

**More than a Meal!**

# Introduction

Shannon Draayer,  
Executive Director Community Nutrition,  
WesleyLife

- I Live in Des Moines, Iowa
- I Attended Iowa State University and Drake University
- I have two kiddos and a husband
- Enjoy being outside and active!



# Agenda

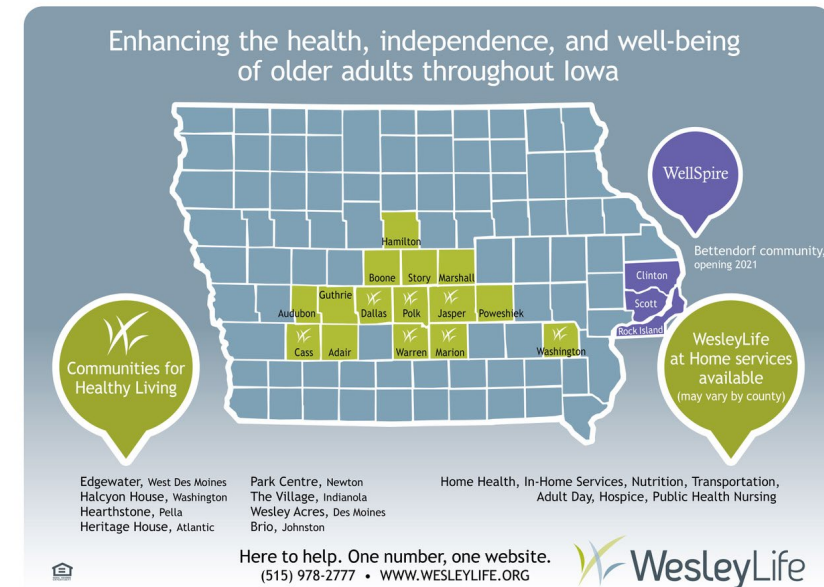
- Get to Know WesleyLife Meals on Wheels
- How Partnerships Have Enhanced our Innovative Approach

We'll discuss how to :

1. Utilize local expertise and relationships for a successful capital campaign.
2. Identify opportunities to expand services and leverage key partners.
3. Develop relationships beyond nutrition services to support your mission.

# About WesleyLife

- **1947**: Founded by the Iowa United Methodist Conference. Pioneered continuing-care retirement communities (CCRCs) in Iowa.
- Growth and expansion to multi-site with locations throughout Iowa
- **2005**: Evolved to a full-continuum aging services provider with transitional care, home health, hospice, adult day, transportation, nutrition, and community-based wellness.
- **Today**: Transforming to a health and well-being organization focus on revolutionizing the experience of aging.



# About Meals on Wheels

- Largest non-profit provider of home-delivered meals in the state of Iowa.
- WesleyLife has operated Meals on Wheels for 18 years.
- Nearly 2,000 hot, nutritious meals a day to older adults and veterans in Polk & Dallas counties.
- A major differentiator: home-delivered meals; our safety checks connect participants, improve well-being, and save lives.



