



THIS IS THE VOICE

of Hunger & Critical Illness



**COMMUNITY
SERVINGS**

DELIVERING MEALS
DELIVERING HOPE



This is the Voice of Hunger and Critical Illness

Community Servings is a food and nutrition program that has delivered over 6 million medically tailored meals to the critically ill over the past 25 years.

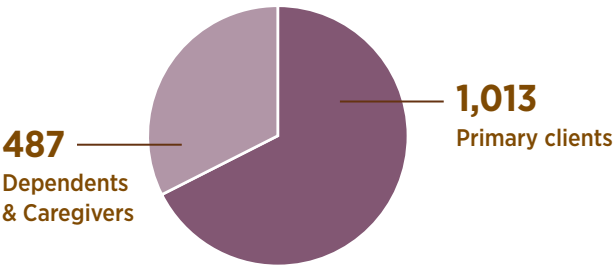
In addition to meals, we provide thousands of hours of nutrition education and support to our clients. We have made great strides in ensuring access to a medically tailored well-balanced diet for those who have reached a point in their illness where they are no longer able to provide food for themselves or their families.

The majority of our clients are facing hardships that would otherwise prevent access to nutritious meals. But their lives and experiences are unique and varied. We have clients who have had extremely difficult childhoods, who have college degrees, who have overcome drug addiction and who have been active members within their communities. We have seen how critical illnesses do not discriminate. At any point in time, anyone can receive a diagnosis of a debilitating disease.

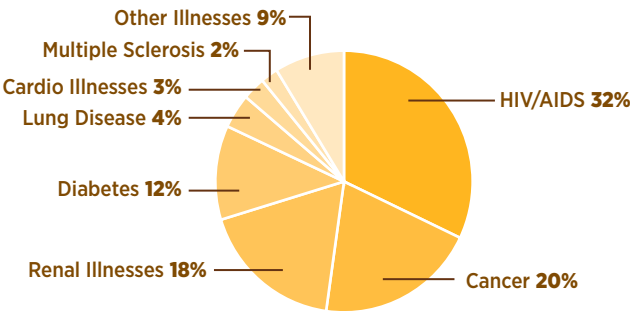
It is important to recognize that a critical illness does not change who our clients are. But it can change how they are able to navigate their lives. Diagnosis of a critical illness in an otherwise stable home is often enough to send a family spiraling into poverty and chaos. For those already struggling, it can be devastating for them and their children. By shining a spotlight on the voice of our individual clients, we are shining a light on the experience of hunger and illness.

Who we serve | FY2014

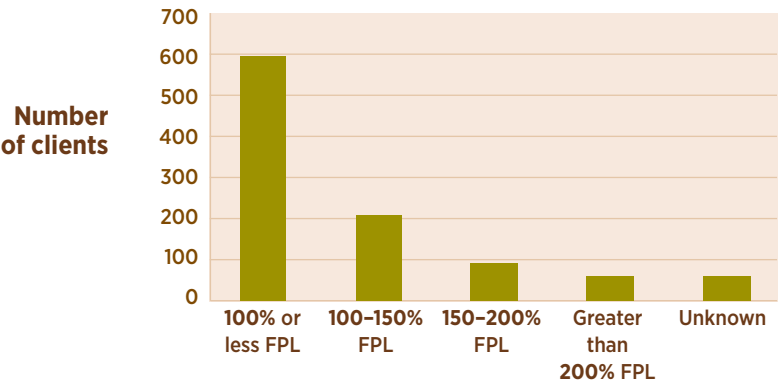
NUMBER OF CLIENTS SERVED | FY2014



CLIENT ILLNESSES



CLIENT INCOME LEVEL



FPL, or Federal Poverty Level, is **\$11,670** for individuals, **\$15,730** for a family of two, and **\$23,850** for a family of four.

