



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

# SENIOR DINING

## ***A DAY OF JOY AND CONNECTIONS AT POND VIEW ESTATES***

On Tuesday, January 28th, a group of students from Trex North School visited Pond View Estates in Albany, organized by Sandy Baldwin, group leader, and in collaboration with Catholic Charities in St. Cloud. Julie Ueland, the student advisor, helped oversee the project to ensure everything went smoothly. Pond View Estates is a Senior Dining Congregate Kitchen, where seniors gather to enjoy meals and socialize, making it a perfect environment for students to connect with the residents.

When the students arrived, the residents were delighted by the energy and enthusiasm they brought. The students got to work helping the seniors create Valentine's cards before lunch. The atmosphere was filled with creativity and laughter as everyone worked together to make colorful and thoughtful cards. Afterward, the group enjoyed lunch together, where the dining hall was full of lively conversation. The students interacted with the seniors, hearing their stories and building connections. The visit bridged generations, fostering meaningful and joyful interactions.

The highlight of the day was the bingo game that followed lunch, where excitement filled the room as the numbers were called. Friendly competition brought plenty of laughs, especially when someone was just one number away from winning, only for another participant to grab the prize first. The fun, camaraderie, and shared moments left everyone smiling.

A few standout interactions included Joseph and Riley spending time with resident Victor Tschida, and Tianna sharing a special moment with resident Ken Bunger. These connections highlighted the deep impact of intergenerational friendships. For many of the residents, the visit from the students was an unexpected but cherished experience, reminding everyone of the importance of making time for one another. It was a beautiful day of fostering community, connection, and kindness.

As the students prepared to leave, there was a sense of fulfillment in the air. Not only had the day brightened the seniors' lives, but it also left a lasting impression on the students, who gained a deeper understanding of the joy that comes from spending quality time with others.

The day ended with smiles, hugs, and promises to return, a reminder of how powerful and meaningful human connection can be.

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Thank you for supporting Catholic Charities.***





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# SENIOR DINING

## ***DON'S STORY: A LEGACY OF SERVICE WITH MEALS ON WHEELS***

At Catholic Charities, we are constantly inspired by the dedication of volunteers like Don, who give selflessly to help those in need. Don joined the Meals on Wheels program in Mora in March 2023, and since then, he has become a valued member of our volunteer team. Driving through all kinds of weather, Don delivers meals to homebound, at-risk seniors, ensuring they receive the nutritious meals they need and the kindness they deserve.

Don, a retired licensed independent clinical social worker, has always felt a deep calling to serve others. For him, helping people is more than a job, it's a lifelong duty. He says, "This duty to serve never ends. I will continue to help humanity as long as I'm here on Earth." Don's commitment to helping others is reflected in his volunteer work with Meals on Wheels, where he's already logged over 140 hours of service.

Meals on Wheels delivers nutritious noon-hour meals to seniors aged 60 and older who are homebound or have difficulty shopping and preparing meals. In 44 communities across central Minnesota, volunteers like Don ensure these vulnerable individuals don't go without a healthy meal. The program provides more than just food—it also offers a much-needed connection for seniors, many of whom may be isolated at home.

Through his volunteer work, Don has made a meaningful impact on the lives of the seniors he serves. His dedication to this program exemplifies the values we hold dear at Catholic Charities—compassion, care, and service to others. We are grateful for volunteers like Don, whose commitment continues to make a difference in the lives of those in need.

Meals on Wheels is a vital service for seniors, helping to meet their nutritional needs while providing a daily check-in. The program serves seniors who are low-income, homebound, or recovering from illness or injury, and Don's hard work ensures they are supported in their time of need.

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# Senior Dining Program

Catholic Charities Senior Dining provides nutritious meals to persons age 60 and over, helping seniors lead independent lives and age in place with dignity.




Catholic Charities receives partial funding from Central MN Council on Aging and Title III OAA Funding, along with funding from United Way, local communities and diner contributions. These funds are used to provide nutritious meals to seniors and promote wellness through social interaction and connection to other services.


