



PRESS ROOM – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Must! Charities Launches Transformative Partnership with Meals That Connect to Support Seniors in Need

Paso Robles, CA – October 2, 2025 – Must! Charities is proud to announce a new initiative in partnership with Meals That Connect to strengthen leadership, define strategy, and ensure long-term sustainability for one of San Luis Obispo County's most critical senior support programs. This effort comes at a pivotal time as demand for services surges and funding declines, leaving thousands of vulnerable older adults at risk.

Our community is aging rapidly, and with that growth comes an urgent responsibility to care for our seniors. Meals that Connect has long been a lifeline, delivering 200,000+ meals and wellness checks annually to over 2,200 seniors, most of whom are homebound and nearly 40% of whom live in poverty. But with a 26% increase in demand and a 20% drop in state and federal funding, the need for strengthened systems and leadership has never been more urgent.

"This partnership with Must! Charities comes at a critical time for our seniors. By strengthening our structure, we can address the reality that food insecurity is often the gateway to homelessness and ensure more older adults can age in place with dignity and stability. We are grateful for this investment that helps us protect our community's most vulnerable members," Laura Kelsay, Executive Director, Meals That Connect.

The initiative will provide Meals that Connect with coaching and planning support to:

- Build a stronger, more capable leadership team prepared to guide growth.
- Develop strategic clarity with a roadmap to align priorities and drive impact.
- Create a sustainable structure that strengthens internal systems and ensures stability.
- Expand partnerships that grow resources and reach.
- Maximize community impact so more seniors receive reliable meals, connection, and care.

"Meals That Connect is at a defining moment. Our partnership is an investment in strategic planning and leadership development that can help prepare for what's ahead, ensuring our seniors remain nourished, connected, and safe, today and for decades to come," said Randy Gray, Director of Community Investments, Must! Charities.

Through this collaboration, Meals That Connect will be better equipped to scale services responsibly, ensuring seniors not only receive essential nutrition and wellness checks but also the dignity of independence.

This investment means more than food on the table—it means preventing crises before they occur, reducing the risk of homelessness, and protecting the well-being of some of the community's most vulnerable members.

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About Must! Charities:

Must! Charities is a nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the model of philanthropy by uniting donors, pooling resources, and investing strategically in our region while empowering nonprofits and educating our community. From day one, we've stood by a bold promise: every dollar donated by the community goes directly to the causes we champion. This commitment is made possible through Must! Roots, a dedicated funding source that covers all operational expenses, ensuring community giving fuels nothing but impact.

Learn more at mustcharities.org