CLIENT LOCATIONS



SPECIAL DIETS OFFERED

62% of clients receive one of our 25 medically tailored diets.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Bland—mild and low in sodium | No Eggs |
| Children’s Menu | No Fish/Shellfish |
| Chopped/Soft | No Nuts |
| Diabetic | No Poultry |
| Low Fat/Low Cholesterol | No Red Meat |
| Low Fiber | Low vitamin K |
| No Citrus/Tomatoes | Regular |
| No Dairy | Renal |
| | Vegetarian |

*Clients may choose up to three combinations of these meal plans.

Sandy's Story

Sickness requires a strong person. 46 year old Sandy has come to truly understand this concept. The daily pain that occurs emotionally and physically as a result of her HIV and Hepatitis C have affected her in a number of ways, including impacting her ability to cook. While she does have some good days, the meals from Community Servings have been there for her on the days when the pain is too much and cooking becomes difficult.

THIS IS THE VOICE OF SANDY

My days really vary. Some days I wake up and I am extremely depressed. I wake up in so much pain that it makes my days hard. Once, I told my doctor that he wouldn't be able to take the pain that I go through mentally and physically. It's just too much. You really do have to be strong to be very sick.

I was diagnosed with HIV in 1999 and a couple of months afterwards, I was diagnosed with Hepatitis C. Having both of these diseases impacted my ability to cook for myself. I have a numbness that originally began in just my feet but has since moved past my ankles. I also have a sharp intense feeling inside of my hands. My doctor prescribed medicine to address this issue but for some reason it made the pain in my feet so intense at times. I would rather feel numbness than pain, so I stopped taking the medicine.

I am very independent and like to be self-sufficient, but the pain in my body is often a hindrance. The numbness in my feet makes standing very difficult. Because both of my hands are numb, I have to watch everything that I do very carefully. When I'm cooking, I can't feel anything. If I cut myself, I won't notice. If I burn myself, I feel a slight pain but the burn can often be much worse than

I thought that it actually was. Last summer, I had second degree burns on both hands. You could see the burns on my palms and fingers. But I had no idea.

I think that the meals have made such a great impact on my overall well-being. Emotionally, I am much happier when I don't have to worry about preparing my own meals. They have already been prepared for me and that takes a load off of my shoulders. It's nice that all that I have to do is microwave the meals that I receive from Community Servings.

Health-wise, I appreciate the portion size of my meals. I'm trying to change my diet. I'm pre-diabetic and am concerned with my sugar levels. I've spoken with the nutrition department and they informed me of things that I did not know before. I learned that vegetables have sugar and which ones have the most sugar and which ones would be healthiest for me to eat. The nutrition department was very helpful and patient, which is also important. Honestly, Community Servings as a whole has truly been a blessing.



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Sherys' Story

Sherys has dealt with a great deal of turmoil over the course of her life. From having a mother addicted to drugs, being sexually abused as a young child, and losing two children, Sherys has overcome more than any individual should ever have to endure. But the 43 year old, single mother of three remains positive, even after receiving a diagnosis of breast cancer on August 31, 2011.

THIS IS THE VOICE OF SHERYS

When you're diagnosed with cancer, you get a new perspective on life. It provides the chance to evaluate everything that you may have suppressed throughout your life. For me, I was able to see how much I've grown. I grew up in a situation where my mom was into drugs, I was beat up in school and, I was sexually abused. All of these events impacted the direction of my life, which at the time was headed in a negative direction. I knew this life was not the life for me. I could do better. I enrolled in a medical assistant program and eventually found the perfect career fit in the Emergency Department at Boston Children's Hospital, where I worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant for 13 years.

Community Servings came into our lives at a time when we truly needed help. Financially and physically, I was struggling. Having cancer impacted all aspects of my life and my ability to provide for my family. I am currently receiving disability and we are financially strapped. As a single mother, it's my complete responsibility to provide for my three girls.

