



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CALIFORNIA'S CHIEF SERVICE OFFICER HEADLINES "DRIVEN TO BE HEROES" EVENT,  
HONORING MEALS ON WHEELS YOLO COUNTY'S VOLUNTEERS AND DONORS SINCE 2020**

The more than 1,000 volunteers and donors who delivered, packed, and funded nearly 400,000 nutritious meals for Yolo County's most vulnerable seniors during and since the pandemic will be honored by Meals on Wheels Yolo County (MOW Yolo) at a public recognition event, "Driven to Be Heroes," on Thursday April 20, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m., in Heritage Plaza at Main and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets in Downtown Woodland. All past, current, and prospective volunteers and donors are invited, as well as community members wishing to express their gratitude.

Beginning at 5:00 p.m., words of thanks and encouragement will be offered by Josh Fryday, a Davis resident, who serves as Chief Service Officer for California Volunteers, Office of the Governor, as well as MOW Yolo Executive Director Joy Cohan. Immediately following, the inaugural "Heroes of the Year" award will be presented to Woodlander Virginia Moehrke, honoring the extraordinary gifts of both time and treasure she made to MOW Yolo over the past three years with her husband, Howard Moehrke. Howard passed away six months ago after having served as a meal delivery route driver with Virginia and making investments totaling nearly \$85,000 in the program.

Illuminating MOW Yolo's current "Operation Accelerate" initiative will be a mini classic car show with drawings for ride-along experiences, and attendees also will have the opportunity to sample appetizers and treats based upon MOW Yolo's senior meal menus, in addition to festive beverages. Original artwork by MOW Yolo Volunteer Implementation Coordinator Natalia Sterling, featuring a rural Yolo County landscape, will be available for silent auction, as well as a trio of classic guitars donated for the occasion by a member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles' Woodland chapter. All proceeds benefit MOW Yolo's "Big Day of Giving" (BDOG) goal to raise \$100,000 to double the number of seniors nourished countywide by the organization in the next 12 months. Pre-giving for BDOG opens on April 20.

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“Without dedicated volunteers and generous donors, MOW Yolo cannot maintain and increase its impact upon senior nutrition in our local communities,” stated Cohan. “The outpouring of financial support sparked by pandemic food security concerns in 2020 and 2021 continues to advance our work, yet more investment is needed. And the volunteers who continued to show up for the seniors who needed them, despite public health threats to their own wellbeing, are angels among us. As our kitchen capacity grows and MOW Yolo can make more meals to serve more seniors, it only will have an impact if there are additional volunteers to deliver those meals, and donors to support the equipment, staff, and operating expenses required to ensure equitable food security for all aging adults in our county.”

A lease for a second, 5,300 square foot meal production kitchen in Winters recently was executed and the space is being equipped, thanks in part to both American Rescue Plan investments by Yolo County and State Nutrition Infrastructure funding administered by the Agency on Aging Area 4. This location joins the existing kitchen in Woodland in producing five meals per week for 630 food insecure seniors countywide – 65% more than this time last year – with strategic plans to increase that number to as many as 1,300 by spring 2024. Additionally, MOW Yolo’s administrative functions are moving late next month to new offices located at 711 Main Street, Suite B, in Downtown Woodland, near to the Heritage Plaza location for “Driven to Be Heroes.”

“This is a transformational time for MOW Yolo,” added Cohan. “Honoring the combined efforts of donors and volunteers is our highest priority, and the greatest gift that we can offer to the seniors who depend upon these meals for nutritional sustenance. We look forward to welcoming them, and all the community members who recognize their efforts on April 20.”

Event RSVPs to [engagement@mowyolo.org](mailto:engagement@mowyolo.org) are helpful, but not required to attend “Driven to Be Heroes.” To learn more about or support MOW Yolo’s senior nutrition and socialization programs, please connect at <https://mowyolo.org>, email [welcome@mowyolo.org](mailto:welcome@mowyolo.org), or call 530-662-7035.

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