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If you have already sent a financial contribution to help meet the holiday need, please enjoy the newsletter, and keep us in mind for another time.

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Your contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Federal Tax I.D. #22-2513482
Make your donation online at foodpantry.org, or send a check to The Open Door, 28 Emerson Avenue, Gloucester, MA 01930



OUR MISSION

The mission of The Open Door is to alleviate the impact of hunger in our community. We use practical strategies to connect people to good food, to advocate on behalf of those in need, and to engage others in the work of building food security.

WHAT WE DO

- Food Pantry
- Community Meals
- Summer Lunch
- Mobile Market
- Senior Market
- Holiday Baskets
- SNAP Application Assistance
- Nutrition Education and Outreach
- Second Glance Thrift Store & Furniture Annex
- Job Training Advocacy
- Community Service

Second Glance

The Thrift Store of The Open Door

Second Glance is open for shopping and donations Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. 2 Pond Road, Gloucester.

CONNECT WITH US!



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Connecting People to Good Food

From PowerSnack to Mobile Market, families and children of Veterans' Memorial Elementary in Gloucester are getting a boost in their nutrition with the rich rainbow of healthy food choices now offered in their school.



PowerSnack Debuts at Local Elementary School

Each day, before they head home for the afternoon, children at Veterans' Elementary have the option of fueling up with PowerSnack, a new after-school supper program offered by The Open Door in partnership with the Gloucester Public School Food Department. The hearty snack includes an entrée paired with fresh fruit and vegetable choices selected by the child from a student-sized salad bar. The custom salad bar was recently purchased with funding from a grant through Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation.



The Open Door kitchen staff, who create the tasty treats that fill the salad bar pans, know the key to getting children to try new foods often lies in the branding and presentation. A smoothie, made with spinach, banana, mango, and orange juice, becomes a Shrek Shake. A splash of olive oil and a few minutes under the broiler turns leafy kale into Crispy Veggie Chips. Everyday food is greeted with enthusiasm when it is fashioned into appealing shapes or dressed up with a dollop of whimsy (or whipped cream) to make it fun.



"Food is a huge priority for many of our families," says Principal Cherylann Parker, who was initially skeptical about the salad bar's influence, but has seen first-hand the difference it has made. She noticed that when produce was presented in the lunch line, the students often refused eat it, but when the children use the salad bar, the children "choose it, put it together and eat it. They own it!"



She enjoys watching her students learn about healthy choices and discover new foods at PowerSnack every day. "They feel like adventurers!" says Parker.

Parents are also thrilled by the salad bar and happy to see healthy choices for their children when school gets out. "It's a great thing for the always hungry after-school crowd," says Anne, a mom whose ten-year-old "loves the salad bar" and looks forward to the fresh fruit choices each day.

"We say nutrition education begins with choice," says Jennifer Perry, Nutrition Coordinator for The Open Door. "When children choose what they put on their plates, there is a better chance that they will develop lifelong patterns that include healthy foods."



Dear Friends,

When I was growing up, our family put together a lot of jigsaw puzzles. We would gather around the table, and together we would work to make the pieces fit.

Puzzling is a science of sorts—first you dump out all the pieces. Then you turn them over. Then you put together the edge pieces, and so on and so forth. Bit by bit, you fill in the center until a complete picture emerges. It can be a satisfying experience.

But what happens if some of the pieces are missing, and your picture is not complete?

For many who struggle to make ends meet, The Open Door provides the missing piece of the puzzle. Our mission is to alleviate the impact of hunger in our community. We connect people to good food, advocate on behalf of those in need, and engage others in the work of building food security.

We connect people to good food through our food pantry and our Community Meals program. The food pantry provides a variety of produce, milk, eggs and canned goods. Our meals are served five nights a week complete with a full-service salad bar.

We offer the Mobile Market, a free farmers market, located in four public housing neighborhoods, two schools where 50% or more of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and at Senior Centers in both Gloucester and Rockport.

Our Summer Lunch program has grown from just two sites to eleven sites where kids can get a free lunch during the months when school is not in session.

We offer cooking classes and nutrition education. We grow food in twelve raised beds along the side of our building to use in our kitchen and pantry programs.

We advocate every day for people who need help, and we advocate for policies that better serve the people who have missing pieces in their puzzles. We engage people, just like you, to help us carry out the mission of The Open Door.

CONNECT. ADVOCATE. ENGAGE.

Last year, The Open Door programs served more than 5,400 people from Gloucester, Rockport, Manchester, Essex and Ipswich. In Gloucester, 1 in 7 residents used our programs last year. The need is great, but together we are greater.

This holiday season as we give thanks for the pieces that make up our lives, would you please consider making a donation to help someone who is struggling to put their pieces together? Every dollar that you donate or pledge by December 31, will be equally matched by an anonymous donor. Your contribution makes a big difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Sincerely,

Julie LaFontaine, Executive Director



School-based Mobile Market at Veterans' Memorial Elementary School

Every Friday afternoon, just as the school bell rings, Veterans' families flock to the cafeteria to participate in The Open Door's Mobile Market, a free farmers' market where enrolled participants can take home an average of twenty pounds of fresh produce each week.

In less than 30 minutes, more than 100 families move through the line, as they choose from the fresh fruits and vegetables piled high in brightly colored baskets. Market offerings include weekly staples such as oranges, bananas, potatoes, and onions, as well as crops from local harvests. Simple recipes for new ways to use the produce are available along with tasty samples. Like an air-traffic controller, Stan Snavely, the Mobile Market manager, helps families negotiate the flurry so they can take good food home to their families for the weekend.

According to Principal Cherylann Parker, the Mobile Market has also enriches the Veterans' community overall because it "pulls parents in, they become more involved, and they've become a part of our school. I can't tell you how much this means to us."

Parents who use the program say they appreciate being able to provide their children with the healthy snacks and fruit that seemed out of reach before Mobile Market came to their school.

Veterans' mom, Elaine says that if it wasn't for Mobile Market "we would have struggled to pay our bills—food was a luxury." She works two part-time jobs to support her family and two children. "I pay my bills first, and live on the after," she says. "The biggest joy for me, is getting the fresh produce—I put it to great use—it's the best, and it's all a big help."

Veterans' is one of The Open Door's eight Mobile Market sites located in four public housing neighborhoods, two schools with high numbers of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, and two senior centers serving low-income communities in Gloucester, Rockport and Ipswich. Last year the Mobile Market distributed 199,732 pounds of fresh produce and groceries to 893 households representing 2,249 low-income men, women, children, and seniors. The Open Door also partners with local sister food pantries in the North Shore Hunger Network to bring Mobile Market to their communities.

Veterans' teacher Pam Ashe with students and some of food they collected for The Open Door. Participating students divided into two teams to engage in a little healthy competition.