We were receiving \$400 a month in food stamps but when I went on disability, our benefits were reduced to \$200 a month. The meals from Community Servings are able to balance the food stamps that we receive. One example

of how the meals truly saved us was when I was extremely financially bound and didn't even have \$10. However, we received our meal delivery and were able to eat healthy and nutritious food. For reasons like this, the meals mean so much to my family.

Sometimes during my treatments, I wouldn't even be able to get up. I wasn't sure how my girls were going to eat. I was going through intense treatments of radiation and I didn't even have the energy to take my children to school. Currently, I'm in remission. My hair is back and my nails are growing again. I still have to take a chemotherapy pill every day and receive injections every four weeks. I have on and off days. While I try to be strong, some days I am completely exhausted.

There was a time in my life when I didn't know how to ask for help, but I am so grateful that we found Community Servings and for everything they have been able to do for us. Every Monday, it feels good to fill my refrigerator. The meals take so much stress off and they have truly become a part of our lifestyle. It is a symbol of all good things and I could not be more thankful.



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Lisa's Story

At 30 years old, Lisa lived a perfectly healthy life in Quincy, Massachusetts. She and her husband, George, had bought a four story house and were taking steps to make renovations. But one day Lisa felt a tingly feeling in her feet and from that day forward, her life would never be the same. At 35, after an extremely long and difficult process, Lisa was diagnosed with Primary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis.

THIS IS THE VOICE OF LISA

I was walking on the grass in my yard when I felt a strange numbness in my feet. I visited my primary care physician as well as a neurologist where a number of tests were run and I was told that it was a virus that would go away. For five years, I lived with what was believed to be a virus, suffering from a number of side effects including stumbling and clumsiness. At 35, more tests were run and on February 25, 1989, I was diagnosed with primary progressive multiple sclerosis. MS typically causes a steady decline but with primary progressive MS, I was in a wheelchair within five years of diagnosis. It is extremely fast moving.

Once I was wheelchair bound, I couldn't cook. Our kitchen wasn't wheelchair accessible and the nature of MS made the act of cooking extremely difficult. I'm paralyzed from the waist down and have no trunk control. My whole body lurches forward, making it extremely difficult to cook or eat. Having MS has been a completely dehumanizing experience. I am "total care" and can no longer provide for myself or my husband.

Before Community Servings, primary meals were simply not happening. After my diagnosis, I spent an extended period of time at the hospital. I felt guilty that I was no longer able to prepare nutritious meals for my husband.

I would often share my hospital meals with him to ensure that he would eat as well. When I returned home, we would eat either junk food, such as popcorn or Doritos, or nothing at all.

Now that we are receiving weekly meals from Community Servings, we have enough to eat. I don't have to make sacrifices in my diet or feel guilty that I am able to eat while my husband is not. We have a refrigerator full of good food which is something that we did not have when I became ill. We don't have to worry about food preparation and we are able to look forward to having a variety of good meals every day, from wild rice to homemade soups to fresh in-season vegetables like butternut squash and asparagus.

I was 137 pounds when I was diagnosed. I now weigh 110 pounds due to muscle wasting. I am extremely bony and thin but I still have a large appetite. The food is good for me because I went from not eating to having three meals available to me each day. We couldn't, at the same time, care for my physical needs and do all that is required to prepare nutritious meals. Community Servings is truly the best option to ensuring that we're eating balanced meals.



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Marcia's Story

For Marcia, the fight against cancer seems never-ending. First, she was diagnosed with breast cancer, followed by ovarian cancer and leukemia. But she remains strong even as treatment options remain slim. Community Servings has been there since her first diagnosis, providing meals that are aimed at Marcia's very specific needs.

THIS IS THE VOICE OF MARCIA

I was recommended to Community Servings by someone that I knew who also had cancer. In 2008, I was diagnosed with breast cancer and have been with Community Servings ever since. In 2010, I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. I was able to beat both temporarily. But the ovarian cancer came back and then, I was diagnosed with leukemia in 2014. Treatment is difficult because the doctors won't give me chemotherapy for the fear that it will agitate another cancer. They are potentially looking at radiation treatment.

