



Tomodachi Bento Project

Orange County Buddhist Church

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Our History

The Tomodachi Bento Project has been in existence since May 2017. The vision of the program was to reduce the effects of social isolation among seniors especially those with chronic health conditions.

Our Mission

The mission is to deliver nutritious Asian-inspired bento lunches twice a month to homebound Japanese and Japanese seniors ages 65 and older residing in Orange County.

Methods

- 24 bi-weekly deliveries of Japanese bento lunches to 60-67 homebound seniors
- Added special COVID meal kits to the bi-weekly deliveries to address issues of food insecurities during isolation and to reduce potential risks of COVID exposure while securing groceries.
- Visits by volunteers to seniors while maintaining social distance protocols.
- Regular phone calls were instituted to help reduce the effects of prolonged isolation.
- Surveys completed by both seniors served and volunteers to assess program effectiveness and areas for improvement.

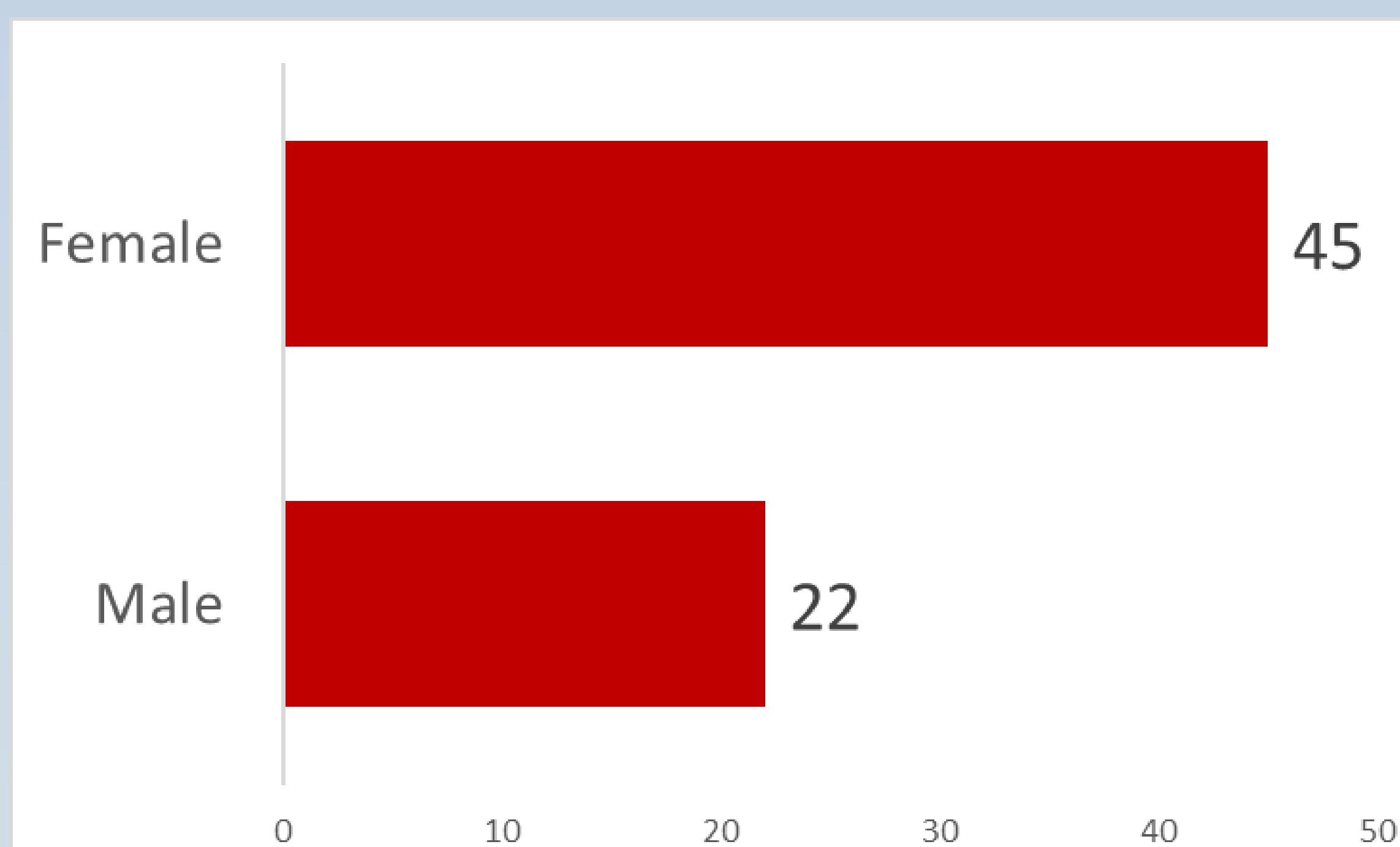
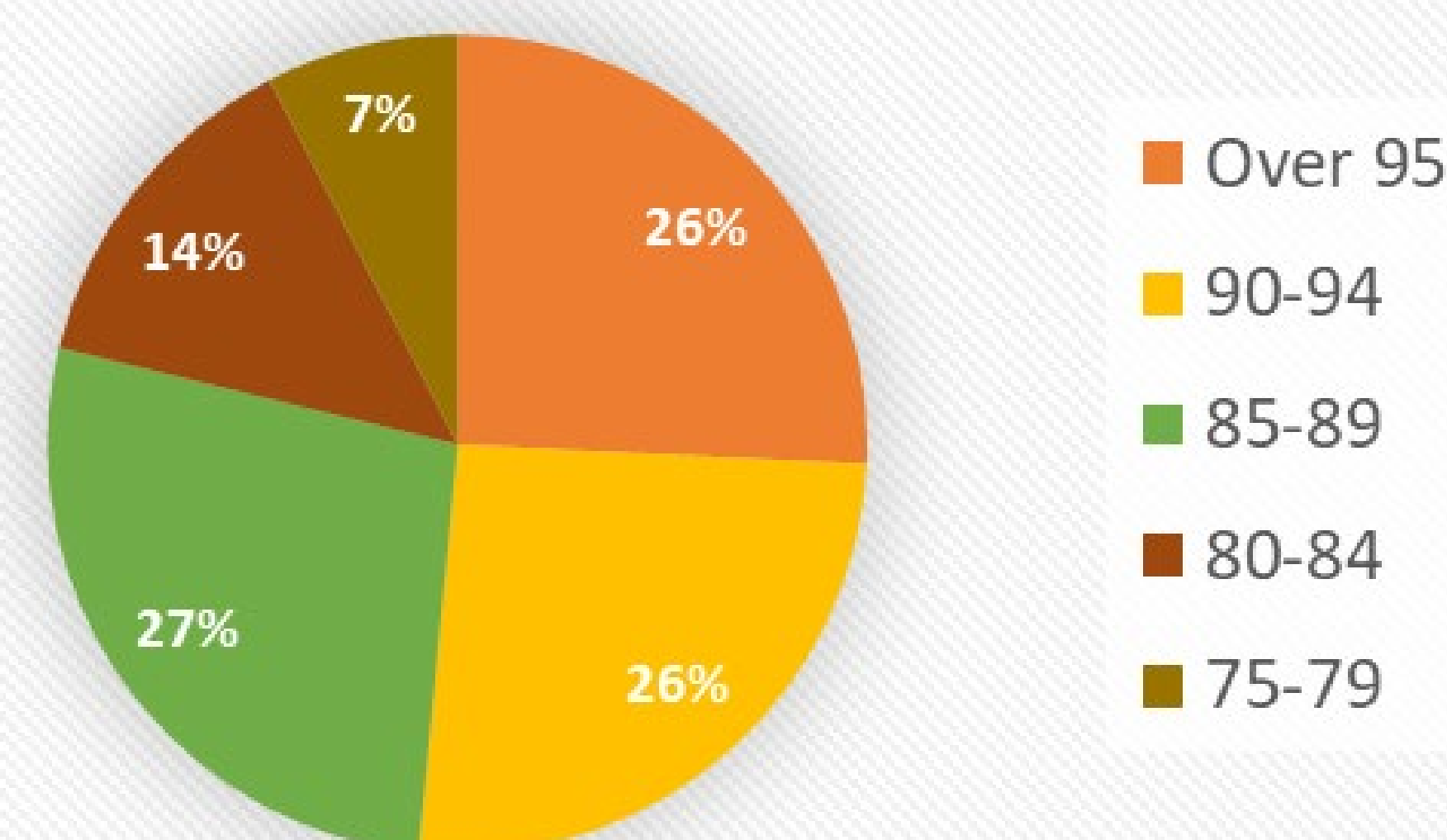
The Program

The Tomodachi Bento Project is organized and managed 100% by volunteers. Volunteer drivers commit to participate in volunteer training and provide their own transportation and vehicle insurance when they participate. Over 76 volunteers participate as cooks, drivers, substitute drivers, and coordinating committee members.

