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NSCC PROVIDES ANOTHER FOOD RESOURCE

BY ADAM BASS | April 1, 2022



Scott Silva with the Open Door Mobile Market restocks bananas during the food distribution at North Shore Community College on Friday. (Spenser Hasak)

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LYNN — North Shore Community College partnered with a Gloucester-based food-resource center to hold an outdoor mobile food market on its Lynn campus Friday morning.

The food markets coordinated by NSCC and The Open Door are aimed at reducing food insecurity among college students.

Friday's event included food staples, such as dairy, protein and produce, which were brought by the Gloucester organization.

Julie LaFontaine, president of The Open Door, said her organization has been working with NSCC since 2016 to distribute packaged food to people in need.

The mobile food markets at NSCC, however, are a new addition to the collaboration, LaFontaine said.

"The first one of these we held back in March," she said. "It was fully equipped with produce like apples, oranges and pears."

The Open Door, which was established 40 years ago, has two food pantries in Gloucester and Ipswich. It describes its mission as feeding those who cannot afford to buy food.

Its produce truck, which was at the Lynn campus on Friday, also made an appearance at the college's Danvers campus last month. It will visit the Lynn campus on the first Friday of each month, and the Danvers campus on the second Thursday of each month until May.

The organization buys produce from Chelsea Market and receives food from the Greater Boston Food Bank, LaFontaine said. The organization spent \$2,500 on produce for Friday's event, she said.

Scott Silva, one of the produce truck's distributors, said the grab-and-go style of the truck allows for better interaction with those attending the event.

"It's more convenient for everyone to come here and pick their produce," Silva said. "I have been doing this for about three to four years now."

Mike Doyle, a math teacher at NSCC, said he loves to help out Open Door whenever they come to the Lynn campus.

"Being outside is so much healthier for our students," Doyle said. "I always love helping them when they bring food and produce."

NSCC President William Heineman said approximately 100 NSCC students receive food and produce from these events. He said having this food resource is important for students, because a lot of them are facing food insecurity that affects their schoolwork and personal lives.

"The challenge isn't so much about what's going on at school; it's, for many students, what's going on at home," Heineman said. "The NSCC staff is so supportive in this, too, and they are able to get creative when helping distribute food."