I was also born with an esophagus issue and have had five major surgeries during my lifetime for it. It impacts what I can eat. I receive the soft and bland diet but sometimes I still have to puree the food that comes from Community Servings. The pasta and rice that comes with my meals are good, because they are not only filling but they are also easier for me to eat. I also spoke with the nutrition department and that was very beneficial. They were able to add no citrus and no tomato to my diet. Both cause acid in my esophagus so being able to avoid this is helpful.

I receive two cases of Ensure with my meals. Typically, I'll have a meal from Community Servings and then an Ensure as my drink. Before I was diagnosed with cancer, I weighed 165 pounds. I was overweight before my diagnosis but now I weigh 135 pounds.

I'm almost 70 years old. I am in and out of the hospital with infections. I take a lot of medication for my cancer, cholesterol, and thyroid. It's only 12 o'clock now and I am exhausted. My blood levels and blood platelet count are extremely low. I just received two pints of blood and I've received fifty pints of blood overall. Even though I receive blood transfusions, they only help for a couple of days. So I try to conserve my energy. And for that reason, it does help a lot to have the meals from Community Servings. All that I have to do is take it out of the refrigerator and put it in the microwave and my meal is ready.



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Gloria's Story

For Gloria, Community Servings came at a time when she was facing extreme hardship. In 2011, she lost her job and was diagnosed with breast cancer shortly after. Three years later, in January 2014, Gloria, who is now cancer free, made the decision to discontinue her meals and regain her sense of independence. But while she was enrolled in our program, the meals and emotional support that Gloria received helped her tremendously.

THIS IS THE VOICE OF GLORIA

My parents always taught me to give more than was expected of me and God would give His best. For me, giving more became my life's work. I graduated from Wheelock College with a Bachelor's in Social Work and from Boston College with a Master's in Social Work. In order to see the true essence of the people that I worked with, I chose to work directly in the community rather than in an office or hospital. I like to call it "social work without walls."

The field of social work exposed me to Community Servings and when I was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer, I was able to refer myself to the meals program. The meals could not have come at a better time. Prior to my cancer diagnosis, I had lost my job along with several other people. In addition to being unemployed, I was aggressively treating my cancer. I received both chemotherapy and radiation treatment, had surgery, and went into rehabilitation. When the cancer returned in my lymph nodes, I underwent a second surgery.

With no job and poor health, Community Servings was truly a blessing for me. Financially, the meals supplemented my income. Once I began receiving disability benefits, the meals allowed for me to save my income for

other expenses. I also needed the meals to maintain my overall health during treatments. I was so weak from both the radiation and chemotherapy, that even taking food out of the bags from Community Servings and putting it in the refrigerator was difficult.

Emotionally, the agency was there for me as well. I looked forward to the delivery drivers coming and taking the time to talk to me. Even when I was weak from my treatments, they would always brighten my day by offering words of encouragement. One day, the driver came by and I did not have enough time to put my cap on and he told me that I was still a 'beautiful woman.' My face became radiant with a bright glow that enabled me to meet my home health aide who arrived later with this same glow. The drivers are the glue to the agency, creating the connection between the clients and Community Servings. Every week, they came with a caring spirit and went far and beyond to make sure that the meals were delivered through all kinds of weather.

Currently, I am cancer-free but I do still have pain throughout my body that results from the chemotherapy treatments. I am taking medication to manage the pain and am working towards regaining my independence. For this reason, in January of 2014, I decided to stop receiving meals. The meals were wonderful and were there for me when I needed them. It is an extremely traumatic situation to lose your job and then be diagnosed with cancer. The food not only touches our lives, the whole agency touches our lives in a way that no one can explain except us.



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Cherry's Story

Cherry was physically sick and financially strapped. Having HIV but not knowing it, she was becoming sicker with time. This severely impacted her ability to take care of herself and her family. After being diagnosed as HIV positive, Cherry was able to take the appropriate medication to begin controlling the disease. But she still didn't have control over other aspects of her life, such as being able to provide nutritious food for her family. For Cherry, Community Servings was able to step in and ensure that this need was being met.

