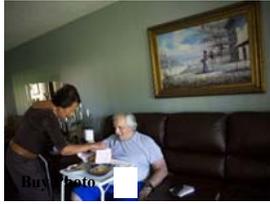


Hospitalization, health needs eat into food budget

Harriet Howard Heithaus, harriet.heithaus@naplesnews.com; 239-213-6091 Published 3:59 p.m. ET April 9, 2017 | Updated 5:48 p.m. ET April 9, 2017

A back operation and melanoma have their costs even when the VA pays the medical bills.



Angelo and Mina Maffucci never had planned to move from their home in Upper Montclair, New Jersey, to Naples.

And they never, ever planned to need help just to put food on their table. Years ago, in fact, they were helping their daughter in Sarasota, who had developed breast cancer. Mina Maffucci joined her there and helped with medical bills and the expense of medication.

Buy Photo

(Photo: Nicole Raucheisen/Naples Daily News)



Angelo Maffucci, 84, eats a lunch composed of soup, crackers and applesauce at his home in Naples, Florida on Friday, April 7, 2017. Everything in the meal was included in the weekly bag of food the Maffuccis receive from the Jewish Family and Community Services of Southwest Florida. (Photo: Nicole Raucheisen/Naples Daily News)

Then back pain started to make Angelo Maffucci's job impossible. Under added financial strain after his retirement, the couple had to sell their home, just as the real estate market was hitting the skids. Their son moved them into a condo he owned in North Naples.

But the problems kept piling up. Angelo Maffucci was hospitalized first for stenosis of the spine in 2007. He would undergo treatment for prostate cancer in 2010. Then his doctor discovered melanoma — again and again.

Related: [Meals of Hope helps those in need, empowers volunteers \(/story/news/local/satisfy-the-hunger/2017/04/03/meals-hope-helps-those-need-empowers-volunteers/99740002/\)](/story/news/local/satisfy-the-hunger/2017/04/03/meals-hope-helps-those-need-empowers-volunteers/99740002/)

Related: [Marco Island church feeds families in need with its 'Our Daily Bread' food pantry \(/story/news/local/satisfy-the-hunger/2017/03/26/marco-island-church-feeds-families-need-its-our-daily-bread-food-pantry/99403576/\)](/story/news/local/satisfy-the-hunger/2017/03/26/marco-island-church-feeds-families-need-its-our-daily-bread-food-pantry/99403576/)



Angelo Maffucci, 84, eats lunch at his home in Naples, Florida, on Friday, April 7, 2017. The Maffuccis have been dependent on a weekly bag of food provided by the Jewish Family and Community Services of Southwest Florida for years, along with the free lunch at the Senior Center each Wednesday. Without it, given the deductibles on his medical expenses, Maffucci estimated they'd be limited to two meals a day. (Photo: Nicole Raucheisen/Naples Daily News)

"I didn't work outdoors or anything like that," said Angelo Maffucci, who says he is still puzzled about that development.

"Cancer's in his family — on both sides," Mina Maffucci lamented. At 84, her husband can no longer drive or walk any farther than past the condo next door.

[Buy Photo](#)



Angelo Maffucci, 84, eats lunch at his home in Naples, Florida, on Friday, April 7, 2017. The Maffuccis have been dependent on a weekly bag of food provided by the Jewish Family and Community Services of Southwest Florida for years, along with the free lunch at the Senior Center each Wednesday. Without it, given the deductibles on his medical expenses, Maffucci estimated they'd be limited to two meals a day. (Photo: Nicole Raucheisen/Naples Daily News)

"But I keep trying," he said. The Korean War-era veteran is grateful for the health care and therapy he has received at the [VA Healthcare Center](https://www.baypines.va.gov/locations/Lee_County_VA_Healthcare_Center_Cape_Coral_FL.asp) (https://www.baypines.va.gov/locations/Lee_County_VA_Healthcare_Center_Cape_Coral_FL.asp) in Cape Coral — "absolutely wonderful" he calls it — and even more eloquent about the care they have received from [Jewish Family and Community Services of Southwest Florida](http://www.jfcswfl.org). (http://www.jfcswfl.org)

