



**NORTH SHORE
VETERANS
COLLABORATIVE**
FOR VETS, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

**VET
CENTER**



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, March 23, 2022

The Open Door Teams up with Veterans Groups and the Y to Offer Mobile Market for Veterans

Farmers Truck Rolls in with Free, Fresh Produce



U.S. Navy Veteran Thomas Baggett, of Peabody, visited today's The Open Door Mobile Market at Salem Veterans' Services. (Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)

SALEM—Brimming with fresh produce and extra groceries, The Open Door Mobile Market Farmers Truck provided free groceries to local veterans on Wednesday.

The event was offered by The Open Door and hosted by Salem Veterans' Services in partnership with North Shore Veterans Collaborative, Lowell Vet Center, The Salem Pantry, and the Salem and Ipswich YMCAs.

“The Farmers Truck builds on our established best practices Mobile Market model, a program designed to reduce traditional barriers to food access by bringing fresh produce and extra groceries directly to the places where people live, learn and gather,” The Open Door President and CEO Julie LaFontaine said. “Since the Mobile Market was first launched in 2005, it has been replicated by dozens of hunger-relief organizations across the Commonwealth. We are proud to

be invited to extend this special market in partnership with other North Shore agencies to help connect our veterans to good, healthy food.”

"I love it. The produce...I'm diabetic, and this is what I need," said Thomas Baggett, of Peabody, a U.S. Navy Veteran who visited the Mobile Market. "I just ran out of food. I don't get paid until next Friday."

The Mobile Market, held at Salem Veterans' Services at 401 Bridge St., began at 11 a.m. and closed at noon on Wednesday, March 23. In all, 211 people, including veterans and community members, received free, fresh groceries at the event.

“We are very excited to have hosted this event and by the tremendous networking support,” said Salem Veterans' Services Director Kim Emerling. “It generated quite a bit of enthusiasm among our veteran community and the community at large. The success was beyond our expectations. We look forward to further collaboration in the future to bring this much needed service to everyone.”

Groceries available at the Mobile Market included red delicious apples, pears, oranges, bananas, onions, sweet potatoes, potatoes, romaine lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, milk, eggs, pork tenderloin, olive oil, cereal bars, beef stew, black beans, and white rice.

About The Open Door Mobile Market Program

The Open Door Mobile Market program was first launched at Riverdale Park in Gloucester in 2005 and has since expanded to serve sites throughout the nonprofit's service area. The Mobile Market program provides qualifying individuals with up to 25 pounds of fresh produce and protein choices at no cost, as well as nutrition education and outreach. The produce is grown locally, purchased wholesale, or procured from the Greater Boston Food Bank.

The program connects families, children, veterans, and seniors in the North Shore to healthy food in a socially acceptable way in the communities where they live, learn, and gather. By reducing barriers to access such as transportation, cost of food, nutrition education, and social stigma, the program reduces the impact of poor nutrition that leaves many in need vulnerable to devastating health consequences.

The Mobile Market is a Best Practices model which has been replicated across the Commonwealth.

All sites are strategically located to reduce the need for transportation and placed in areas with the greatest need.

In 2021, The Open Door helped stabilize the lives and health of 8,516 people from 4,176 households through the distribution of 1.83 million pounds of food. Its Mobile Market served 1,883 people with approximately 179,000 pounds of food.

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.

For more information, visit FOODPANTRY.org.

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*Dozens of people lined up before the Mobile Market officially began at 11 a.m.
(Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)*



The Open Door Mobile Market Farmers Truck allows people to easily select the produce and dairy they want and need for themselves and their families.

(Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)



*Fresh, vibrant produce at the Mobile Market included bananas, pears, romaine lettuce, tomatoes, and more.
(Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)*