



**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® | Pop-Up Produce Stands | **SEPT 2018**

Numbers are a weird thing. Businesses celebrate finding ways to serve more customers. Food shelves get to have mixed feelings. This summer our volunteers and staff found ways to serve unprecedented numbers of our neighbors. Having fed around 5,000 people on average each month for some time, **this summer we served more than 7,000 people** every month! This is a testament to the creativity and innovation of our team, tremendous hard work from hundreds of volunteers, and made possible because you have chosen to invest in our clients and our mission.

It is also a reminder that there are still more people who need food yet lack access. I am often asked if our increased volume of clients means that demand is growing, but the truth is that, despite our best efforts, we haven't yet met the existing demand. This unmet need is why we launched the Mobile Pantry, Garden To Table, and Pop-Up Produce Stands; all designed to make healthy food more accessible closer to where it's needed. We have a waiting list of sites asking for help—from senior

living facilities to schools to isolated low-income neighborhoods—and with your continued help, we will find ways to reach them.

With a severe lack of affordable housing and a growing number of senior citizens in Dakota County, the need for our work unfortunately shows no signs of easing. Our volunteers, Board of Directors, and staff will continue fighting every day to find new ways to make healthy food easier to get for those who need it.



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

**3910 Rahm Road
Eagan, MN 55122**

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Pop-Up Produce Program Doubled this Summer through Strategic Partnerships

Neighborhood-based approach makes farm-fresh produce easy to access

Our Pop-Up Produce Stands take advantage of the bounty of the summer harvest to make farm-fresh produce available directly to our neighbors in low-income communities. We fed more people this summer than any period in our history, and the key was working smarter through partnerships.

NE Eagan/IGH—Our Mobile Pantry team partnered with the Eagan YMCA and St. Thomas Becket Catholic Church to launch a new Pop-Up Produce site serving Northeast Eagan and Inver Grove Heights. The YMCA hosted the site, provided volunteers, and used its existing relationships in the community to promote the program. "The Y has seen community members not only get access to healthy food, but access to our discounted programs aimed at healthy living," said Nate Danielson, Director of Healthy Living at the Eagan YMCA. "We highly value the partnership." St. Thomas Becket provided volunteers and funds to support the initiative.

Apple Valley—We partnered with Greenleaf Elementary School's summer book exchange program to provide residents of a low-income mobile home community access to two great programs at the same time. Both programs



saw marked increases in participation, and The Open Door provided more than 25,000 pounds of farm-fresh produce to residents of Dakota County's largest food desert while teachers worked to help students maintain their reading levels during the critical summer break.

Lakeville—The partnership with Trinity Lutheran's new ReStored Thrift Store not only provided the Pop-Up Produce Stand for the residents of Lakeville, but also a beautiful new storefront of affordable clothing and household items and a fourth Mobile Pantry location in Lakeville for accessing fresh and healthy food.

Stephanie Benedict Grows Hope Through Monthly Giving



When you meet Stephanie, her generous spirit and passion for The Open Door's programs are clear. She feels strongly about the Mobile Pantry program and is one of a handful of volunteers who drive the bus to local elementary and middle schools. Stephanie grew up in an area of Arizona known for its high poverty rate. From an early age, she was taught the importance of giving back to the church or to other organizations that help

those in need. These are two of the reasons Stephanie supports The Open Door through financial gifts and volunteering. Stephanie gives generously each month to The Open Door as a member of our Growing Hope program. She says that when she first started donating to The Open Door she thought of giving only food, but after she started volunteering she quickly realized that financial gifts go further. "That a food pantry orders food from a food bank," she says, "is a new concept to some donors." Stephanie says she gives monthly because it is easy to do. She invited The Open Door to share her story of giving so others may be inspired to join the Growing Hope program.

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Join Stephanie as a Growing Hope Member by donating online at www.theopendoorpantry.org or by contacting Sarah O'Brien at 651-888-0630 or saraho@theopendoorpantry.org



Balancing Dignity and Efficiency: Mobile Pantry's New Model

Gift from Minnwest Bank adds capacity needed to take on larger sites with less lifting

