

# Interfaith Caregivers & Meals on Wheels Collaboration

■ By Janet Zito of ICGMC

When it comes to serving older adults in Mercer County, caring extends well beyond local agency lines. During a recent Office on Aging/Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) director's meeting, Interfaith Caregivers of Greater Mercer County's (ICGMC) Interim Executive Director, Janet Zito, met Meals on Wheels of Mercer County's (MOWMC) Chief Operating Officer, Beth Englezos. ICGMC matches volunteers with local older adults and adults with disabilities to provide free non-medical services such as friendly visits, help with grocery shopping, and transportation to medical appointments. Realizing that MOWMC has a large clientele in Trenton, an area where ICGMC knows their services are greatly needed, a plan emerged. Ms. Englezos provided information on the Trenton MOWMC distribution routes while ICGMC volunteers prepared small gifts of warm scarves and information about ICGMC's services. MOWMC volunteers distributed the gifts and information during their regular meal service.

"Interfaith Caregivers and Meals on Wheels both have similar clients, so it just made sense to work together to help as many people as possible," said Ms. Zito.

Two weeks later, ICMGC had the opportunity to work with another Mercer County ADRC program, Mt. Carmel Guild, and its executive director, Mary Inkrot. ICGMC and Mt.

Carmel Guild have worked in partnership for years, as Mt. Carmel Guild provides in-home nursing services, a service needed by some of ICGMC's clients. "Our volunteers provide non-medical services, although our clients sometimes need a hand with medical services as well. In that case, we often refer them to Mt. Carmel Guild and vice versa," said Ms. Zito.

Every Thanksgiving, ICGMC distributes food baskets and grocery gift cards to some of their clients who are experiencing financial need. ICGMC volunteers and staff picked up food generously donated through Mt. Carmel Guild and prepared it for volunteers to deliver. These Thanksgiving deliveries were able to reach the kitchen tables of many who might not have any other way to receive them. The gratitude expressed by the recipients speaks to the invaluable work accomplished by this effort!

These examples of collaborations among Mercer County agencies, nonprofits, and volunteers depict this community's dedication to caring for the vulnerable. Together we are a mighty force! Thank you to the Mercer County Office on Aging/ADRC, Meals on Wheels of Mercer County, Mt. Carmel Guild, and all the wonderful people who volunteer to serve their neighbors in need!



# Statewide Respite Care Program

## Services To Provide Short-Term, Intermittent Relief to New Jersey's Caregivers

Caring for anyone is a huge job. The Statewide Respite Care Program offers services to the person who needs care so that you, the caregiver, has respite - that much needed break.



- Interfaith Caregivers of Greater Mercer County volunteers and staff worked together with Meals on Wheels of Mercer County to prepare and deliver Thanksgiving to many who needed it!

Let us give you *a Hand*

To learn more or start the application process, please contact the Mercer County Office on Aging / Aging and Disability Resource Connection at (609) 989-6661 or [ADRC@mercercounty.org](mailto:ADRC@mercercounty.org).