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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE COUNCIL ON AGING RALLIES COMMUNITY SUPPORT TO COMBAT SENIOR HUNGER

THIS YEAR MARKS THE 22ND ANNUAL MARCH FOR MEALS CAMPAIGN THROUGH MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA

[Hendersonville, NC] (February 22, 2024) – The Council on Aging for Henderson County (COAHC) will host its annual March for Meals event, part of a nation-wide campaign aimed at raising awareness and funds to combat senior hunger. The event will kick off on March 18 at 9:00, at the Council on Aging office, located at 105 King Creek Blvd in Hendersonville, and is expected to draw dozens of participants dedicated to supporting vulnerable seniors in our community.

The annual March for Meals campaign commemorates the historic day in March 1972 when President Nixon signed into law a measure that amended the Older Americans Act of 1965 and established a national nutrition program for seniors 60 years and older.

The event will feature staff, volunteers and community leaders speaking about the importance of addressing senior hunger and isolation, followed by a Proclamation from the Mayor of Hendersonville, and ending with packing that day's meals for drivers to deliver to homebound seniors throughout the County. Participants have the opportunity to take part in a ride-along with a Meals on Wheels driver and get a hands-on look at the impact of this vital program.

This campaign arrives at a pressing time for Henderson County's Meals on Wheels service. Demand continues to exceed available financial resources. This issue is magnified by the pending loss of COVID-related funds at the end of this fiscal year. In response, COAHC recently had to make the difficult decision to stop accepting clients beyond their current funding capacity, resulting in a waitlist of over 100 homebound seniors, with an average wait time of at least 6 months before receiving service. This means that there are dozens of seniors in our community who are unable to access the vital support they desperately need to age in place.

"We hope to leverage the annual March for Meals event with the objective of bringing attention to the increasing demographic of seniors who rely on us for daily, nutritionally balanced meals to sustain their ability to remain in their own homes," says Kevin Laffond, Nutrition Services Manager. "Meals on Wheels plays a vital role in catering to the needs of homebound seniors within our community, offering an indispensable service to those who face mobility challenges. For numerous seniors, the delivery driver represents a significant source of human interaction, given their limited ability to venture outside."

For more information on how you can volunteer, contribute, or speak out for the seniors in Henderson County this March, visit coahc.org.

About The Council on Aging for Henderson County

For more than 50 years, the Council on Aging for Henderson County has been providing and coordinating services that engage, connect, and support local adults as they age. Their programs include Meals on Wheels for Henderson County, congregate dining, providing liquid nutrition to seniors at nutritional risk, caretaker respite, and counseling aging adults and their families on helpful resources to navigate the aging process. For more information on how you can volunteer, contribute, or support seniors in Henderson County, please visit coahc.org.