**Minnesota's rural seniors are at great risk of food insecurity and social isolation.** When programs like Catholic Charities sees a reduction in funding, the seniors we can no longer serve have very few alternatives. **Our goal is to help seniors age in place with dignity and independence.**

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### Congregate Dining

  - Congregate dining provides nutritious noon-hour meals to persons age 60+.
  - We have group dining and Meals on Wheels services in **47 communities** across Central Minnesota.
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### Frozen Meal Distribution

  - Frozen meals are intended for seniors 60 or older, low income (at or below the poverty line), in need of nutritional support, and have difficulty preparing or shopping for their own meals.
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### Meals on Wheels

  - Catholic Charities Meals on Wheels delivers meals to persons who are homebound or in need of rehabilitation time from surgery or illness. Volunteer drivers provide critical social interaction.

+ 1,753 seniors were served hot meals in 2024.

+ 279,649 hot and frozen meals were delivered in 2024.

## More Than Just A Meal



Senior Dining offers more than just a meal – we provide a nurturing environment that fosters friendships and a sense of belonging. Roberta, a Senior Dining Coordinator for 15 years, has witnessed the powerful impact of our services at the Grasston and Mora locations.

A woman who recently suffered a stroke faced significant challenges, but she was determined to regain her independence. After her therapy sessions, she and her husband would come to Senior Dining, where they found not only a meal but a circle of support.

Every visit, a group of women diners would greet them with warm smiles, helping with her jacket and meal. Over time, the woman's strength and independence began to improve. The therapy sessions and unwavering support of her new friends at Senior Dining, made a significant difference in her recovery.

The couple maintains their deep friendships with the group of women they met at Senior Dining. Even in their 90s, they continue to get together, reminiscing about the meals that sustained them, the friendships that uplifted them, and the kindness that made all the difference.

**For Roberta, this story is a reminder of the true essence of her work. It's not just about coordinating meals – it's about creating a community where people care for one another, lifting each other up in times of need.**



**Contact Catholic Charities  
for more information:**

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[www.ccstcloud.org/senior-dining](http://www.ccstcloud.org/senior-dining)



# Senior Dining Program



## Catholic Charities Senior Dining 2024 By the Numbers

**5,294**

Seniors served.

**351,150**

Meals served.

**14**

Counties served.

County	Seniors Served	Meals Served
Benton	111	9,023
Cass	48	3,820
Chisago	304	19,741
Crow Wing	469	33,254
Isanti	154	14,970

County	Seniors Served	Meals Served
Kanabec	229	20,146
Mille Lacs	235	20,382
Morrison	126	12,584
Pine	299	33,193
Sherburne	697	58,451

County	Seniors Served	Meals Served
Stearns	1,498	95,476
Todd	171	13,935
Wadena	53	6,935
Wright	422	35,312



### What's at stake if Federal Funding is drastically reduced or frozen:

Seniors age 60 and older would lose access to 5,200 meals per week, including more than 500 homebound seniors served through Catholic Charities Senior Dining.

**Catholic Charities Senior Dining  
funding for 2025 has been reduced by**

**\$526,027**

**Catholic Charities Senior Dining  
funding for 2025 has been reduced by**

**117,493 meals**



Senior nutrition is essential to support older adults who wish to live independently. Meals and rides help seniors live with dignity in their own homes.



Budget cuts have increased the unmet needs of seniors in Minnesota as providers across the state are closing dining sites and cutting meals.