Related link: [Brent Batten: Fore! Fast-paced golf to feed the hungry in Naples area \(/story/news/columnists/brent-batten/2017/04/01/brent-batten-fore-fast-paced-golf-feed-hungry/99878110/\)](#)

The Maffuccis have been dependent on that weekly bag of food the JFCS provides from its pantry for years, along with the free lunch at the Senior Center each Wednesday. Without it, given the deductibles on his medical expenses, Angelo Maffucci estimated they'd be limited to two meals a day.

"Definitely I'd say that," he said, as he stirred the split-pea soup lunch Mina Maffucci had just set before him. The JFCS has been helping the Maffuccis for nearly a dozen years now, and both say they can't express their gratitude enough.

Angelo Maffucci recalled the day he made the decision to look for help with food. The first charity he called told him his income was \$50 above their monthly limit. A JFCS food pantry heard his request, and the next day a volunteer arrived with a bagful of groceries.

"And we're Catholic," Angelo Maffucci marveled. The pantry provides them with a turkey at Christmastime, and another one will come this week, before Easter. It's not only seasonal treat, it's a godsend for their food budget.

"You can make a lot of meals out of a turkey," said Mina Maffucci, 82.

JFCS distributes food without regard to religion or ethnicity. Jaclyn Faffer, president and CEO of JFCS of Southwest Florida, says its pantry, which is one of 14 that partners with the [Harry Chapin Food Bank \(http://www.harrychapinfoodbank.org\)](http://www.harrychapinfoodbank.org) to receive food, sees about 500 people each year.

Unlike other sectors of Southwest Florida, she said, its demand goes up in the summer "when seasonal employment is down and people are making less money."

"This is the hardest thing to ask for help with, because people want to feel they can at least feed their family or themselves," she said.

The Maffuccis no longer own a car or drive. They get transportation to their weekly Wednesday lunches, which are the equivalent of an evening out.

"We have lasagna one week, tilapia the next and then chicken. It's wonderful," he said. "And often sometimes they even have entertainment.

"It's a tremendous organization. I can't tell you how much of a help they've been for me and many, many others, too."

Help the hungry

Give today so others can eat tomorrow. Your monetary contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law and will be matched 100 percent by campaign partners Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation, Community Foundation of Collier County and United Way of Collier County, up to \$45,000.

Donations to the Satisfy the Hunger Community Food Drive may be made online at Community Foundation of Collier County, check or credit card.

[Click here to donate online \(https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=P2HDK75729PCA\)](https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=P2HDK75729PCA)

Make checks payable to the Community Foundation of Collier County

Mail donation to:

**Attn. Satisfy the Hunger Community Food Drive,
1110 Pine Ridge Road, Suite 200,
Naples, FL 34108**

Contact the foundation at 239-649-5000 for more information or to request a credit card form. All donations are tax-deductible.

Donation Events

The Naples Daily News will collect food, baby supplies, personal hygiene products, cleaning supplies and snacks for kids and to help fill the shelves of Collier County food banks this summer.

To donate items, please drop off at:

**Naples Daily News
1100 Immokalee Road
North Naples
10 a.m. to noon**

Donation Dates

» **Friday, April 14: Help Solve Senior Hunger** (<https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/3540189/Satisfy-the-Hunger-Help-Solve-Senior-Hunger.pdf>)

» **Friday, April 21: Life's Necessities** (<https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/3540190/Satisfy-the-Hunger-Life-s-Necessities-April-21.pdf>)

» **Friday, April 28: School's Out for Summer** (<https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/3540188/Satisfy-the-Hunger-School-s-Out-for-Summer-April.pdf>)

Get more information at naplesnews.com/satisfy (<http://naplesnews.com/satisfy>).

Read or Share this story: <http://nplsne.ws/2nY3rli>

