



December 2025 Update & History of Meals on Wheels, a Program of the Montgomery County Free Clinic

Since its inception 56 years ago, Meals on Wheels has operated as an arm of the Board of the Christian Nursing Service (CNS), which later dissolved and became the MCFC. According to Bill Doemel, long-time volunteer executive director of MCFC: "In 1969, the Rev. Charlotte Hotop Zachary and Dr. Mary Ludwig recognized an existing need to provide at-home meals for home-bound residents in Crawfordsville. These visionary leaders negotiated with the local hospital to prepare the meals, and they organized volunteers to package and deliver them." The program also received strong support from local churches. In the earliest days of the program, Dr. Ludwig said, "the cost was minimal and if a person could not pay, then CNS subsidized the meal".

In 2009, the CNS reorganized as the MCFC. MCFC negotiated the continuation of meal preparation with the hospital and received MOW-designated donations that provided funds for shortfalls when clients could not pay. In 2012, the Montgomery Country Free Clinic, Inc., opened the new Dr. Mary Ludwig Free Clinic at 816 Mill Street and began providing medical and dental services to the uninsured of Montgomery County. MCFC continued its dedication to MOW, while still relying upon churches and other teams of volunteers to pack and deliver these meals.

Coordination of all MOW volunteers moved in-house in December of 2025, managed by the executive director of the MCFC. We hold ample reserves from generous donors that allow us to administer the program, and, beginning January 1, 2025, the cost-to-client of daily meals will be subsidized by MCFC. We will continue to work with the dedicated team at Franciscan Health who prepares physician-prescribed meals (e.g., low salt, low sugar) five days a week. We are extremely grateful to the dozens of volunteers who make this program a success!

To learn more or you wish to join our amazing volunteer corp as a packer or driver, please visit mcfreeclinic.org/meals-on-wheels. Any questions should be directed to Ashley Menard, Executive Director of MCFC at 765-362-3244 or via email to ashley.menard@mcfreeclinic.org. You can also contact Ashley, if you would like to sign up a loved one for Meals on Wheels.