



Annual Neighbor  
Newsletter  
November 2025



1228 E. Breckinridge St., Box 2  
Louisville, KY 40204



## From Our Board President

Dear Neighbors,

This year reminded us how much community matters. When unexpected federal cuts threatened programs like Meals on Wheels, neighbors and city leaders stepped up. And when a new staff member joined HCM, she found not just a job, but a table where stories and friendships grow daily.

That is the heart of Highlands Community Ministries: neighbors caring for neighbors, meeting needs with both compassion and dignity.

*"The food is good, but it's the people that make it a community."  
– Kevin Mitchell, Senior Lunch Participant*



As we look to the year ahead, we are working to keep those tables full with food, conversation, and hope. I invite you to join us. Give, volunteer, or simply stay connected through our e-newsletter. Together, we will keep showing up for one another.

Leslie Fowler

Every neighbor has a story. Meet a few inside.

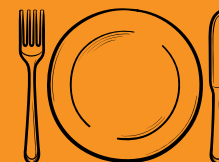
## Because of YOU...



**7,414**  
people fed through  
the Food Pantry



**314**  
families kept their lights  
and water on with  
utility support



**13,685**  
meals delivered and  
shared with local  
seniors



**53**  
neighbors stayed in  
their homes through  
rent assistance



# Rolling Forward Together

by John Anderson, Meals on Wheels Volunteer

Florence is ninety-five and lives alone. When she learned about the proposed federal cuts to Meals on Wheels, she said softly, “I can’t believe they were going to take Meals on Wheels away from us. A lot of people depend on that.”

*Now I know the people we serve by name. They could be my parents or grandparents. They could be yours.*

– John Anderson

## “I can’t believe they were going to take Meals on Wheels away from us.” – Florence, age 95

She’s right. Meals on Wheels isn’t just food—it’s care, connection, and dignity. It’s the reassurance that someone still remembers, still checks in, and still cares if you’re okay.

When we learned that federal funding for the program would be reduced by 80%, my heart sank. Without help, Highlands Community Ministries would have had to remove 35 homebound seniors from weekly deliveries.

Thanks to quick action at both the city and state levels, Meals on Wheels continues – for now. Mayor Craig Greenberg’s administration covered the first quarter of our fiscal year, and after advocacy from across Kentucky, Governor Beshear’s team identified state funds to support senior meal programs through **June 2026**.

That’s a huge relief, but those dollars are temporary. A bridge, not a rebuild. After June, there’s still a gap to fill: about **\$22,500** to carry Meals on Wheels through September and ensure every senior continues receiving care.

I started volunteering because I wanted to make a difference. Now I know the people we serve by name. They could be my parents or grandparents. They could be yours.

If you believe no senior in Louisville should face hunger or loneliness, **please join the Friendly Neighbor Society, HCM’s monthly giving circle.** Your ongoing support of \$10 or more will keep Meals on Wheels rolling through next fall and beyond.

*Because when we stop feeding our neighbors, we lose more than a meal. We lose who we are.*

### Keep Meals on Wheels Rolling

Funded through June 2026.  
Goal: \$22,500 to sustain through September 2026.

- Every **\$7 = one meal**
- \$35 = one week of meals for a neighbor
- \$150/month = meals for a year for one senior
- \$1,400 = 1 week of meals for all 40 seniors

Scan the QR code to join the Friendly Neighbor Society, our monthly giving circle.



# Finding Belonging at the Table

by Sondra Bazlamit, Operations Coordinator

## I didn’t expect to end up at Highlands Community Ministries.

One afternoon, sitting in my car on my lunch break and feeling burned out, I scrolled through job postings and found an opening for Operations Coordinator. I wasn’t even sure what all it involved—but I was intrigued.

A few months in, I’ve learned it means providing administrative support to our Meals on Wheels and Senior Lunch programs—and, more unexpectedly, building relationships that have changed the way I see the world.

If you had told me one of my favorite parts of this job would be Bingo, I probably would’ve laughed. I didn’t know how to play, but Miss Sheren always sat beside me, leaning over my card to whisper, “Sondra! You’ve got Bingo!”

*“Before HCM, I saw policies as headlines. Now, I see faces.”*

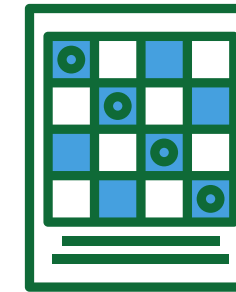
– Sondra

The seniors insist that everyone wins once—but no more than twice—and that I win too. My first prizes? A jar of peanut butter, a box of graham crackers, and a lint roller.

What struck me most was how much joy they wanted me to have. Many live with very little, but they made space for me at the table—not just to play, but to belong.

As someone new to Louisville, I’ve also discovered this city through their memories. Mr. Conrad talks about the turtle statues at Hogan’s Fountain, which he swears are “the finest turtle statues anybody ever had.”

Mr. Jimmy, a quiet man, once told me he used to ride with a motorcycle gang. When he speaks, the room falls silent.



Before HCM, I saw policies as headlines. Now, I see faces.

When I read about proposed cuts to Meals on Wheels or the Congregate Nutrition Program, I pick up the phone and call my representatives—not for me, but for the people I’ve come to care about deeply.

Each morning, before anyone arrives, I make sure everything is ready: the tables, the salt and pepper, the game prizes. It’s a quiet ritual that says, without words, You matter. We’re glad you’re here.

When I applied to HCM, I just wanted to feel seen again. What I found was a rhythm: laying the table, listening to stories, celebrating small joys, showing up for needs both spoken and unspoken. In that rhythm, I’ve found something steady. Something sacred. A community that has changed me, simply by letting me be part of it.

*This information is made possible by state and/or federal funding provided by the Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living.*

## Stay Connected

Stories like Sondra’s happen every day at HCM. Sign up for our monthly Neighbor News email to see your impact in action.