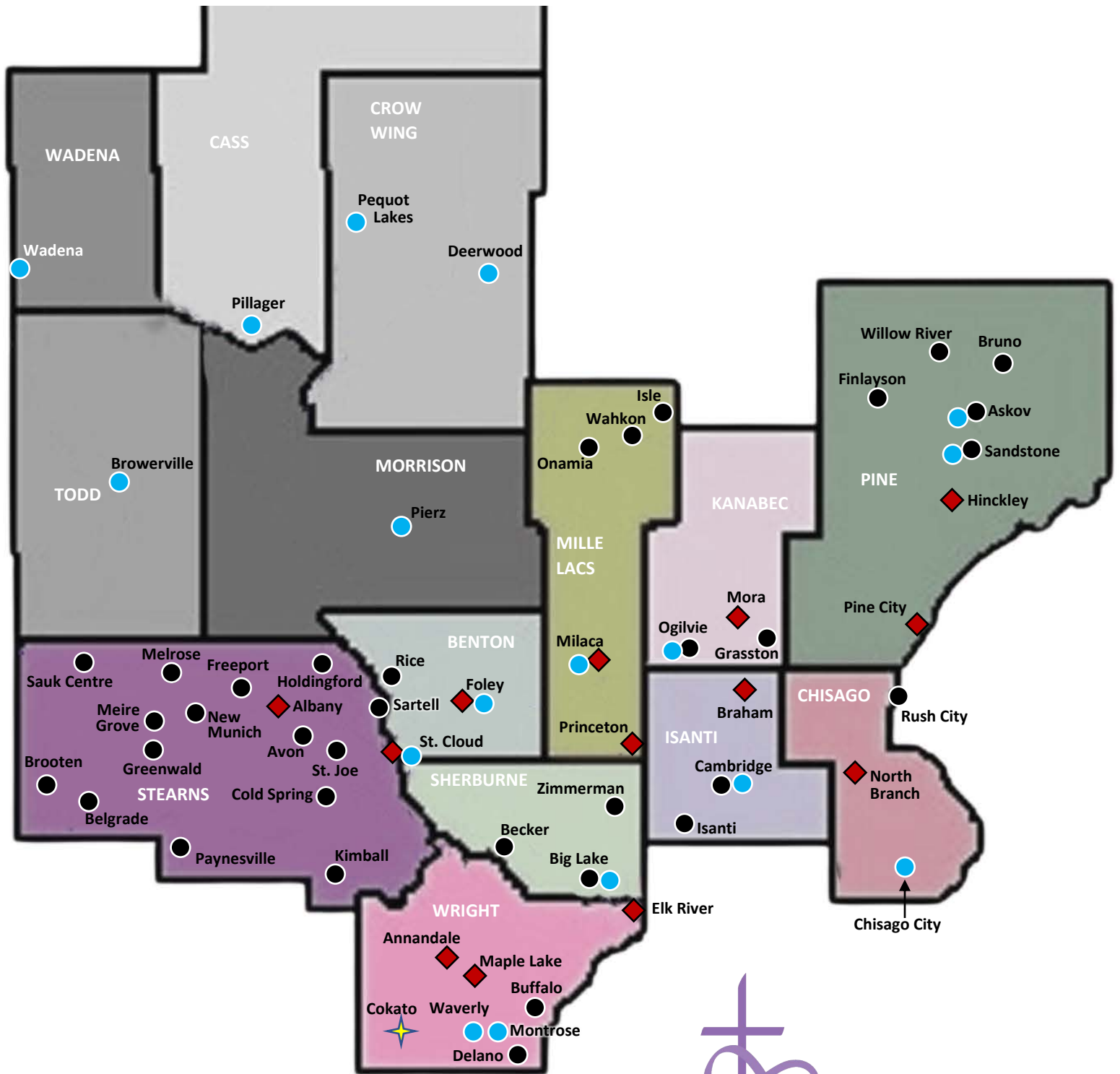
Seniors in rural Minnesota are at higher risk of social isolation and have access to fewer food programs than those in the metro area.



According to AARP, older adults on average stop driving at age 75. This places them at risk of isolation and loss of food access. Transportation services are in short supply across Minnesota and the need is growing.

## Preventing or slowing down Seniors spend down to Medicaid

According to Genworth MN, nursing home care is about \$171,000 a year for a room. The MN Department of Human Services reports that a majority of seniors who enter assisted living or nursing home care transfer to Medicaid within one month. By elevating the needs of community dwelling seniors we can also prevent or slow their spend down to Medicaid which benefits the state.



 Congregate Dining Only

 Congregate Dining and Meals on Wheels

 Meals on Wheels Only

 Frozen Meal Distribution

**Catholic Charities Senior Dining**  
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