



**GOD'S LOVE
WE DELIVER®**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**U.S. SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DENIS MCDONOUGH
AND SENATOR KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
VISIT NEW YORK CITY FOOD AND NUTRITION NON-PROFIT GOD'S LOVE WE DELIVER
IN SUPPORT OF MEDICALLY TAILORED MEALS FOR VETERANS**

Secretary McDonough and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand toured God's Love We Deliver to volunteer and hear about the life-saving impact of food and nutrition services through medically tailored meals on veterans

New York, NY (April 13, 2023) – Yesterday, [God's Love We Deliver](https://www.godslovewedeliver.org/), the NYC metropolitan area's only provider of medically tailored meals and nutritional counseling for individuals living with and affected by severe and chronic illness, was visited by the Honorable Denis McDonough, U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs and New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), as part of their collaboration and partnership with the federal government to support medically tailored meals for individuals living with severe and chronic illness. The Secretary and Senator were accompanied by Glenn Johnson, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, OCLA; Dr. Christine Going, National Food Security Program Coordinator, Food Security Office; and Caitlin Celardo, National Social Work Program Manager, Food Security Office. They were also joined by Viviana DeCohen, Commissioner of the NYS Department of Veteran Services and Lt. Col. James Hendon, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Veterans Services.

God's Love We Deliver President & CEO David Ludwigson, Chair of the Food is Medicine Coalition and former God's Love President & CEO Karen Pearl, Senior Director of Program Services Kate Janeski, and Senior Director of Business Partnerships Dorella Walters, briefed the Secretary and Senator on the God's Love We Deliver home-delivered medically tailored meal program – which will deliver nearly 3.5 million meals to 11,000 individuals this year – and the organization's CONNECTED program, serving former U.S. military service members.

God's Love We Deliver has served veterans since its founding in 1985, but recognizing the distinctive needs of the population, with seed money from craigslist founder Craig Newmark, in 2022 the organization launched their [CONNECTED program](#) to meet the unique needs of the veteran community who are so often impacted by food and nutrition insecurity, severe illness, and mental/behavioral issues such as PTSD, bipolar disorder, severe depression, and others.

The five-pillar [CONNECTED program](#) model includes:

- o Staff training for veteran cultural competency and clinical care
- o Medically tailored meals and nutrition support
- o Community groups such as a nutrition education group and mindfulness practice
- o Education modules, which address topics at the intersection of nutrition, healthcare, and healthy living
- o Program evaluation

This year, God’s Love We Deliver will cook and home-deliver 140,000 medically tailored meals to 600 veterans and their children and caregivers.

Following the briefing, the Secretary also volunteered in the kitchen, preparing meals for clients across the city, who live with 200+ diagnoses.

“It is our honor to serve our veterans” said **David Ludwigson, President & CEO of God’s Love We Deliver**. “Research shows that medically tailored meals lower healthcare costs, reduce hospital admissions and readmissions, and improve health outcomes and quality of life. People living with severe and life-altering illness deserve medically tailored meals delivered to their home, free of charge. God’s Love We Deliver will work tirelessly to ensure our ongoing ability to deliver this promise to our veterans living with illness, and to all of our clients.”

“We are so grateful to President Biden and the Administration for centering Food is Medicine and medically tailored meals as a high-impact and low-cost intervention for people living with illness, at the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health last September,” said **Karen Pearl, Chair of the Food is Medicine Coalition and Special Advisor to the CEO of God’s Love We Deliver**. “It was such an honor to have Secretary McDonough and Senator Gillibrand here at God’s Love We Deliver to see “food is medicine” in action.”

“It was great to visit with God’s Love We Deliver. At VA, we know that comprehensive and innovative nutrition programs and services help Veterans maintain healthy lives and achieve food security,” said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. “Food is foundational for a healthy life, and it takes all of us – working together – to improve outcomes for Veterans and remove any barriers they face. We truly appreciate those in the community who work tirelessly to end food insecurity for Veterans and all Americans.”

“I’ve long supported the critical work of God’s Love We Deliver and I’m delighted that they’re serving veterans through their CONNECTED program,” said **Senator Kirsten Gillibrand**. “We know that food insecurity among veterans exceeds that in the general population and getting those who are living with illness the right nutrition saves lives. I applaud the work that God’s Love We Deliver does to serve veterans and all those in the New York City metropolitan area affected by life-altering illness.”

To learn more about the CONNECTED program, visit www.glwd.org/connected.

Photo assets can be found [here](#).

Photos by Lydia Lee

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About God’s Love We Deliver

God's Love We Deliver cooks and home-delivers nutritious, medically tailored meals for people too sick to shop or cook for themselves. Founded in 1985 as a response to the AIDS pandemic, we now serve people living with more than 200 different diagnoses. To support the health and well-being of our clients, we provide ongoing nutrition assessment, education, and counseling, and advocate for food and nutrition support. God's Love is a non-sectarian organization serving individuals living with illness, and their children and caregivers. With a community of more than 13,500 volunteers, we deliver 3.4 million meals annually. All services are free to clients. For more information, visit godslovewedeliver.org.