

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Sertoma Club Donates Freezer to Meals on Wheels Program**

The Sertoma Club of Faribault has donated a new freezer to Three Rivers Community Action, Inc. The freezer will provide storage space for frozen meals that will be delivered to homebound senior citizens and disabled residents of the community. The freezer was presented to Three Rivers on July 23 by Gary Lazarz, Sertoma Club's current vice president and its incoming president. The freezer has the capacity to hold 150 meals for participants in the Meals on Wheels program administered by the agency. Thirty recipients of the home-delivered meals will each receive five frozen lunches in one weekly delivery.

The Sertoma Club is a nonprofit organization dedicated to **SERVICE TO MANKIND** and Three Rivers is very grateful to Sertoma for its service to Meals on Wheels clients. The freezer has helped resolve the growing problem of a shrinking number of volunteer drivers who currently deliver fresh noon meals to disabled and frail elderly individuals Monday through Friday. The club's generosity will also help the program

serve people in more rural areas since drivers will need to make only one trip a week; with gas prices as they are it has become a hardship for some to make daily deliveries to people living any distance from the City. Three Rivers could not implement this program without the wonderful volunteers who are committed to service to the community, and this model of meeting homebound individuals' nutritional needs will lessen the burden on them as well. But, as always, Three Rivers is in need of more volunteers, even with this new approach.

Meals on Wheels is a vital resource for disabled people or those over 60 who, without the daily nutrition they receive from the already prepared meals, would likely need to move from their homes into assisted living facilities or nursing homes. There are very high quality frozen meals available today that are tasty and nutritious and need little in the way of preparation, a must for persons who are unable to do meal prep on their own or to get to a congregate dining site.

Joyce Grabowski, Rice County Senior Programs Coordinator, said "The generosity of the Sertoma Club will not only help feed many of our homebound in the community, it also gives Three Rivers Community Action the opportunity to utilize our volunteers more efficiently. As we look toward the future, particularly in today's economy, we must continue to explore innovative ideas to stretch our resources, continue to provide quality services, and improve the circumstances of our citizens, in this case often the most deserving and overlooked – the elderly."

Jill Mackey, outgoing President of the Sertoma Club, and others affiliated with the club, have served as volunteer drivers for the program. Mackey explained that the Sertoma Club is an international organization which focuses the majority of its work on

services for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. She said, however, that each chapter may use some of their resources for initiatives that serve the local community. As a volunteer driver, Mackey saw first-hand how the Meals on Wheels program makes a difference in the lives of participants. She was touched by how appreciative and happy to see her the participants always were, and by how good it made her feel to help in this capacity.

During last year's Christmas season, the Sertoma Club and Nelson's Market partnered to give gift certificates to people in the program so they could buy themselves or others something special, and when Grabowski made a personal appeal to the Club for the freezer, its members found it a perfect fit. Mackey said "We know that Three Rivers does a very good job of reaching out to and supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged community members and we want to support them. We get a lot of requests for donations and assistance, but it is not often that we get such a specific in-person request that allows us to get a real feel for how our assistance will help. Joyce's request had a big impact and as a group we decided helping the agency in this way was a priority."

For more information about Meals on Wheels or any of the many services Three Rivers offers, or to volunteer to deliver meals, call 507-333-6450.

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