debbie being filmed for the Power of a Knock award video, seen here: <https://vimeo.com/851071218>



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Jill Smith being interviewed for the Power of a Knock award video

HEROES AMONG US *(continued from pg.1)*

Volunteers like Mary, David, and Randy lend their musical talents to entertain diners in Café 55, elevating an affordable and sociable meal to an even more special experience.

Our Concierge team works doggedly to make SourcePoint a welcoming place where newcomers feel right at home. Meanwhile, groups like Scrappy Crafters and Do for Others give their time and talents to crafting items that raise funds or provide comfort.

According to an article in the National Library of Medicine, senior men are more likely than senior women to be left out of the social scene. But with volunteers like Harold and Bill channeling their passions into new groups (motorcycle club and coin collecting respectively) more male-centric programming is springing up.

And experienced caregivers, Leslie and Jan, channel their personal challenges into aiding others in similar situations as support group peer leaders.

If space allowed, this could be a book instead of an article. All our volunteers are heroes to Delaware County seniors!

DEBBIE RICKABAUGH'S POWER OF A KNOCK ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Thank you to Meals on Wheels America for the honor of this award. It was an amazing surprise!

Like many of my generation, my life is full to the brim. During my early years of Meals on Wheels volunteering, I was already a 4-H project leader and running my family's company while wrapping up raising two children and assisting an aging father. In the 16 years since my first meal route, my dad has passed, and my kids, I am proud to say, grew up to be public servants; my daughter is a clinical nurse manager, and my son is a firefighter/paramedic. What hasn't changed is my commitment to volunteering for both Meals on Wheels and 4-H while still working at our family's company. Throw in on-call babysitting for my three active grandchildren and my life is jam packed.

While there are many inspiring hero stories Meals on Wheels America could have chosen to exemplify The Power of a Knock, I am proud that they saw in my story a simple act of kindness that let Dennis know that not only is it as important to communicate with him in his language as it is for everyone else on the route, but also, that I was thinking about him, long after his meal was delivered. Because when you are remembered you are important. What is more validating than that?

As Meals on Wheels programs like SourcePoint's innovate to keep up with the times and struggle to keep up with their community's needs, it could be easy to lose sight of the fact that we serve the individual. But we volunteers never forget, because no matter what changes, we still knock on one door at a time.

Thank you again. Serving in partnership with Meals on Wheels America has been, and continues to be, my pleasure.

SAVE THE DATE

Henmick Brewery Volunteer Gathering

Thursday, Sept. 28,
4:30-6:30pm

- Social event just for volunteers
- Meet other volunteers!
- Food Truck!
- Sept. 28 is the right date!

Senior Day at the Fair

September 19

- Free admission if over 55
- Visit the SourcePoint booth!

Volunteer Hoedown

October 27, 5-7pm

- Square Dancing!
- Just for volunteers!

JOIN A WINNING TEAM

You do enough, but if you want more, or know others who want to join you, here are some open volunteer opportunities:

- Spread the word that multiple meal routes are available, and we offer mileage reimbursement from SourcePoint and back at a rate of \$0.66 per mile and a free lunch!

- If you like to get up early and start your day as part of a team, consider volunteering in our kitchen packing meals into trays. It's fun, it's fast, it's social and you're going to love it!

- If you tend to talk about SourcePoint to all your friends, consider joining the Concierge team and helping to create a welcoming environment for those new to SourcePoint.

Thanks for all you do!

VOLUNTEERING AND BRAIN HEALTH: A STUDY

A recent study conducted by the University of California, Davis, concluded that older adults who volunteer have better cognitive abilities, specifically better attention, multitasking, and memory. Volunteer activities make seniors more active, provide social interactions, and mental stimulation. Those in the study who volunteered multiple times a week had the highest cognitive function. Read the full report: <https://health.ucdavis.edu/news/headlines/volunteering-in-late-life-may-protect-the-brain-against-cognitive-decline-and-dementia/2023/07>



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volunteers.

The Power of the Knock award is about recognizing the outstanding service of the dedicated, selfless, and valued volunteers who take special care to make their clients feel seen, heard, and valued as individuals. I see each of you—our volunteers—taking time from your own lives in service to our mission. Many of you are busy being heroes for your own families, as well as being a hero to other families who need help keeping their older loved ones thriving.

While we don't expect you to give more than the time you are scheduled, it is relatively easy to pick up on a nugget of information that will help you let your clients, neighbors, or family members know they are seen and remembered. It could be as simple as noticing a VFW ballcap on someone's head and offering thanks for his or her service. Or picking flowers from your yard or fresh vegetables from your garden to share, telling a special older adult, "I picked these for you today because I thought you would enjoy them." Just asking about someone's grandchildren by their names means you remember them and provides an opportunity for a little bragging.

As you go about your day working so hard and with such heart fulfilling SourcePoint's mission, I want you to know that I see you, and that I see you all as heroes!

*With my deepest gratitude,
Fara Waugh, CEO*



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