THIS IS THE VOICE OF CHERRY

I was HIV positive for 8 years but I didn't know that I had the disease. My body was completely shutting down on me. It reached the point where I couldn't even get up and go to the bathroom anymore. When I was finally diagnosed with HIV, I had extremely high viral loads and a CD4 count of 23. I am lucky to be alive.

Now, thanks to medicine that I have been taking, I have much lower viral loads. Generally, people have the wrong idea about HIV. They think that it's still like it was 20 years ago when it was noticeable to tell who was being impacted by the disease. But the medicine makes it so you could never really know whether or not someone has been diagnosed as HIV positive. In addition to HIV, I also have diabetes, thyroid, and kidney issues. I take medications daily for all of these as well as for my liver and heart. But there are still other aspects, emotionally and financially, that these medicines can't fix.

Financially, I couldn't provide for my children. I am currently on disability and the money that we receive from our Supplemental Security Income benefits

isn't that much. After I pay rent, make car payments, and pay for insurance, there isn't much money left. And these are expenses that we can't afford to not pay. Because there is no public transportation where we live, we need a car. But the car payments take up the majority of our money with monthly payments of \$450. After all of these expenses are paid for, we only have about \$29 for survival.

Before the meals, I didn't have a way to make ends meet. I was so focused on my kids getting everything that they needed, that I wasn't taking care of myself. Community Servings is a blessing in disguise. We still have to balance the small budget that we have, but every week we look forward to the meal deliveries. It's so nice that my kids can have the same meals and we can all eat together as a family. I am so grateful and thankful for everything that Community Servings has been able to do for us.



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Marcia's Story

Individuals become engaged with Community Servings in a number of ways. One is through purchasing a pie from our *Pie in the Sky* fundraiser that sells donated pies to raise money for our mission to deliver medically tailored meals to the critically ill. But an individual's relationship with Community Servings can change with a single diagnosis. Marcia went from buying our pies every November to qualifying for our meals program after being diagnosed with several chronic illnesses.

THIS IS THE VOICE OF MARCIA

I already knew about Community Servings because when I was healthy and working, I bought pies every year. But now as a client, the organization has been fantastic for me. It has really saved the day many times when I was ill.

Currently, I'm suffering from several chronic illnesses that each, individually, pose a different challenge in my life. Throughout the time that I've been involved with Community Servings, I've gone from one condition to another and there have been periods where I have a number of medical conditions going on at the same time. I have a homemaker that comes to my house once a week. When she comes, she helps prepare a few things for the week depending on how much money I have to spend on food. But it is also hard for me to buy things for her to cook because carrying groceries is difficult, especially when the items are heavy.

Community Servings has helped me stay as healthy as possible. They have made a large impact on my daily life. When I'm not feeling well, it's nice for me to be able to take out one of the frozen meals, throw it in the microwave and have my dinner ready for me. I also need to have several small things

throughout the day. The goody bags with tea, oatmeal, raisins, and saltines are extremely helpful. The meals give me the ability to take care of feeding myself. They give me independence.

In terms of my emotional health, the people who deliver the meals have really made a difference. Since I am usually homebound, it is great when they come by. They are all so receptive and eager to help – just having conversations with them is nice. During the holidays, Community Servings provides a special meal that has a lot of thought put into it. There have been times where I have not been able to go out for a holiday and because of this, the meals mean a lot to me.

The meals from Community Servings act as a safety net in my life. It warms my heart to have someone who doesn't even know you do something so kind that really gives you a boost. And that's exactly what it does. Community Servings is truly a shining spot in my life.



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Diane's Story

Preparing meals requires energy, time, and money. Inadequacy in one or more of these areas makes it extremely difficult for an individual or family to maintain a healthy diet. In 2011, a breast cancer diagnosis showed Diane just how difficult the process of planning and preparing meals could be. For Diane, Community Servings has allowed her to not only simplify her life but also, more importantly, to prioritize her health.

