



**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® | **MAY 2017**

At The Open Door we believe everyone deserves access to healthy food, and we work hard everyday to make healthy food available to as many of our struggling neighbors as possible. We know that when you eat better, you do better.

We also know that food alone will not solve hunger. There are systems and policies that impact the lives of those we serve, and over the past year we have been working to give our clients a voice in the civic arena. We are working to remove barriers, helping to navigate the system, and arranging for face to face conversations with their representatives.

We know that even though unemployment rates are down, the median wages for average workers still don't make ends meet. We know there is not enough affordable housing, and we know that as our population ages, the challenges of finances and mobility only become more difficult.

Inside this newsletter you will find stories that shine a light on the work we do in the advocacy arena, learn of our expanded partnership with ISD 191 to nearly double the reach of our Mobile Lunch Box Program, and the start of the 8th year of our Garden To Table Program.

Thank you for believing in our mission, and in our clients. We could not do our work without you.

With gratitude,

Jason Viana, Executive Director



www.theopendoorpantry.org

nearly **5,000** individuals served each month | **1 million** pounds of food distributed annually | **12** Mobile Pantry sites | **1,800** children served each month





Mobile Lunch Box expands partnership with ISD 191

Program aims to serve 2,000 meals this summer

“School’s Out!” doesn’t have the same ring to it for kids who rely on free and reduced lunch and breakfast programs.

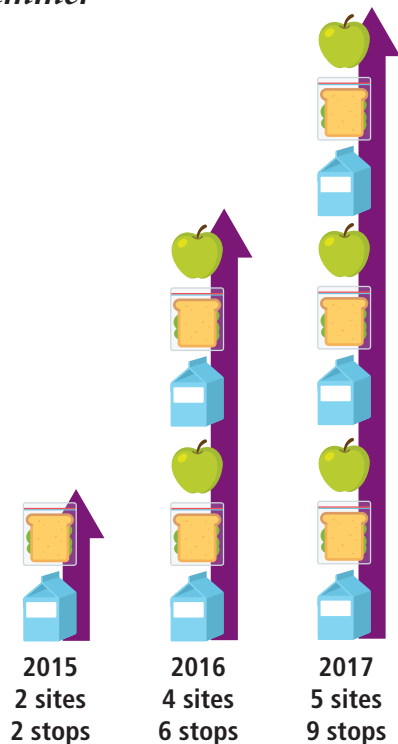
The Mobile Lunch Box program—now in its 4th year—helps bridge the missing meals gap during the summer months. Starting in June and running for 12 weeks, the Mobile Lunch Box travels to designated, low-income neighborhoods to provide a healthy lunch, a variety of enrichment activities, and kid-friendly take home bags of food to school-age kids (5-18) and their families.

Last year our Mobile Lunch Box served nearly 1,000 kids at 4 different sites and 6 stops per week. This year, with continued support from Easter Lutheran Church, Giving WoMn, and an expanded partnership with ISD 191 and

volunteer support from 360 Communities, we will serve lunch at 5 sites with 9 stops per week.

We still need volunteer groups to serve at several of our sites. If you are interested in supporting the Mobile Lunch Box Program please contact Maggiy Emery at maggiyem@theopendoorpantry.org

For more information on locations and times, go to the Mobile Lunch Box page on our website.



THANK YOU! March Campaign Results

From large corporations, to faith communities, to schools across 3 districts, to small businesses, to individuals, The Open Door received fantastic support to replenish our shelves through our March Campaign. Thank you to everyone who donated food, toilet paper and personal hygiene products, household supplies, and financial gifts!

78,420 lbs of food **\$93,198** dollars raised



From top: Exec. Director Jason Viana accepts over \$17,000 in donations from BCBC employees; Eastview High School students Ruchitha and Erica went door to door to collect food donations for March Campaign. Left: Transport America employees delivered 330 pounds of food and \$1082 to The Open Door.

EMPTY BOWLS

- > 800+ ATTENDEES
- > \$25,000+ RAISED



Thank you to the Empty Bowls planning committee, the 100+ volunteers who creating and donated the beautiful bowls and art, kept the kitchen running, served soup and bread, and provided delicious desserts, All your efforts make Empty Bowls the great event it is!





Lakeville Clients Speak Out on Hunger

Community conversations move client concerns forward

Fairfield Terrace, a senior living residence, is one of three Mobile Pantry sites served each week in Lakeville. Residents recently sat with State Senator Matt Little during a Community Conversation hosted by The Open Door and shared their candid feelings on the challenges they face accessing food on a daily basis. "If I can't find someone with a car, I can't get to the store," said one long time Lakeville resident when speaking of the lack of options in Downtown Lakeville. "There are several restaurants, but no place to buy milk, eggs, or bread."

