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**MEDIA ADVISORY**

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***Holiday Meals on Wheels receives \$40,000 from Ford Motor Company Fund to sponsor 11,000 meals for metro Detroit homebound seniors on holidays***

***93 year-old volunteer Victor Getter who has delivered meals for 20 years, will deliver on Thanksgiving along with almost 1,200 volunteers from Ford Motor Company and other corporations***

Detroit, MI--Over the past 20-year history of the Holiday Meals on Wheels program, the Detroit Area Agency on Aging has been able to feed over 20,000 metro Detroit homebound seniors annually on holidays, as a result of support from individuals and major corporations. This year, Ford Motor Company Fund is donating \$40,000 to feed close to 11,000 local elderly on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

"When the Detroit Area Agency on Aging, which runs the Meals on Wheels program in Southeast Michigan, told us they did not have funding to feed thousands of senior shut-ins on Thanksgiving and Christmas, we jumped at the chance to help," said Jim Vella, President, Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services. "It's more important than ever, during these difficult times, that we join together to help and support everyone in our community, as best we can. I'm especially proud of Ford employees and retirees who have volunteered their time on a holiday to deliver meals to seniors in need."

The Detroit Area Agency on Aging *Holiday Meals on Wheels* program's 1,170 volunteers will pack, distribute and individually deliver fresh-cooked, hot nutritious meals to 5,500 homebound seniors in metro Detroit on Thanksgiving Day. Starting Thursday morning at 6 a.m., they will package the hot food portion of the meal for distribution to 12 sites where delivery of individual meals starts at approximately 8:30 a.m. until all the meals are delivered around 10 a.m. The packing occurs at Valley Services, 1980 Bagley in Detroit at the corner of Rosa Parks Blvd.(old 12<sup>th</sup> Street) south of Michigan Avenue, near old Tiger Stadium and old Corktown.

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Through the Detroit Area Agency on Aging *Detroit Meals on Wheels*, a federal and state funded program, meals are delivered to seniors five days a week. Unfortunately, there are no public funds to feed metro Detroit area homebound seniors during weekends and holidays. In 1988 Detroit Area Agency on Aging, under the leadership of Paul Bridgewater, joined the national campaign and created the *Holiday Meals on Wheels (HMOW)* program, adopting the slogan that “*Hunger Takes No Holiday*” to feed seniors who would otherwise go hungry on holidays.

“In these difficult economic times, we are fortunate that the Ford Motor Company Fund recognized the need to feed our homebound senior population helping the community’s elderly to live independently and with dignity. The Holiday Meals on Wheels meal and volunteer may be the only food and company they will have on the holiday. This year we have more volunteers than ever from corporations helping to pack and deliver thousands of meals. It’s reflective of how the business community is joining with organizations to help the elderly and less fortunate,” said Paul Bridgewater, Detroit Area Agency on Aging President & CEO.

“Over the past 20 years since I started the program we have had some outstanding volunteers. One volunteer who has not missed a holiday is Victor Getter. This 93-year-old has always helped people, not just in this program, but in the neighborhood. We can always depend on him to drive his truck.”

After retiring, Victor started working as a truck driver for HMOW delivering hundreds of hot meals to the various distribution sites. He enables hundreds of volunteers to pick-up the meals and deliver individually to thousands of homebound seniors. Currently he is volunteering to deliver meals for New Light Baptist Church Annex at Chicago and Grand River, one of the 12 sites used to distribution HMOW. He also volunteers with other major events. Victor has been a volunteer with the Grand Prix from its concept and the Thunder Fest Boat Race since 1945. Next month, he plans to go to Wayne State University for an adult computer class.

At present, HMOW feeds between 3,500 to 5,700 seniors each Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and Labor Day. These holiday meals are made possible by a grassroots campaign that raises private contributions. Hundreds of Detroit Area Agency on Aging employees, employees of other companies, partnering organizations, corporations, churches and individuals sell holiday greeting cards for \$5 each. For every card, a homebound senior is fed through this program.

Thousands of hot, nutritious HMOW meals, along with a beverage, bread and dessert are delivered by hundreds of volunteers who help to pack and deliver holiday meals to a dozen distribution sites where other volunteers deliver individual complete meals to the home of each senior.

To volunteer for the Christmas Day delivery or make a donation, call (313) 446-4444..>>

***Detroit Area Agency on Aging Holiday Meals on Wheels 2008 Thanksgiving Day  
delivery distribution sites:***

- **All Saints Church, 3837 W. Seven Mile Road, Detroit**
- **Detroit Association of Women's Clubs, 5461 Brush Street, Detroit**
- **Franklin Wright Settlements, 3360 Charlevoix, Detroit**
- **Christ Church, 960 East Jefferson Avenue, Detroit**
- **Alpha Phi Alpha /King Solomon's Lodge, 9840 Dexter, Detroit**
- **New Light Baptist Church Annex, 9550 Grand River Avenue, Detroit**
- **New Prospect Missionary Baptist Church, 19951 Livernois Avenue, Detroit**
- **Bridging Communities, 6900 McGraw Street, Detroit**
- **S.O.C./Neighborhood Club, 17150 Waterloo, Grosse Pointe Woods**
- **El Bethel Church, 25295 Grand River, Detroit**
- **12<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church, 1840 Midland, Detroit**
- **Neighborhood Service Organization (NSO) -The Harper/Gratiot Multi-service Center, 9641 Harper Street, Detroit**

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