THIS IS THE VOICE OF DIANE

On July 1, 2011, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I underwent chemotherapy and radiation treatments but one of the major symptoms from these treatments is exhaustion. I would have to physically peel myself out of bed after 15 hours of sleep but I still had absolutely no energy.

Today, even though I am cancer-free, I can't completely bounce back to my normal self before my diagnosis. Having cancer and then undergoing treatment takes a toll on you. Treatment was tough when I had cancer, and I am still feeling the impact even though I am cancer-free.

I used to have a lot of energy and when you're healthy, you don't realize how much work preparing a meal is. But now, my health is not at its best and I keep losing milestones of independence. This past St. Patrick's Day, I tried to cook a meal all on my own. But I couldn't keep up with everything, from going out to buy food, to cooking the food, to cleaning up afterwards. I just don't have the stamina any more. Even on good days when I'm feeling my best, I'm still struggling by 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

I can't stress enough how helpful the meals are. They are exactly what I need. I am watching my cholesterol and the low fat diet that I am receiving helps me

to watch the levels of bad fat that I eat. Also, food today is so expensive and it takes so much time and energy to prepare. The grocery shopping, bringing the food into my apartment, especially with my intense back pain, and the actual cooking process are all difficult for me. Because it is just me in my household, I definitely need any help that I can get. The meals have made my life a lot simpler. Community Servings also gives me the time to take care of other aspects of my life. I finally have the time to take care of myself.

Community Servings and their programs truly shine a light on humanity. There is some good in the world and I believe that Community Servings is the perfect example of this good.



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Grady's Story

Grady understands critical illness on a personal level. With a sister who died from HIV and a mother who died from diabetes, Grady had a familiarity with the nature of these diseases in the back of his mind when he received a diagnosis of both. At 61, he is beginning to come to terms with his age and his illnesses and is making strides towards prioritizing his health. Community Servings has been there throughout his journey to a healthier life by providing meals tailored to his specific needs.

THIS IS THE VOICE OF GRADY

I was diagnosed with HIV in 1998. My sister had it but there was no medicine to treat it at the time and she died. I decided that I should probably get myself checked out. I had been hanging out in the streets and I had a funny feeling that the tests would come back positive. But I happened to know who to see and where to get help.

Having HIV has impacted all of my relationships within my family. I'll go to eat at one of their homes and they will have plastic forks for me to use. I used to always play with my nieces and nephews but after I was diagnosed they would say things like 'Mommy says we can't play with you anymore because you're sick.' They just don't understand the disease. I became the black sheep of the family.

One day, I was looking in a window glass of a store and I noticed that one of my legs was much bigger than the other. I went to the hospital and they told me that I must've had an angel on my shoulder. I didn't feel any pain but I had a blood clot in my leg.

I had surgery on July 5, 2011, and until January 2014, I have been to the hospital at least once every month. The ambulance drivers knew me and I knew everyone on one floor of the hospital by name and shift. February and March of 2014 were the first times that I haven't been to the hospital. I started taking care of myself and I've been feeling better. Sometimes, I think that I'm still 25 years old. It took something out of me to realize that I'm getting old. Now, I know when to rest and when to stop.

I started eating right and I lost 65 pounds. My illness required me to change my appetite. I have a lot of stomach pains and digestive issues. Sometimes I have to force myself to eat. The meals from Community Servings really do help. While I often had difficulty eating, I've never had a problem with the food from Community Servings. I love the chili and cornbread. I receive a diabetic, low vitamin K diet. I need the low vitamin K meals to help prevent future blood clots. I love to cook and used to cook all of the time. But now I have a hard time standing up for long periods of time and I have back spasms. Because I can't cook like I used to, the meals help me to manage my nutrition needs and focus on taking care of myself.



