



# THE BOSTON ELDER NUTRITION PROGRAM

**A PROGRAM OF ETHOS** Assisting the elderly to remain independent through the coordination and delivery of high-quality, healthy, nutritious meals.



CARE. COMPASSION. COMMUNITY



# WELCOME

## A MESSAGE FROM THE BOSTON ELDER NUTRITION PROGRAM PARTNERS

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Boston Elder Nutrition Program. Our mission is to assist the elderly and disabled to remain independent through the coordination and delivery of high-quality, healthy, nutritious meals, to the home or to community settings.

The Boston Elder Nutrition Program is an innovative collaboration among the Age Strong Commission, and the elder services non-profits Central Boston Elder Services, Boston Senior Home Care and Ethos, all working together to bring healthy food to seniors.

At the core of our program are nutritious meals, companionship, and a watchful eye on the health and safety of our seniors. For those who have trouble getting around, we bring the meals to you. For others, we serve in community centers and other gathering places in our neighborhoods.

Adequate nutrition is necessary for health, functionality, and the ability to remain independent. Healthy eating can increase mental acuity, resistance to illness and disease, energy levels, immune system strength, recuperation speed, and the ability to manage chronic health problems. The Boston Elder Nutrition Program ensures that seniors have access to adequate nutrition even when family support, mobility, and resources are lacking.

The following guide will help you learn more about:

- The Boston Elder Nutrition Program at Ethos
- The issues the program helps to address
- How to access and manage program's services
- Ways to make a referral for a loved one, neighbor, client, or patient
- Opportunities to get involved in the program

In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like to share your thoughts on the program, please do not hesitate to contact Ethos at (617) 522-6700.

Sincerely,



Valerie Frias  
CEO  
Ethos



Sylvia Exantus  
CEO  
Central Boston Elder  
Services



Meg Hogan  
CEO  
Boston Senior Home  
Care



Emily Shea  
Commissioner  
Age Strong  
Commission

# ETHOS

## ABOUT US

Ethos is a private, nonprofit organization that assists the elderly and disabled to live at home. We serve over 3,000 individuals and families, primarily in the Boston neighborhoods of Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, West Roxbury, Hyde Park, and Mattapan. Ethos offers a wide range of high-quality, discounted services and support, delivered at home, and in the community.

The Ethos Nutrition program started in 1973 and

is one of more than 5,000 local Senior Nutrition Programs in the United States. Through its home delivered meals (Meals on Wheels) and congregate meals (Community Cafés) programs, Ethos provides well over 2.6 million meals to seniors who need them each year. The organization also offers nutrition check-ups and counseling from a licensed dietitian, as well as a variety of activities and programs at many of its Community Cafés.

## OUR HISTORY

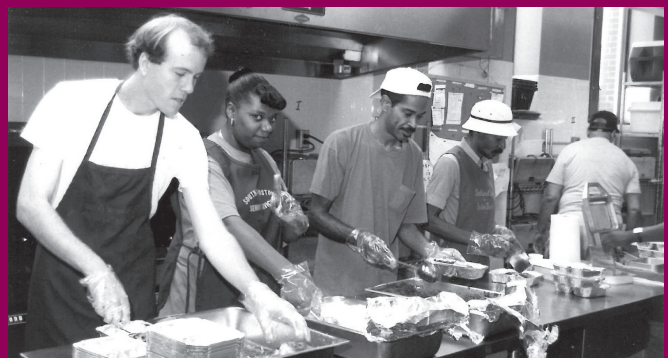
In 1972, Massachusetts Office of Elder Affairs issued a call for grassroots coalitions to support a program to keep elders out of nursing homes. Called "Home Care," it was one of the nation's first efforts to create an alternative to the institutional models of caring for the elderly that had prevailed since the poorhouse. That August, a group of southwest Boston seniors and providers formed the Ad Hoc Coalition for the Elderly. In its first report to the state, it found "meager resources wasted by duplication... and lacking organized means of efficiently referring older people to sources of help." It was a problem the group decided to take on.

In March, 1973, the Coalition incorporated as

Southwest Boston Senior Services – the city's first, neighborhood-based not-for-profit organization devoted solely to keeping the elderly and disabled at home.

