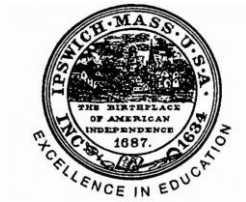




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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Ipswich Middle School Walk for Hunger Raises More than \$18,000 for The Open Door



*From left: The Open Door President and CEO Julie LaFontaine, seventh grade student Colin Ramey, Principal Kathy McMahon, and seventh grade student Andrew Young.
(Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)*

IPSWICH— For the first time since the pandemic hit, Ipswich Middle School held its annual Walk for Hunger in-person on Friday, raising more than \$18,000 to support the Ipswich Community Food Pantry, a program of The Open Door.

More than 300 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students raised funds leading up to the event and pledged to walk approximately 10 miles on Friday, from High Street to Great Neck and back.

“Seeing young people become so engaged in hunger-relief and the way the Ipswich community bands together to support this event is exactly the neighbors-helping-neighbors attitude that makes what The Open Door does possible,” said President and CEO Julie LaFontaine. “Thank you to the amazing young people who took our mission to heart and raised money to help others, and to all the staff, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and community members who helped make this event possible.”

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 Ipswich Community Food Pantry, located at 00 Southern Heights, distributed 286,000 pounds of food to 813 people.

“This is yet another example of the caring and socially conscious students that we have in our schools. I’m so incredibly proud of the middle school students and staff for all that they do for our community,” said Superintendent Dr. Brian Blake. “Seeing them on the walk route today having fun, chatting with friends, and knowing the good they were doing for The Open Door was inspiring. Congratulations on not only reaching, but exceeding their goal!”

One seventh grade student, Andrew Young, raised more than \$1,100.

“I’ve never really done anything like it before,” Young said. I didn’t expect it to be the highest amount raised. It just felt good knowing I was helping my community.”

“I am extremely proud of the Ipswich Middle School students who answered the call to action by collecting donations for the local food pantry and walking as a community to raise awareness of food insecurity in our town,” said Principal Kathy McMahon. “The IMS Walk for Hunger is a long-standing tradition of our school, showing students that they can make a difference and inspire change. “

The annual tradition was canceled in 2021 due to the pandemic, and a socially distant “Help for Hunger” campaign was held in its place in 2020, allowing students to raise money online.

The Ipswich Middle School Walk for Hunger has benefited The Open Door since the nonprofit took over the management of the Ipswich Community Food Pantry in 2016. Each year, students strive to raise \$10,000 through the Walk for Hunger.

Donations for the Ipswich Middle School Walk for Hunger can be made through the weekend by visiting [FOODPANTRY.org/donate](https://www.foodpantry.org/donate). Please specify that your donation is for the Ipswich Middle School Walk for Hunger.

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 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.

For more information, visit [FOODPANTRY.org](https://www.foodpantry.org).

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From left: Seventh grade students Olivia Leary, Adriana Hardy, Sarah Boroff, and Joselyn Ocasio. Students were encouraged to take fruit from The Open Door Mobile Market Farmers Truck after the approximately 10-mile Walk for Hunger.

(Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)



The Open Door Director of Advocacy and Development Sarah Grow, back left, and President and CEO Julie LaFontaine, center, cheer on students and staff at the Ipswich Middle School Walk for Hunger.

(Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)



*Ipswich Middle School students walked approximately 10 miles on Friday for the school's annual Walk for Hunger, raising funds to support the Ipswich Community Food Pantry, a program of The Open Door.
(Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)*



*From left: The Open Door volunteer Marsha Sloane, President and CEO Julie LaFontaine, and Director of Advocacy and Development Sarah Grow cheer students on.
(Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)*



Students choose fruit from The Open Door Mobile Market Farmers Truck.

(Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)