



The Open Door
 Julie LaFontaine, President and CEO
 28 Emerson Ave.,
 Gloucester, MA 01930

Media Contact: Kelsey Bode
 Email: kelsey.bode@foodpantry.org
 Phone: 978-283-6776 x 226

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SmartChoice™ at The Open Door Modernizes Pantry Shopping

New Online Ordering System Returns Agency to Shoppers

GLOUCESTER — A new online ordering system at **The Open Door** has expanded choice more than ever before for client shoppers.

SmartChoice™ at The Open Door launched this June and allows clients to place a weekly grocery order that matches any special dietary needs they may have as well as their taste.



Once clients sign into SmartChoice™ at The Open Door at FOODPANTRY.org/order, they create their weekly grocery order using the above menu. (Image Courtesy of The Open Door)

Clients select from featured items, fruit and juices, vegetables, protein and dairy, ready-to-eat items, grains and cereal, baking, snacks, condiments, special dietary items, pet supplies, household supplies, health and hygiene products, baby food and supplies, and miscellaneous items.

“When people choose their own groceries, we know they’re getting the food they’ll eat and enjoy to thrive,” President and CEO Julie LaFontaine said. “We’re proud to have this new resource for our clients.”

Before the online ordering system became available, The Open Door provided bags of pre-selected groceries for clients starting in March 2020 in response to the pandemic. This was done through a Curbside, No-Contact model used at both the Gloucester and Ipswich food pantries, and protected the health and well-being of clients, volunteers, and staff alike while also expanding the nonprofit’s capacity to meet increased need. While the curbside model was necessary to feed more people, it left shoppers with less personal choice.

At the height of the pandemic, The Open Door met a 40% increase in need for food resources, and continues to meet ongoing need.

Today, clients are still picking-up their groceries at either site or receiving deliveries if they qualify for The Open Door grocery and meal delivery program. However, SmartChoice™ at The Open Door brings more choice to the table than ever before. It accounts for every item available in The Open Door’s inventory, working seamlessly in partnership with the warehouse. Grocery orders are managed by the Fulfillment Center, where staff and volunteers package grocery orders Monday through Friday.



Volunteer Laurie Fenton prepares a grocery order placed via SmartChoice™ at The Open Door. (Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)

Translation services are available over the phone in many languages. Those without internet access, with questions, or who prefer to place their order by phone are also welcome to do so by calling 978-283-6776.

About The Open Door

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.

Founded in 1978, The Open Door is a 501 (c)(3) tax exempt nonprofit and community food resource center for low-income residents of Gloucester, Rockport, Manchester, Essex, Ipswich, Hamilton, Boxford, Rowley, Topsfield, and Wenham. In 2020, The Open Door helped stabilize the lives and health of 9,681 unduplicated people from 4,703 households through the distribution of 2.46 million pounds of food, amounting to 2.05 million meals. Requests for food assistance during this pandemic year were up 27 percent.

Programs of The Open Door include two food pantries (located in Gloucester and in Ipswich), 12 Mobile Markets, Community Meals, SNAP Application assistance and Advocacy, Medically Tailored Groceries, Nutrition Education, Therapy and Counseling, Food Rescue, Summer Meals for Kids, On Your Mark Job Training and Internships, Holiday Baskets, Senior Soup & Salad, (NEW) SmartChoice™ at The Open Door and (NEW) Grocery and Meal Delivery. Second Glance, the thrift store of The Open Door, provides revenue for the organization, referrals for people in need, and recycles textiles and other materials.

For more information, visit FOODPANTRY.org.

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