One year later, it began operations out of a Roslindale storefront with a staff of four and funding for one elder lunch site and a Meals on Wheels route.

Today, that agency is Ethos, a \$43 million organization that promotes the dignity and independence of thousands of elderly and disabled persons. Despite years of growth, Ethos remains rooted in the principles of care, compassion, and community that guided its founders.



# THE ISSUES

## BY THE NUMBERS

Even the most independent among us, if fortunate to live long enough, may experience a decline in mobility or health that can strip away our independence and diminish the quality of our lives. Great advances in medicine have extended our average life expectancy to a record high of 78.7 years. Living longer means more years spent in the struggles that accompany old age. Add to that the increase in geographic mobility of our families and the result is millions of seniors left behind, hungry, and alone.

### TOO MANY SENIORS IN MASSACHUSETTS ARE LEFT BEHIND, ALONE, AND HUNGRY, STRUGGLING TO STAY INDEPENDENT AND HEALTHY

The rate of hunger among seniors aged 60 and older has increased by 45% since 2001, a lingering effect of the 2008-2009 recession. At the current rate, the number of food-insecure seniors may grow to more than 8 million by 2050. Hunger pains can be increasingly painful as we age:



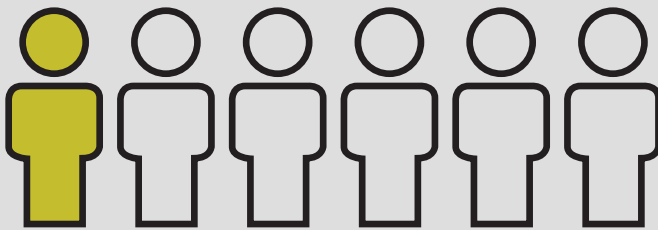
**374,103**  
are isolated,  
living alone



**140,330**  
are threatened  
by hunger

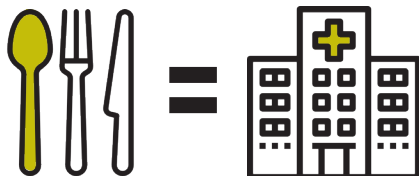


**344,375**  
are living in or  
near poverty



**1 IN 6**

seniors struggles with  
hunger nationally



We can provide a senior Meals on Wheels for **1 YEAR** for roughly the same cost as **1 DAY** in a hospital.





While we all celebrate the increase in lifespan, maintaining health while aging comes with a price. Without support from programs like Meals on Wheels, millions of seniors are forced to prematurely trade their homes for nursing facilities.

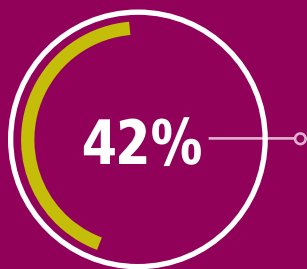
Meals on Wheels saves us all billions of dollars in unnecessary Medicaid and Medicare expenses every year – tax dollars that can be spent in much better ways.

## MEALS ON WHEELS IN BOSTON DELIVERS THE SUPPORT THAT KEEPS SENIORS IN THEIR OWN HOMES, WHERE THEY WANT TO BE.

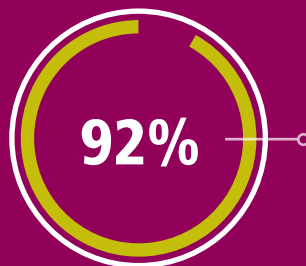
For millions of Americans, Meals on Wheels and Congregate Meal programs are literally the difference between remaining in their own homes and needing to relocate to a nursing facility. The nutritious meal, friendly visit and safety check help them cope with three of the biggest threats of aging: hunger, isolation, and loss of independence. Research proves that when seniors have the right support, they gain greater quality of life, need fewer hospital stays, and live longer.

