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National Campaign to End Senior Hunger

Neighborly Care Network to host Mayors For Meals in Pinellas County

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (February 21, 2011) – For the 5th year, Neighborly Care Network is hosting Pinellas County’s “Mayors For Meals”, a day dedicated to combating senior hunger. As part of the national *March for Meals* campaign sponsored by Meals on Wheels Association of America (MOWAA), mayors and other dignitaries across the United States will deliver meals to homebound seniors on Wednesday, March 23.

March For Meals seeks to raise awareness for senior hunger and to encourage action on the part of the local community. Senior nutrition programs across the United States, like Neighborly Care Network, promote *March for Meals* in their local communities through public events, partnerships with local businesses, volunteer recruitment and fundraising initiatives during the month of March. “Mayors for Meals” is just one component of the *March for Meals* campaign.

Some of last years’ participants include Mayor Bill Foster of St. Petersburg; Mayor Jimmy Johnson of Seminole; Mayor Bill Mischler of Pinellas Park; Mayor Kathleen Peters of South Pasadena; Vice-Mayor Michele King of Gulfport, and Commissioner Karen Seel of Pinellas County. This year’s turnout is expected to be bigger and better than years past.

“We are excited about having so many of our local dignitaries participate in our event. We hope to raise awareness and recruit as many people as we possibly can to join us in the national movement to end senior hunger by 2020,” says Debra Shade, President and CEO of Neighborly Care Network, which operates Meals on Wheels in Pinellas County.

Because the local campaign has been so successful, MOWAA has awarded Neighborly Care Network top honors five years consecutively, receiving a check each year between \$1,500 and \$2,000. Neighborly’s “Mayors for Meals” campaign stands apart because of the amount of Mayors located within Pinellas County. With 23 Mayors, Neighborly has spent a lot of time and effort coordinating more routes, volunteers and dignitaries. **This year, ninety-three dignitaries are invited to participate in this year’s “Mayors For Meals” program including the Governor and council members from each city.**

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On the day of, participants will pick-up food chests at the Neighborly Care Network Meals on Wheels site closest to their office. The dignitaries will shuttle meals to pre-assigned homes, which is between 12-15 stops, and return the chests to the dining sites. Delivers will be made between 10:30 a.m. and noon. **Participants may drive their own vehicles, accompanied by a Neighborly volunteer or staff member, and possibly a media representative; or, they may ride with a Neighborly volunteer or staff member.**

Neighborly Care Network at-a glance:

Since 1966, Neighborly Care Network has provided home- and community-based services to the elderly in Pinellas County so they may live independently in their own homes. A pioneer in eldercare services, Neighborly started the first federally funded Meals on Wheels program, as well as the first Adult Day Care in the nation. Some other life-sustaining programs include Nutrition Services, Transportation Services, Medicare Home Health, and the nationally innovative Neighborly Pharmacy. Shoppe Around the Corner offers unique gift and home décor items, with the proceeds benefiting Meals on Wheels. If you have a loved one in need of long term care, the Neighborly PACE Center is dedicated to helping you keep your loved one safe and comfortable at home while receiving the care they need. PACE services include primary and specialty care, hospitalization and emergency care, social work services, prescriptions, adult day centers, transportation, meals, in-home support and care, physical and occupational therapies, and more. Neighborly also offers a variety of volunteer opportunities. For information, call 727-573-9444 or visit www.Neighborly.org.

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