

Mario Andretti to deliver Meals on Wheels in Northampton County



Mario Andretti, 74, of Bushkill Township, says he's delighted to pitch in to help Meals on Wheels of Northampton County during its March for Meals campaign. *(Express-Times File Photo)*



By **Jim Deegan** | **The Express-Times** (PA)

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This will give new meaning to **Meals on Wheels**.

Racing legend **Mario Andretti** is among several community leaders who have volunteered next week to deliver meals to clients of Meals on Wheels of Northampton County.

Chances are he won't pull up in an Indy car. But you never know.

"We'll try to do it fast," Andretti said Friday with a grin. "I'll probably bring my Lamborghini and see if we can do a few doughnuts in the parking lot to get people's attention."

Andretti, 74, of Bushkill Township, is one of nearly 30 so-called "community champions" pitching in for "Community Champions Week" -- part of the 2014 March for Meals campaign.

Each day next week, local celebrities -- elected officials, business leaders, the IronPigs' Ferrous mascot -- will help deliver meals to folks signed up for the Meals on Wheels program.



Folks attend a news conference announcing Meals on Wheels' March for Meals campaign at the Northampton County office on Fritch Drive in Bethlehem.

Express-Times Photo | DAVID YANOSHIK

Officials of Meals on Wheels of Northampton County kicked off the campaign with a news conference Friday at their headquarters at 4240 Fritch Drive in **Bethlehem**.

Andretti said he is delighted to be involved.

"Not everyone has family that can help them," Andretti said. "This organization deserves all the credit and kudos you can come up with."

Andretti said he's delivered meals before as part of his association with Firestone, but this is the first time he'll be doing it in his own backyard. He's set to make the rounds Tuesday in the **Nazareth** area.

People who'll be getting their meals delivered won't know about their celebrity courier until they open the door, said JoAnn Bergeron Nenow, executive director of Meals on Wheels of Northampton County.

"What Meals on Wheels does, I've had the opportunity to see it firsthand many times," Andretti said. "People wait for their meal and welcome it. It makes you wonder what would happen or who would fill this need if we didn't have this organization.

"I just really believe they do such wonderful work. You get to see it firsthand. It's what they rely on. If you don't bring the meal, they don't eat. It's that simple. If I can do a little bit, my part, to create some awareness, that's what I want to do."

Meals on Wheels of Northampton County prepares 1,900 meals a day for seniors in Northampton, Lehigh and Monroe counties, including two adult day care centers and 10 senior centers.

An estimated 90 volunteers each day deliver meals to 650 clients on 55 routes in Northampton County.

"In this tough economy, the food and human contact we provide to seniors in this community is needed more than ever," Nenow said. "We need the community to come out and support our March for Meals events. Our clients are counting on us."

March for Meals is a national campaign recognized each March to raise awareness of senior hunger and to encourage local community action, Nenow said.

http://www.lehighvalleylive.com/breaking-news/index.ssf/2014/03/mario_andretti_to_deliver_meal.html