**“HAVING LUNCH AT THE CAFE IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY WEEK. I LOVE SEEING FRIENDS, HEARING A TALK, and LISTENING TO LIVE MUSIC.”**

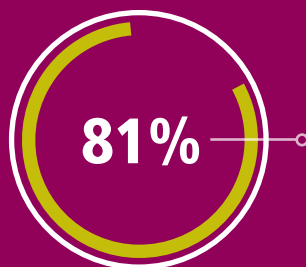
Alicia, Community Café diner



of eligible seniors are enrolled and receiving SNAP benefits (formerly Food Stamps) — making assistance programs for SNAP enrollment that much more important for seniors.



say it enables them to remain living at home



say it improves their health



say it makes them feel more safe and secure

# BOSTON ELDER NUTRITION PROGRAM

## AT ETHOS

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A good meal can do wonders for the body and spirit. In fact, healthy eating is a cornerstone of healthy aging. Ethos programs give seniors flexible meal options, which often include the company of a visiting aide, Ethos volunteer, or fellow diners.

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### PROGRAM FEATURES

**Meals on Wheels** Home-delivered meals for those who can't cook for themselves.

**Community Cafés** Communal lunches, served up with social and cultural activities at convenient locations across the city.

**Diverse Menus** options include sandwiches, traditional American fare, Asian, Caribbean, Vietnamese, African-American, Italian,

vegetarian and Kosher meals. We also offer therapeutic menus.

**Counseling and "Nutrition checkups"**, nutrition planning, and advice on healthy eating and special diets.

**Group Nutrition Education and Advice** Staff dietitians are available to speak to community groups, senior centers, and residents of elderly housing.

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### NUTRITIOUS MEALS

Adequate nutrition is necessary for health, functionality, and the ability to remain independent. Healthy eating can increase mental acuity, resistance to illness and disease, energy levels, immune system strength, recuperation speed, and the ability to manage chronic health problems. The Boston Elder Nutrition Program at Ethos ensures that seniors have access to adequate nutrition even when family support, mobility, and resources are lacking.

### FRIENDLY VISITS

For many seniors, the trusted Meals on Wheels staff member who shows up every day with a hot meal and a warm smile is the only person they see or speak with all day. This special delivery is the reason to get up in the morning, something to look forward to, and a reminder to take good care of themselves. Seniors traveling to group settings for meals also receive valuable social interaction and companionship. All of us can attest that a meal can be much more than the food on the plate, but also the company across the table.

### SAFETY CHECKS

Along with the inevitable impacts of aging come the increased risks of medical emergencies, falls, and other accidents. The safety check that accompanies each meal delivery ensures that, in the case of an emergency or problem, medics will be called, families will be notified, and our seniors will not be forgotten.

### ADDITIONAL SERVICES

The Boston Elder Nutrition Program at Ethos also offers additional services that further support the quality of life and independence of our clients. We offer meals to meet special dietary needs, cultural, or ethnic preferences. We also provide emergency meals for bad weather days.

# OUR PARTNERS

Ethos owes much of its success to a robust set of collaborations we have developed over the years with other institutions and organizations. We have built enduring partnerships with government agencies, providers, senior and disability advocates, health care organizations, businesses, philanthropies, and donors.

**AGE+**

City of Boston  
Age Strong  
Commission

**THE AGE STRONG COMMISSION** is dedicated to improving the lives of Boston's older adults by connecting them with resources and information. They are focused on setting the City's direction for successful aging in Boston. Their services include assistance in applying for government benefits and community-based services, discount programs, housing advice, transportation options, advocacy, volunteer programs, and information and referral.



**CENTRAL BOSTON ELDER SERVICES** is a non-profit corporation that helps Boston area seniors remain in their homes by providing short and long-term care. Programs and services are offered to help seniors remain self-sufficient and are available to residents living in the Boston neighborhoods of Allston, Back Bay, Fenway, Mission Hill, North Dorchester, North Jamaica Plain, South End, and Roxbury. Protective services is available and provided city wide.



**BOSTON SENIOR HOME CARE** is a private, non-profit organization that provides case management, service planning, and social support services to low-income persons who wish to remain in the community but require assistance to do so. They also provide programs and education initiatives for those serving as caregivers and information about maintaining a healthy lifestyle and controlling chronic disease at any age.



**BOSTON ELDERINFO** is the intake and referral service of the Eldercare Alliance, nonprofit collaboration of the three ASAPs (Aging Service Access Points) that serves Boston: Central Boston Elder Services, Boston Senior Home Care, and Ethos.



**MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA** is the leadership organization supporting more than 5,000 community-based programs across the country that are dedicated to addressing senior isolation and hunger. This network serves virtually every community in America and enables seniors to live nourished lives with independence and dignity.



# MEALS ON WHEELS

## INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Every weekday, Ethos brings hot, nutritious meals to thousands of homebound elderly residents in Boston.

Along with a well-balanced meal, our Meals on Wheels drivers serve up a cheerful, consistent presence while also keeping a watchful eye over each recipient's health and safety.

The Ethos Meals on Wheels Program caters to many tastes, with menus that feature, Kosher, Caribbean, Asian, Vietnamese, Italian, African American, vegetarian, and therapeutic dishes as well as traditional American fare. See page 10.

Based on their individual needs, elders may also receive frozen weekend meals, cold meals, and nutritional supplements.

If you or someone you know is unable to shop for and prepare food that meets the requirements of good daily nutrition, Ethos will deliver tasty, nourishing meals right to the door.

### ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for this service, you must be:

- Residing within the city of Boston
- At least 60 years of age
- Either temporarily or permanently homebound.

\*There is a suggested donation of \$2.00 per meal unless otherwise noted. All contributions are voluntary and confidential. **No one will be denied service for an inability to make a donation.**



### HOW TO INITIATE SERVICES

Call our intake line at Boston Elder INFO at (617) 292-6211.  
[www.ethocare.org](http://www.ethocare.org) | [meals@ethocare.org](mailto:meals@ethocare.org) | (617) 477-6606

# COMMUNITY CAFÉS

## INFORMATION AND POLICIES

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At Ethos, we believe a sense of community is as vital to life as food and shelter. That's why all Boston Elder Nutrition Program Community Cafés overseen by Ethos are meant to be comfortable, familiar surroundings where elders can spend time with friends new and old while sharing a healthy, nutritious meal.

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### REGISTRATION & ATTENDANCE

- Community Café participants will be asked to complete a registration form. This form collects demographic information which is kept strictly confidential and is only shared with the Age Strong Commission, the agency that administers the funding for this program.
  - There are no obligations when you fill out a registration form.
  - Continued funding depends on the submission of registration forms to the Age Strong Commission.
  - How often you attend is up to you. You may want to participate daily or just when there is a special event.
  - Anyone may attend who is over 60 years of age or lives in a building that has a Community Café.
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### MEAL RESERVATIONS

- A menu is posted prior to the beginning of the new month so that members can review what the meal is for each day and decide for which days to reserve a meal.
- Reservations must be submitted to the Café Coordinator by Tuesday of the week before so that the food orders can be given to our vendors.
- All members who have reserved a meal will be served first. If you forgot to order a meal as a member, you may still receive one, provided there is a cancellation and left over food.

### IMPORTANT FOOD POLICIES

- Federal funding and city food safety regulations require that all food be consumed at the Community Café within two hours of delivery.
- Only milk and some desserts may be taken from the Café. Any food that is left over after the meal has been served must be discarded.

\*There is a suggested donation of \$2.00 per meal unless otherwise noted. All contributions are voluntary and confidential. **No one will be denied service for an inability to make a donation.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMMUNITY CAFÉS**

**To RSVP at any café location:**

**[www.ethocare.org](http://www.ethocare.org) | [meals@ethocare.org](mailto:meals@ethocare.org) | (617) 477-6606**

# HOW YOU CAN HELP

## GET INVOLVED

Small actions can make a big difference in the lives of the elderly and disabled. As an Ethos volunteer or donor you can share the gift of your kindness, company and generosity to enrich others' lives and your own.

### GET INVOLVED

**Refer** Know someone who will benefit from the Nutrition program, services, and social groups?

**Volunteer** Do you want to impact the lives of the city's elders?

**Donate** You make our programs happen!

### DETAILS

- Donate securely online or by mail. Flexible payment methods available.
- You decide when, where and how you volunteer. Choose hours that fit your schedule.
- Training and supervision build your confidence and skills.
- Contact Ethos about internships and group and corporate volunteer activities.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

To donate, volunteer or learn more about Ethos programs, visit **[www.ethocare.org](http://www.ethocare.org)** or call **617.522.6700**

**Ethos**

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Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
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[www.ethocare.org](http://www.ethocare.org)