# Who We Serve

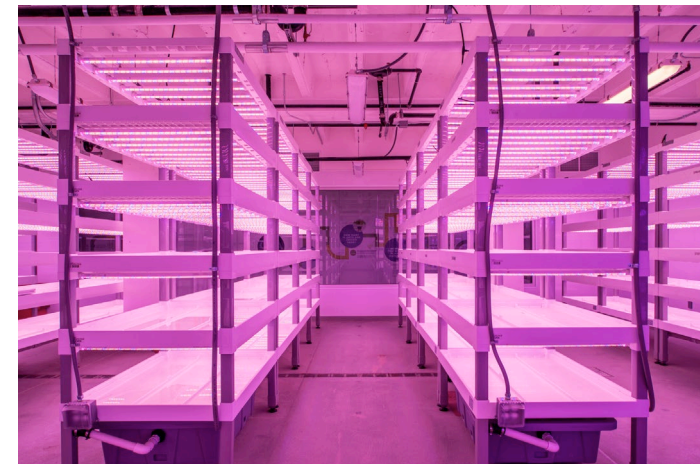
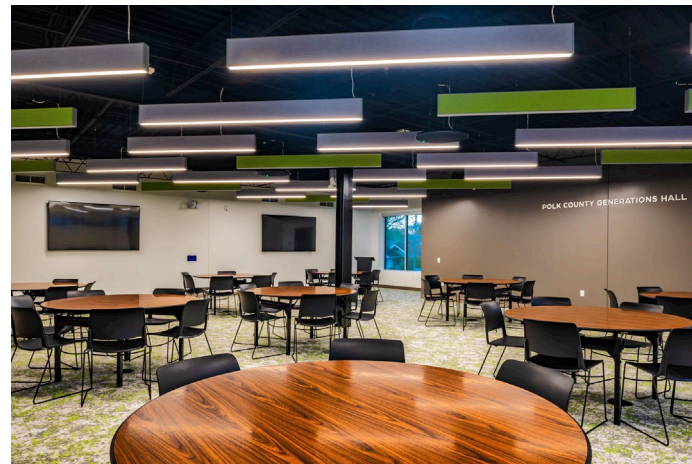
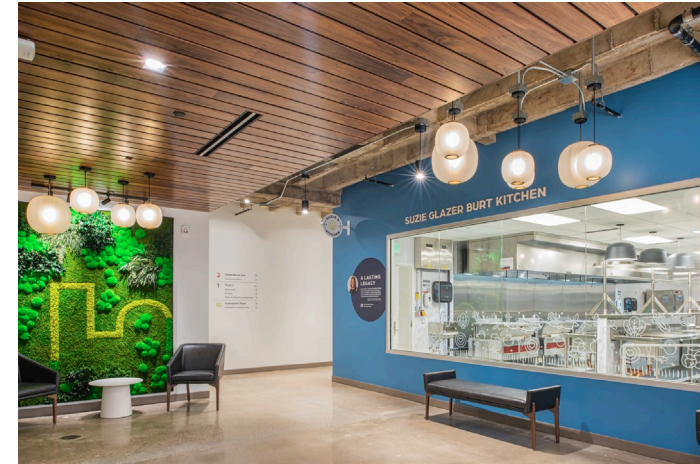
- Food Insecurity
  - 80% of clients live at/below 185% of federal poverty rate (\$27,000/year fixed income).
- Social Isolation
  - 43% of older adults feel lonely. 69% of those we serve live alone; most are women. Average client age is 76.
- Well-Being
  - Reduces hospitalizations by an average of 39%.
  - Since 2016, wellness checks have saved 3-7 lives a year.





# New Campus Completed in Late 2023

- Tripling Meal Capacity with new kitchen
- Fresh Food through Prairie Meadows Hydroponic Farm
- Connecting generations
- Public awareness and connection to mission, the need



# Enhancing our Mission through Partnerships



# Utilize local expertise and relationships for a successful capital campaign.



# Historic Capital Campaign

- The Largest Campaign in WesleyLife History
- Focused on three things: Food Insecurity, Social Isolation, Well-Being
- Funding from every level of government: Federal, State, County and City
  - Thank you to the Association for Community Living (ACL) for your commitment to this important project!
- Volunteer Fundraising Committee

# Ongoing Recognition and Stewardship

- Ensuring a positive and ongoing experience
- Reminder of the impact, personalize it
- What's in it for them?



**Identify opportunities to expand services and leverage key partners.**





# Why Hydroponics at Meals on Wheels?



- Improve nutritional quality of meals, Health and Well-Being of our clients
- Those most at risk often have the least access to fresh, locally grown produce.
- To combat hunger and support the well-being of those we serve, WesleyLife launched the Prairie Meadows Hydroponic Farm, the nation's only hydroponic operation affiliated with a Meals on Wheels program.

# About our Farm



- 3,000+-square-foot indoor farm growing leafy greens to support WesleyLife's meals
- Operates year-round to provide fresh produce including various leafy greens and herbs
- Can produce up to 20,000 pounds of produce each year
- Greens provided to Meals on Wheels and WesleyLife communities; retail sales to support our mission



# Benefits of Hydroponics



- Local Agriculture
- Consistent Production
- Less Waste, Transit
- More Phytonutrients
- Niche and Culturally Appropriate Products

# From Seed to Fork



**Seeding &  
Germination:  
1 Week**



**Transplant & Growth :  
2-3 Weeks**



**Harvest,  
Package**



**The Wesley  
Blend**

# Early Successes

- Wesley Blend Greens
  - 3,000 Pounds harvested
  - 20,000 Meals on Wheels Meals
- Educational Opportunities
- Give Back Greens
  - [fill in the blank with number of pounds]  
Pounds donated
- Food Security and Emergency Response





# Outreach - Get Involved!

- Visit Us: 3206 University Ave. Des Moines, Iowa
- Hydroponics Lectures and community open houses
- Connection with local high schools
- Partner with area non-profits
- Volunteer Opportunities



# Develop relationships beyond nutrition services to support your mission.





# Polk County Generations Hall

- Focus on Intergenerational Connections
- Events with Drake University, AARP, others





# Hugo's Wood Fired Kitchen

- Showcase the need to a new audience
- Mission-oriented with give-back opportunities
- Well-known local restaurateur
- Offset expenses



Questions?