Pandemic Results

The program increased from 50 participants to 67. The City of Hope grant was key to expanding the program due to increased demand from seniors affected by COVID isolation mandates.

Age of Seniors Served

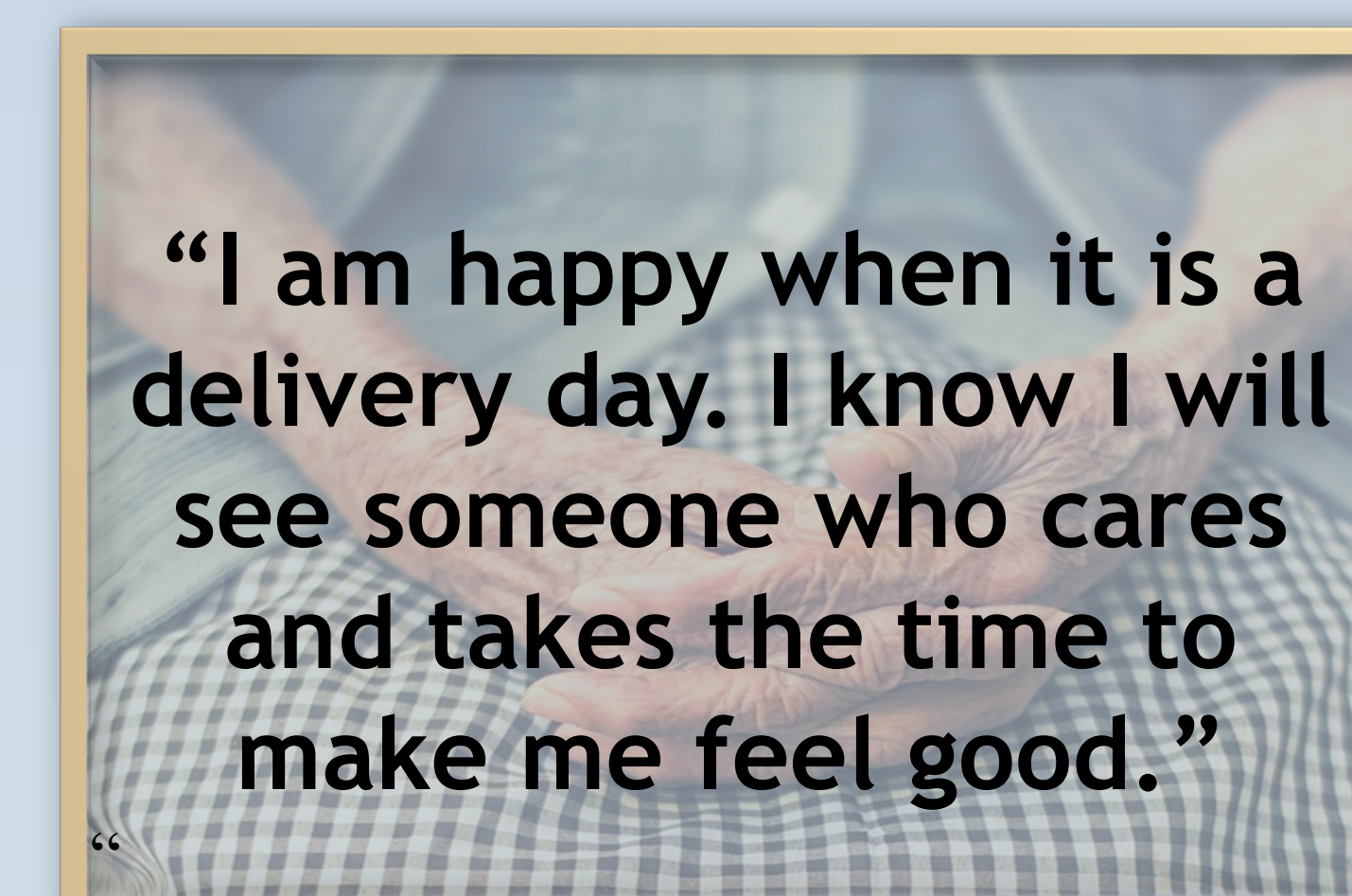


Exuberant 98-year-old... still living at home.

Our Bento Lunch



Enjoying her bentolunch at 101-year-old.



Volunteers prepping the bento