

Food insecurity followed Betty her entire life. The oldest of 10 children, she started cleaning houses in exchange for food at age 10. When there wasn't enough for her siblings, she held back. It was the same when Betty had her own family: She'd go hungry so her children could eat.

That cycle of food insecurity has ended, though, thanks to Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center. The hospital took over the Peace Meal program in 2013 after Eastern Illinois University ran it for nearly four decades.

Peace Meal feeds 5,000 individuals a year—including Betty—in 14 east central and central Illinois counties. Every day, a Peace Meal driver leaves Betty with a hot meal and a kind word so she no longer has to go to bed hungry.

“There is no greater success in providing senior nutrition services,” said Peace Meal Director Barbra Wylie. “Knowing our delivery drivers are dedicated to our clients means every bit as much to them as the nutritious meal they receive every day.”

Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center is focused on addressing social determinants of health and contributes up to \$400,000 annually to the program. Nutrition and socialization are key to seniors' health and well-being, making the program a good fit for the hospital. Peace Meal—often called “more than a meal”—also helps seniors remain independent in their own homes.

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