



Keeping Seniors Safe, Healthy and Connected

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated a growing issue among the region's older adults. A new survey of Lehigh Valley seniors reveals that 1 in 4 respondents report that they lack companionship and 1 in 6 report feeling isolated from others. Older adults who are chronically lonely live shorter lives and are more likely to have problems with memory, mental health and physical health.

Imagine living 1,100 miles away from your 96-year-old parent. Now imagine that your elderly parent has been diagnosed with early dementia and cardiac issues, and the world just entered a global pandemic.

Beth*, the daughter of Meals on Wheels client, Helen*, has been facing these exact challenges. Beth moved out of state 15 years ago and her mother, Helen, remained alone in Northampton in senior housing. No matter how hard Beth tried to convince her mother to move in with her, Helen is determined to stay living in her hometown.

So, every month Beth makes the 17-hour journey to check in on her mom. When Helen's health started to decline, Beth knew that she needed some extra help. Once COVID hit, however, it became more difficult for Beth to get extra food to her mother every week.

This is when she discovered Meals on Wheels of the Greater Lehigh Valley. The daily volunteer visits take some of the stress away; "It truly takes a small village to let an elderly, dementia person live independently". It is not just the friendly volunteer visits that have helped, but also the nutrition from the meals that Helen is receiving. Helen's snacking habits are gone and have been replaced with muscle-building protein and vitamin-rich veggies. Helen is thrilled with the meals and is glad that she no longer has to cook! Helen excitedly says to her daughter, "Why didn't you find this sooner?!"

With your support, we can continue to keep our older adults safe, healthy and connected as we build an Age-Friendly Lehigh Valley. Give today to the Community Building Fund to help your neighbors access the resources they need to rebuild and recover.

**Names changed to protect identities*