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Iayania's Story

Being diagnosed with one critical illness can be devastating. But when an individual is continually diagnosed with critical illnesses, the true impact can be hard to measure. 37 year old Iayania provided some insight on this impact. The single mother of two has been diagnosed with AIDS, cervical cancer, stomach cancer, manic bipolar disorder, and PTSD. But for the last 16 years, Community Servings has been there for Iayania and her family.

THIS IS THE VOICE OF IAYANIA

I count on the meals. Every week, when our meals are getting low it's good to know that more are coming. I have two children who are also receiving meals and look forward to them each week. As a family, we have really come to depend on the meals from Community Servings.

On February 4, 1998, I was diagnosed with AIDS. In regards to eating, I was doing fine. My cancers had a larger impact on what I could eat. In one year, I received two cancer diagnoses. I was first diagnosed with cervical cancer, which I underwent chemotherapy and radiation for. I was then diagnosed with stomach cancer in January of 2012. On March 7, 2012, I had surgery and the cancer had to be cut out of my stomach. I had a total of 179 stitches and 18 staples in my stomach after surgery. But I am finished with my treatments and am now cancer-free.

After my stomach surgery, once they took the cancer out, it was like my stomach was a baby. I had to be careful with what I ate. Eating spicy foods was difficult. I couldn't eat the curry. After I spoke with Client Services, I stopped receiving spicy foods. Now that my stomach has started stretching back out, I

can go back to eating regular cooked foods. I am receiving the regular diet and I really like the salads.

I am struggling to gain weight though. After the chemotherapy and radiation, I weighed only 80 pounds. I now weigh 85 pounds and am not losing or gaining any weight. Because of my weight, a special part of my diet is the Ensure that is included with my meals. I am very underweight. Right now, I'm wearing 2 pairs of leggings under my jeans just to look like I weigh more. The cold doesn't help either.



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Diane S.'s Story

Treatment response varies on an individual basis, with some feeling the complete effects of chemotherapy and radiation during their treatment and others going through the process without feeling any major impacts. Diane was fortunate enough to fall in the latter category. After being diagnosed with breast cancer, she received intensive treatments to combat the disease. But it wasn't until she was in remission, that she began to feel the negative effects. And it was during this time, that the meals from Community Servings were there for her.

THIS IS THE VOICE OF DIANE

The doctors said that some people will just breeze through the treatments and then feel the side effects after. During my treatments, I would go shopping, cook, and have company over. I think that I sound pretty good right now and this is how I would often sound during treatments as well. Almost everything was the same as before I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

But I have the personal belief that if you don't have any of the side effects during treatment, they will catch up with you later. It makes sense. The treatments are poisoning us to keep us alive. When you have something like that running through your body, it's going to affect you. It's also just not fair to those who suffer from the effects during treatment if you never suffer at all.

I've been in remission since 2009. Now that the treatments are over, I am feeling some of the effects of the chemotherapy and radiation. I am also currently receiving treatment for my chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, COPD. Two or three months before I started my treatments for cancer, I noticed a shortness

of breath. As time went on, one of my doctors from my team recommended that I see a specialist. I was then diagnosed with COPD. With COPD and the effects of my cancer treatment, I can often experience fatigue.

On days where I have more fatigue than normal, the meals are so helpful. Before Community Servings, I didn't think that I had any other options available to me. I thought that the only choice that I had was to make my own food. But I was only able to prepare my own meals after the fatigue had settled. Since I joined Community Servings, I haven't looked back. I live alone and it's good to know that the meals are there when I'm having a bad day. All that I have to do is go into the kitchen and put the food in the microwave and my meal is ready. I have really come to depend on them. The process of making a meal: the thawing, cooking, and standing over the oven can be so tiring. The meals are truly able to lift a stress off of my daily life.



“With COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease] and the effects of my cancer treatment, I can often experience fatigue. On days where I have more fatigue than normal, the meals are so helpful.”

Community Servings is grateful for our talented
pro-bono photographers:

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