



Visiting Homemaker

Home Health Aide Service of Bergen County, Inc.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHEER Program's 200 Word Essay Wins Grant Money to Help Local Seniors in Need

Subaru's "Share the Love Event" inspires sharing stories of bringing food and compassion to local seniors

Hackensack, NJ (November 24, 2010) – Visiting Homemaker Home Health Aide Service of Bergen County's CHEER Program has just won \$500 from the Meals On Wheels Association of America (MOWAA)/Subaru "Share the Love" grant program. The winning essay, which follows this news release, describes how CHEER brought volunteers into its program to make sure that frail seniors would continue to receive grocery shopping services despite severe budgetary challenges. CHEER is now entering the next phase of the holiday competition – which relies on getting the most Facebook users to "Like" our story. Winning that portion of the contest could earn this Meals On Wheels program up to an additional \$500.

The money comes at a critical time for this Meals On Wheels program, and the more than 140 other grant winners nationwide. The country's economic downturn has made it more difficult to raise money to continue feeding our community's homebound and other hungry seniors. CHEER plans to use the money to extend service to people who need assistance but are currently on the program's waiting list.

The MOWAA/Subaru "Share the Love" grant is tied to Subaru's *Share the Love Event*. The *Share the Love Event* will run from November 20, 2010 – January 3, 2011. Subaru will donate \$250 for every new Subaru vehicle sold or leased to the customer's choice of one of five charities, including MOWAA. For more information about Subaru's *Share the Love Event*, follow [this link](#).

"These Meals On Wheels programs share love every day by bringing food and companionship to America's hungry seniors," said MOWAA President and CEO Enid Borden. "For the third year in a row Subaru has generously included Meals On Wheels in its *Share the Love Event*. We want the world to read these stories and find out more about what these amazing Meals On Wheels programs do every day to 'Share the Love' in their communities."

Visiting Homemaker Executive Director, Gail Ryan, acknowledged the honor: "We are grateful to be recognized by the Meals On Wheels Association of America (MOWAA)/Subaru "Share the Love" grant program. Our CHEER Program truly does "Share the Love." CHEER aides and volunteers bring essential groceries to frail elderly people. But they also bring much more. They bring a smile, a link to the outside world, and assurance that someone cares."

The next phase of this competition relies on getting the most Facebook users to "Like" this story. More than 140 "Share the Love" essays from programs across the country have been posted on MOWAA's [Member blog](#). The Meals On Wheels program with the most "Likes" will win an additional \$500. Those placing 2nd through 10th will receive an additional \$250. To "Like" the local essay submitted for this Facebook contest, go to mowaablog.org and search "CHEER Program."

CHEER provides weekly visits by trained aides and volunteers who help with tasks that are too difficult for their elderly clients. CHEER aides routinely do grocery shopping, run errands, do the laundry, and change bed linens. Their services make it possible for clients to benefit from good nutrition and remain living safely and comfortably at home. CHEER aides also perform another valuable service for people who are isolated—they serve as spotters who identify problems and get help before crises develop.

CHEER is the flagship program of Visiting Homemaker Home Health Aide Service of Bergen County. Since 1954, the agency has been serving the frail elderly and sick or disabled members of the community and enabling them to retain their independence. Visiting Homemaker is a non-profit agency that provides home care services to people of all ages who need assistance in order to remain living at home. It provides high quality, individualized services including certified home health aides, companions, grocery shopping, errand and light housekeeping services, special occasion care, and other customized and supported services to people throughout Bergen County.

For further information about CHEER or the agency's other services or to request assistance contact Gail Ryan, Executive Director, 201-488-0041, ext. 23, ryan@vhsbc.com.

About Meals On Wheels Association of America

The Meals On Wheels Association of America (MOWAA) is the oldest and largest national organization in the United States representing those programs that provide meals to people in need. MOWAA's mission is to end senior hunger by 2020. To obtain more information about MOWAA or to locate a local Meals On Wheels program, visit the MOWAA website at www.mowaa.org.

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CHEER PROGRAM'S WINNING 200 WORD ESSAY:

VOLUNTEERS "SHARING THE LOVE"

Like Meals on Wheels, our CHEER Program's focus is on serving the frail elderly in their homes. Visiting Homemaker Home Health Aide Service deals with real life issues that impact the ability of isolated seniors over age 60 to live from day-to-day at home.

As CHEER Program Director, I feel the CHEER Program is "Sharing the Love" everyday by bringing groceries to seniors to supplement the nutritious meal they may also be receiving from MOW.

For over 40 years, a Bergen County grant has funded ten employees who serve our CHEER clients with grocery shopping and light housekeeping tasks. Five years ago, with no funding increase in sight and a growing wait list, a volunteer component was added.

Our 30 volunteers serve an additional 60 seniors a month with grocery shopping services. Our wait list has been reduced and we also help spread the word about MOW. Our volunteers are "Sharing the Love" every day with seniors by providing a friendly visit, relief from isolation, and needed groceries. Both MOW and CHEER volunteers provide the support network seniors in our communities need to remain safe and independent at home.

Michele Ogden
CHEER Program Director
11/5/2010