Little listened intently and shared updates on happenings at the State legislature. He also encouraged them to continue sharing their concerns with other local officials. Residents chose to voice their concerns at an upcoming Comprehensive Planning meeting in late May. "The overall goal is to have their issues heard by the people who can help address them," said Casey Silver, Food Access & Equity Manager for The Open Door. "The conversations also help us to make sure we are meeting these needs in the most relevant and helpful ways."

"If I can't find someone with a car, I can't get to the store. There are several restaurants, but no place to buy milk, eggs, or bread."

—Lakeville Senior Resident



State Senator and Lakeville resident Matt Little, (second from right) met with senior citizens at Fairfield Terrace to listen to their concerns.

The Open Door began the *Community Conversations on Hunger* in October 2016 at Easter Lutheran Church in Eagan, and has just completed the second series in Lakeville. Our next set of Community Conversations will be held this summer. This set

of conversations will be focused on listening to the concerns of the Latino Community in Dakota County, and will be conducted entirely in Spanish. If you speak Spanish and would like to help, please contact Casey Silver at Caseys@theopendoorpantry.org



Partnering for Hunger Day on the Hill

On March 13, The Open Door partnered with 360 Communities to represent Dakota County at the 3rd annual Hunger Day on the Hill. A pair of Open Door clients joined volunteers, staff, and board members from The Open Door and 360 communities on our trek to the State Capitol where all were able to speak with multiple state representatives about funding for food pantries, healthy food access, and their experiences with food shelves and hunger.

Teaching Clients to Prepare Healthy Meals

Many of us have struggled with knowing how to cook new foods, and our clients are no different. This sentiment came through loud and clear during our Community Conversations, and in response TOD partnered with The U of M Extension program, *Cooking Matters Minnesota* to offer a free series of 6 healthy cooking classes for clients hosted at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church.



Clients engaged in hands-on learning for preparation of a new recipe from start to finish, were able to enjoy the meal during the class, and left with take-home groceries and recipes to create the meal on their own for their family.



Faces of The Open Door

"I have been a G2T gardener since the program began. I heard about it while volunteering at The Open Door.

I garden with The Open Door because everything about it is easy. Getting seeds and plants and equipment is easy. Making friends is easy and sharing with others is easy. I have a nice garden plot and love to take home those home grown tomatoes and cucumbers.

I feel a part of the community and know that I am helping when I donate these garden vegetables to The Open Door."

—Karen C, Garden To Table Giving Gardener

Giving Gardens Partners

These faith communities and businesses commit to growing food for our pantry shelves.

- > Blue Cross Blue Shield of MN
- > Chapel Hill Garden
- > Christiania Lutheran Church
- > Glacier Hills Elementary
- > Project Food Patch
- > YMCA Youth Garden
- > Prime Therapeutics

Garden To Table sprouting for the 2017 season

The Open Door's Garden To Table program is off to a great start. Over 125 gardeners attended the 2017 Kick-off meeting, plots have been tilled, seed packets have been distributed and wood chips have been delivered and are ready to spread on garden paths. Volunteers busily built 34 new raised garden beds at the Mary, Mother of the Church garden site and a variety of free Master Gardener-led classes—from Straw Bale Gardening to Tomato Disease/Pest Control—have been scheduled throughout the summer for gardeners.



There are a variety of ways you can help with the Garden To Table program

- Volunteer at a garden site. Tend perennial beds, weed, mulch, and more.
- Become a Giving Gardener
 - Tend and harvest a garden at work, church, school or your organization.
 - "Grow a Row" for the Pantry in your own backyard garden.
- Do you have food preservation skills? Lead a workshop on pickling, jamming, drying, or freezing the summer's bounty.

Other ways to bring fresh veggies and fruits to the Pantry shelves:

- 'Share a Share': donate part of your CSA to the Pantry.
- Too many tomatoes, cukes, or herbs? Donate your extra produce to the Pantry! You can drop off fresh produce during open hours at the Pantry in Eagan or the Mobile Pantry Center in Apple Valley.

To find out more, contact Alpa Goswami, Garden To Table Manager, at alpag@theopendoorpantry.org or by calling 651-600-9244.

ITEMS NEEDED FOR OUR PANTRY NOW!

TOP
5

- > peanut butter
- > 16–48 oz size bottles of vegetable oil
- > 100% fruit juice
- > canned tuna or chicken
- > toilet paper

Thank you Annual Partners of The Open Door

Our annual sponsors support The Open Door throughout the year through food drives, volunteering, and financial support.

