



Meals on Wheels: Delivering Food and Friendships

By Nannette (Nan) Slone, St. Luker since 1999

St. Luke's recently began offering volunteer opportunities with Meals on Wheels, an initiative through Seniors First that ensures seniors do not face hunger, feel isolated or feel forgotten. In my role as a Meals on Wheels volunteer I have had the pleasure of meeting a delightful "young" man named Ramon who will celebrate his 89th birthday later this year. Ramon understands what I say to him much better than I understand what he says to me, however we work it out with the assistance of his daughter, Evalise.

Ramon is a remarkable man. Originally from Venezuela, he came to the U.S. in 1999 after spending almost 20 years in Puerto Rico. He met his wife, Heddy, an American citizen, when she came to Venezuela nearly 70 years ago! They married 68 years ago, raised seven children together, and now have 20 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren (and counting).

In Venezuela, Ramon worked as a Government Tele-communicator for 30 years, before moving to Puerto Rico in 1980 where he became a chauffeur for people who took various long journeys touring the island. This was interesting for Ramon as he was able to see and learn much more about Puerto Rico than if he worked only in San Juan or Ponce.

In 1999, Ramon retired, and he, Heddy and some of their children moved to Orlando, Florida. Moving to Puerto Rico and the U.S. are 2 of his greatest moments. Things are still very difficult in Venezuela. They feel blessed to have come here when they did.



Ramon, always a hardworking man, worked at a Walmart grocery before having to retire due to a serious bout with COPD. This is a disease that plagues his family. He is stable now and enjoys gardening, helping care for Heddy and playing with his great-grandchildren. Getting to know Ramon has been delightful; he is one of my favorite Meals on Wheels clients and he says his goal now is "waiting for God to lift him up to heaven." ♦

To learn more about serving with Meals on Wheels or any of St. Luke's community partners, visit st.lukes.org/local, email serve@st.lukes.org, or call 407.876.4991 ext. 285.