



**A FRESH APPROACH
TO ENDING LOCAL HUNGER**

Fresh News

THE EAGAN PANTRY | THE MOBILE PANTRY | THE MOBILE LUNCH BOX | GARDEN TO TABLE | POP-UP PRODUCE STANDS |

SPRING 2020

The outpouring of support for the mission of The Open Door has been remarkable. Having the food, funds and volunteers to keep us going during this crisis is important, but perhaps the most important thing you have given our team is your trust. Each time you choose to support The Open Door you are telling our team and our volunteers that you trust us to take your generosity and make it count.

Two months ago we were facing the same uncertain prospects as many other businesses and organizations - could we even stay open? Not only did we find a way to modify our operations to remain open, with your help we have found ways to rapidly scale up our operations and work with our partners to serve more people than ever before.

Your support didn't just help our bottom line, you helped change our mindset. You gave our team the ability to focus on one thing – how to do more, as safely as we can, when more is needed. In April we provided fresh and healthy food to more than 12,000 people in our community, nearly 70% more people than our pre-COVID normal, and we are preparing to sustain that level of support as long as it is needed.



Thank you for caring, thank you for responding, and thank you for partnering with us. Together we are doing amazing things.

With Gratitude,

Jason Viana, Executive Director



www.theopendoorpantry.org

Eagan, MN 55122

3910 Rahn Road

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Crisis Response - The First 60 Days

Because the community has given more, The Open Door is doing more

The power of people coming together is on display every day at The Open Door. The community response to this pandemic has empowered our team to continue finding ways to feed more people at a time when more people are in need of food support. The outpouring of generosity has enabled us to “scale up” by adding new sites to meet the increased need for food support. We modified operations – shifting to a pre-packed model for all foods as well as adopting CDC guidelines to ensure volunteers and clients are safe. Thanks to your support, our entire organization, staff, board, and volunteers have been able to focus on expanding our mission’s work.

We are pleased to share that we continue to operate on a full schedule. Our partnerships within the community have proven to be especially beneficial during this crisis. Because of our relationship with Independent School District 191, we established drive-thru distributions at 4 low-income elementary schools and have served an average of 160 families at each distribution. In partnership with MVTA we established a large scale Pop Up drive-thru - serving hundreds of families in a few hours. We launched our Mobile Lunch Box program (typically a summer program) and served 600 meals a week to kids. We have planned for a long-term crisis response and are preparing to serve in excess of 10,000 people each month for the next 6 months.

7,000
10,000
12,000



7,000 Lunches to Students



Doubled Food Purchases



Expanded Mobile Space



Leasing Larger Trucks



250+ New Volunteers



4 School Drive-Thru Distributions



Built 11th Garden




L to R - Staff support an Elementary School Drive Thru in Burnsville packing over 10,000 pounds of produce; volunteers are still going strong at Eagan Pantry, and volunteers slogged through a steady rain at a recent Elementary School Distribution



Become a Grow Hope monthly supporter of The Open Door! Your support provides a steady and predictable source of revenue year-round. Sign up online at www.theopendoorpantry.org or by contacting Sarah O'Brien at 651-888-0630 or sarah@theopendoorpantry.org.

Making Room for Thousands

Before COVID-19 impacted our community, the Emergency Food System was already at capacity. Now, with more than 600,000 Minnesotans out of work, there are thousands of families in need of food support who didn't need help two months ago. Our team immediately began working to find new ways to make more food available to more people. In partnership with Second Harvest Heartland, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority, the City of Egan, All Saints Catholic Church in Lakeville, and Dakota County, we created a series of drive-thru produce distributions designed to support up to 500 families each. These have been the largest events in The Open Door's history with an average of 1,600 people receiving support at each of the first 3 events. More than 65% of families have been first-time visitors to The Open Door.



Pop Up Produce Drive Thrus
 June 5th - West Saint Paul
 June 8th - Apple Valley
 June 15th - Egan
 June 22nd - Lakeville



Lunch Box Launches Early, Gears Up for Biggest Summer Yet

The Mobile Lunch Box program launched early this year and has served nearly 8,000 meals to low-income students during this crisis. Our team is finalizing plans to expand operations this summer to unprecedented levels! With an improved model and more community support we are planning to serve 30,000 meals this summer! We will partner once again with ISD 191 & ISD 196 to work with neighborhoods where there is the greatest need.



Mobile Lunch Box volunteers with family at a distribution site.

Since the crisis began, Mobile Lunch Box has served nearly 8,000 meals directly to low-income students. This summer we plan to serve 30k meals!



Snack Donations Needed to Help Feed Kids This Summer

TOD seeks snack donations. If you are able, donate. Fill a plastic grocery bag with 5-7 of the following items: a box of snack crackers (Cheez-It, goldfish, etc.) a package of kid-friendly granola bars (no protein bars), a package of applesauce, a package of fruit cups, either a box of mac and cheese or a package of easy mac, a box of fruit snacks, a box of instant oatmeal. See photo for example of items needed for each snack bag. Please, no notes or messages of any type included in the bags. One bag filled with enough snacks to last one week will be provided to 600 children each week.

VOLUNTEERS ARE THE OPEN DOOR

26,595 volunteer hours were  **donated in 2019**

That's equivalent to 12 full-time employees

Working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks



Financial Impact
\$656,630

Based on the Independent Sector's estimated value of volunteer time



Volunteers are the heart and soul of The Open Door, and our work wouldn't be possible without them. This year, amidst a pandemic and the uncertainty that followed, volunteers helped us feed more people.



Garden to Table in its 11th Growing Season

Welcomes new garden, more plots

This year, Valley Natural Foods invited The Open Door to take over the management of the community garden plots at the grocery store. This partnership opens up 33 new plots to G2Table clients.

Early this spring, clients and volunteers worked together to build 36 raised garden beds at our St. Joseph's site.

The raised beds will introduce new soil to the location, which will help plants grow and gardeners to have a more bountiful garden.



Alpa works at our newest garden at VNF (above), and Volunteers build raised beds in Rosemount

MEET THOMAS, G2T GARDENER



Thomas came to know Garden to Table when he learned about the program as a client of the Eagan Pantry. A quick application process later, Thomas was officially a gardener, although he had "never gardened in my life." His advice to a first-time gardener is that gardening is not predictable - but do it anyhow. "My biggest takeaway is when you grow something yourself it tastes better than anything you can buy in a grocery store."

Struggling with health issues relating to a compromised immune system, and the medical bills to follow, Thomas has relied on the food shelf on and off for about ten years. Prior to being a client, Thomas originally thought a food shelf was for extremely desperate families who needed food to feed their kids. What he came to realize is that it wasn't enough to live on one meal a day. He recognized that food is often the first thing we deprive ourselves of when struggling and made the determination it shouldn't be. Thomas encourages others to ignore the stigma of using a food pantry and get the help they need.

Thank you to our annual partners!

