



A FRESH APPROACH TO ENDING LOCAL HUNGER

fresh news

The Pantry of The Open Door | The Mobile Pantry® | The Mobile Lunch Box | Garden To Table® | **DEC. 2016**

Dear Friends,

Over the last two months I have had the opportunity to sit in conversations with more than 100 community members who are struggling with, or concerned about hunger in Dakota County. What I heard is not news, but it does bear repeating: Thousands of people in our community struggle everyday to put food on their table. The healthiest food is the most expensive, and the hardest to obtain. Working families are facing wages that don't keep up with inflation and math that just doesn't add up.

I also heard loudly and clearly the sincere gratitude for what each of you makes possible through the work of The Open Door.



- ~You have helped make healthy food an option for the hungry.
- ~You have helped infuse dignity in the process of asking for help.
- ~You have helped us take the Food Shelf to our clients.
- ~You have helped clients grow 19,000 lbs of fresh, healthy food.
- ~You have helped feed 300 more kids healthy lunch this summer.

As you sit down with those you care about this holiday season, please know how grateful we are for what each of you makes possible in our community each day.

In gratitude,

Jason Viana, Executive Director

Mobile Pantry Nearly Triples Reach

Since opening our new site in Apple Valley, acquiring new vehicles, and expanding our distribution sites, the results have been incredible! Early results show our new approach is meeting the needs of our clients who were served by our Lakeville Pantry, as well as better serving our clients in Farmington, and surrounding areas.

Thanks to our volunteers and staff, those lacking reliable transportation are able to get the food they need at 12 sites—including three sites in Lakeville—2x a day, 5 days a week.

38,461 lbs of food distributed at our Mobile Pantry sites in 2015

138,272 Total pounds of healthy foods already distributed through October 2016



1/3 OF OUR CLIENT FAMILIES NOW SHOP ON THE MOBILE PANTRY



Guests learned about The Open Door and our clients, enjoyed food samplings, craft beer, and music while helping to raise almost \$25,000 at our 5th Annual OctoberZest! fundraiser.



Garden To Table's Best Year

426 Number of gardeners who grew their own food in their Garden To Table plots

19,079 Total lbs of food harvested by client gardeners in 2016

The 2016 season was the best year yet for our Gardeners in the Garden To Table Program! Collectively, our clients and volunteer gardeners harvested over 19,000 pounds of fresh and healthy food, well beyond the previous record of 16,000 pounds last year.

At the end of the season Harvest Banquet, our client-gardeners shared that they missed fewer meals, and had more access to fresh and healthy food thanks the G2T program!

Gardeners were able to re-register for their plots next year. New gardeners will be able to reserve a plot in early 2017.



Community Support Makes it Happen at The Open Door!

Making sure hungry families have access to healthy, nutritious food takes a concerted effort from a caring, engaged community. Church members, business employees, civic groups, school clubs, and individuals all across Dakota County have risen to the occasion to support their neighbors

who are struggling to make ends meet. Highlighted below are just some of the people who take the time and make an effort every year, every month, or every day to provide food in a welcoming way at The Open Door.



Above: Volunteers from **Questar** help ready our Mobile Pantry.

Each month volunteers from **Kohl's Apple Valley** store come to help stock our shelves and prep the Pantry for evening distribution.



Above: Employees of **Proto Labs**, Rosemount, won the company-wide food drive with this creative donation box and delivered donations totaling 313 lbs and over \$2100 to The Open Door!

Left: For the last 3 years, Kelli and Paul (pictured) Sisk have hosted a Turkey Drive for The Open Door at their **Kick Start Martial Arts** studio in Eagan.



Herregan Distribution employees drop off donations. Pictured (l to r) with their donations are Jan McDonald, Jim Burns, Matt Link, and Kim Fritz.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: Herregan Distributors, Inc, Eagan

Bob Link, President of Herregan Distributors, Inc, and his team have supported The Open Door for many years. This year they became the first company to join our new Annual Partner Program, committing to supporting our mission through food and fund drives, volunteer engagement, and financial support. This formal commitment deepens our relationship, and provides reliable support our team can build upon when serving our clients. Thank you!

Right: Deacon Jim Marschall from **All Saints Catholic Church**, Lakeville, and TOD volunteer Bob Roehl look over the over 2,200 lbs of donations from the All Saints faith community.



For their Mothers & Daughters Service Learning Luncheon, **Holy Angels** students and moms made and donated over 200 First Aid kits and bags of rice to our Eagan Pantry.



Program Manager Wendy O'Brien (center) receives a generous gift from Ron Wilson and Jerry Forness of the Savage car club, **Southern Cruzers**.

Community Conversations on Hunger



Over the last 8 weeks, The Open Door partnered with Easter Lutheran Church and Loaves and Fishes to host a series of community conversations about hunger in our community. The evenings were designed to encourage neighbors to share a meal and engage in an honest discussion around hunger and its challenges.

"We started this program—with support from Blue Cross Blue Shield's Center for Prevention—to expand our relationship with our clients, deepen the conversation through honest dialogue, and to better learn how families deal with hunger and/or poverty", says Casey Silver, Food Access & Equity Manager.

Each of the four sessions was filled with 40+ community members actively discussing everything from the high cost of healthy food and access to transportation, to the concepts of the Minnesota Food Charter and the upcoming Comprehensive Planning Process for their cities.

The lessons learned will inform the work of The Open Door and empower our neighbors to make their voices heard in the civic arena.

empty
bowls

Save the Date



8th Annual Empty Bowls

Thursday, March 2, 2017

11 am–2 pm and 4:30–7:30 pm

St. John Neumann Church, Eagan

- > Choose a handcrafted bowl
- > Make a donation
(suggested \$20 per bowl),
- > Enjoy a simple meal of soup and bread.
- > Take your bowl home as a reminder of those who are hungry in our community.



There's still time to make your year-end gift! Give today!



Where there's food, there's **HOPE**

By mail

Make checks payable to The Open Door
3910 Rahn Road, Eagan, MN 55122

Online

Click 'donate now' at
www.theopendoorpantry.org