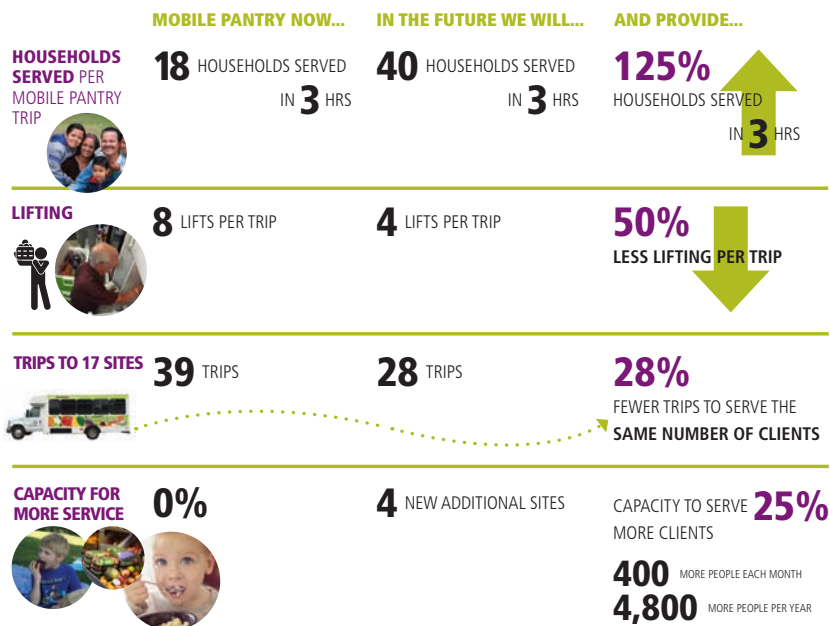
Balancing efficiency and dignity is at the very core of The Open Door, and nowhere is that more present than our Mobile Pantry. Having grown from 4 sites to 17 sites since its inception in 2014, the program hit a plateau when we reached our maximum capacity. Our volunteers and staff have spent the last year listening to clients, visiting other programs, and re-examining every part of our program to find opportunities to increase our capacity to serve

without taking away from the dignified experience we pride ourselves in offering to those we serve.

After piloting a new model at two sites since last fall, our team indeed found a new way that not only increased our capacity to serve, but did so in a way that improved our client experience while easing the physical burden on our volunteers. This new model brings the food shelf experience off of the bus and into an existing community setting, such as a senior living facility or school. This shift improved accessibility for seniors and provided sufficient space to allow multiple clients to make their selections at the same time. To fully implement this model, we needed a different truck and some new equipment.

The philanthropy committee at Minnwest Bank in Eagan learned of our need and made a gift of \$25,000 to make this new model a reality. The gift allowed for a box truck complete with a lift gate and all of the new equipment we will need to take on larger sites with less work!

We are already moving forward with our largest Mobile Pantry site to date, a senior living facility in Apple Valley where we will have capacity to serve 50+ households in one visit. Our team foresees capacity for additional sites moving into 2019!



Garden To Table: Apple Valley Rotary Builds New Community Garden

Highlighting another banner year for our Garden To Table Program was the creation of our first neighborhood-based garden, built on-site in a low-income

mobile home community located in the middle of Dakota County's largest food desert in Apple Valley. This garden is our most accessible yet and was made possible through a partnership with



the property owners, the City of Apple Valley, and the sweat equity and funds of the Apple Valley Rotary.

The raised beds were planted immediately and have yielded

hundreds of pounds of fresh produce for residents who were able to choose and grow their own harvest. Thank you for helping us build community and empower clients!



Union 32 Craft House presents **7th ANNUAL** benefitting **THE OPEN DOOR**

October Zest!

Sunday, Oct 7, 2018 ■ 6 pm–9 pm
 Lost Spur Golf and Event Center, 2750 Sibley Memorial Highway, Eagan

Help us raise \$50,000 to support our Mobile Pantry program!



Tickets \$40 per person, \$50 at the door
 Tickets on sale now! Go to www.theopendoorpantry.org

GOLD SPONSOR



SILVER SPONSORS



BRONZE SPONSORS

The Keystone Group, Thrivent Financial
 Stevens Equipment Supply
 Xcel Energy

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.



OPPORTUNITIES NOW TO HELP FEED PEOPLE!

Join our team of friendly, fun volunteers

Volunteer opportunities daily
 Daytime and evening hours open

- Eagan Pantry
- Mobile Pantry sites
- Pop-Up Produce stand sites

Register online for one of our four monthly orientations (45 min.) at www.theopendoorpantry.org/getinvolved or contact Deanna Baisch at deannab@theopendoorpantry.org



TROT BEFORE YOU GOBBLE!

THANKSGIVING DAY, Thurs., Nov. 22
 Registration is now open!
www.turkeytrotsaintpaul.com

- Donate to TOD when you register.
- Bring a healthy food donation to our Mobile Pantry at the race start!



PRESENTED BY Mosaic

GIVE BACK BEFORE YOU GIVE THANKS!

- The Walk to End Hunger is a family-friendly fun walk.
- Thanksgiving morning at the Mall of America
- A great way to start your holiday off right.

Get a team together—family, friends, neighbors—and walk to support The Open Door.

To sign up as a team or individual go to www.walktoendhunger.org and click on The Open Door logo.

