

## NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **DON BOSCO MEALS ON WHEELS PRESSES ON DESPITE HARDSHIP**

(KANSAS CITY, MO) – Tuesday started out as any other day for driver, Kinfu Dibawo. Dibawo, who is approximately 67 years old, was working his delivery route for The Don Bosco Center’s Meals on Wheels program when two armed men approached him near Lexington and Brooklyn in Kansas City, Mo. around noon and demanded the van he was driving. The men took off with the organization’s van and approximately 20 meals that were to be delivered to homebound clients of the Don Bosco Senior Center.

The seniors who had not yet received their meal on Tuesday were contacted by the Don Bosco staff. The staff was prepared to deliver a meal if any of the seniors expressed they did not have enough food to get them by until Wednesday.

“It was really an appalling act,” said Nicholas Scielzo, President of the Don Bosco Centers. “We’re so thankful that our driver was okay, but are sad for our homebound seniors who weren’t able to get the meal they so depend on.”

Dibawo suffered minor scrapes and bruises in the incident, but is resilient. He was back on the job on Wednesday and ready to resume his meal deliveries. Despite the loss of the van and approximately \$2,000 in equipment, The Don Bosco Centers were determined to continue delivering the Meals on Wheels program. The van only had liability insurance, so if it is not recovered the organization will have to replace the vehicle and contents. Replacement of the vehicle is estimated at \$25,000. It was one of five vehicles the organization uses for the program.

“We’ve rearranged some of our other vehicles to make sure our meals are back on schedule,” said Scielzo. “This incident really highlighted the needs of our community and reaffirmed the work that Don Bosco is here to do.”

As of Wednesday morning, the van had yet to be recovered. However, the outpouring of support from the Kansas City community has been overwhelming. Several community partners

have come to the aid of The Don Bosco Centers, including KCMO Talk Radio 710, Kansas City Transportation Group, UMB Financial Corporation, and a number of individual donors.

“Replacing the van would be a major unforeseen expense for the organization, but we’ll do what we have to do because these people depend on us” said Scielzo. “We’re so grateful for the outpouring of support we’ve already received from the community.”

Don Bosco’s Meals on Wheels program has served the community for approximately 25 years. Over 400 meals are delivered to homebound seniors and individuals with disabilities each weekday.

The stolen van was a white, unmarked 1995 Chevy Cargo van, license plate MO 918 GS7. The community is encouraged to call the Tips Hotline at 816-474-TIPS with any information.

Don Bosco is a non-profit organization that empowers individuals and families to achieve self-sufficiency and independence through a comprehensive network of services and programs designed to enhance the quality of life in the ethnically rich and culturally diverse Northeast Kansas City community. The Don Bosco Senior Center, which runs the Meals on Wheels program, is one of six centers operated by Don Bosco. For more information, visit [www.donbosco.org](http://www.donbosco.org) or call 816-691-2900.

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