Sunday dinner benefit planned to help those who can't pay.

"The eradication of hunger and malnutrition among American seniors and others in need,"—Meals on Wheels Association of America mission statement

Gladys and Earl Hudson like the delivery of a hot meal at noon.

"I don't have to cook," said Gladys with a laugh.

Earl said the food is good and what Gladys doesn't eat, he does.

"It's plentiful," he said.

The Hudsons' sons signed their aging parents up for the service about a year ago.

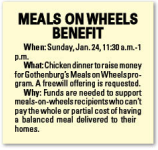
"It's a good program," Earl said. "The people who cook the meal and deliver it are wonderful people."

Gladys said a lot of older people wouldn't get a meal if the program wasn't available.

Keeping the Meals on Wheels program funded and alive is the reason for a benefit dinner

Sunday at the Senior Center.

“It’s to help those who can’t afford to pay for it,” said Kendra Fecht, president of the local Meals on Wheels organization. “We want to make sure all our seniors have a balanced, nutritious meal at least once a day.”



MEALS ON WHEELS BENEFIT

When: Sunday, Jan. 24, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

What: Chicken dinner to raise money for Gothenburg’s Meals on Wheels programs. A freewill offering is requested.

Why: Funds are needed to support meals-on-wheels recipients who can’t pay the whole or partial cost of having a balanced meal delivered to their homes.

Those who receive a noon meal on wheels receive the same nutritional fare, with dietary changes as needed, as people who eat at the Senior Center.

Under the program, Senior Center director Angie Barkmeier said the meal is delivered by volunteers to an average of 26 to 36 local residents each weekday.

In the evenings, on weekends and holidays, food is prepared at Hilltop Estates Care Center and delivered by their employees to about eight residents each week.

Hilltop senior services representative Michelle Hecox said the service means residents can continue to enjoy the convenience of nutritious, delivered meals.

“This is part of what makes Gothenburg a wonderful community to live in,” Hecox said.

Although most participants pay the cost of a meal and delivery— which is $4.25—some can’t.

In addition to senior citizens, Fecht said anyone who is convalescing or disabled can get a meal regardless of age.

Recipients are billed monthly and pay for weekly or part-time delivery of meals.

“Whatever they want,” she said.

For those who can’t afford the meals, other people sometimes pay for them, Barkmeier said, noting that the cost of a meal five days a week year round is $1,105.

Participants receive a balanced meal that follows United State Department of Agriculture guidelines, Barkmeier said.

Both Barkmeier and Fecht said they understand how it’s difficult to prepare a balanced meal if people are home alone.

“You’re probably not going to have a fruit, vegetable or protein,” Fecht said.

Barkmeier said a few more people need help to pay for Meals on Wheels this year.

Anyone wishing to donate to the program or who wants a meal delivered can contact Barkmeier at 537-7465.

Fecht added that buying a meal on wheels for a family member, neighbor or friend makes a great gift.

Barkmeier said people may even consider giving a gift of meals to people recovering from surgery and for the spouse who cares for them.

About the benefit Sunday, Fecht said it's quite popular.

"Although we prepare large amounts of food, we've had to turn people away because we've run out of food," she said. "It's so wonderfully accepted."

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