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For nearly 35 years, Patty Kuhns has shown a steady dedication to those who depend on the Illinois Capital Area Chapter's Meals on Wheels program for food and comfort. Her husband, Chuck, used to take time off work to drive the routes with her in times of bad weather. Starting after his retirement in 2005, he now regularly joins her as they deliver meals together each Wednesday. Patty says she was originally drawn to volunteering with the American Red Cross because while she was a U.S. service member in the 1960's, the American Red Cross flew her back home for free to attend her mother's funeral. "That was really special to me, and I wanted to give something back," Patty says. It was a personal source of inspiration that led to her getting involved with Meals on Wheels .

"I had a friend from my church who drove every week for Meals on Wheels," she says. " She was eventually diagnosed with leukemia, but even though she was sick, she still managed to drive her route once a week for two years before she passed away. I thought, if she can do it, I can do it." The years of service have been fulfilling for the couple, but what really sticks in her mind is that "I've met some really special people."