HERE FOR HARD TIMES
You can help connect local people to the groceries and meals they need

FOODPANTRY.org
I try not to despair,” says Mariana*, a 45-year-old Gloucester mother of four children under the age of 12, when asked about how she will manage the record high food prices and electricity increases her family will face this winter.

Mariana is a stay-at-home mom. Her husband makes $52,000 a year without benefits, but with $2,200 due each month for rent as well as an $180 electrical bill, $140 gas bill, and $80 internet bill—something her children need for school—little is left for food, other necessities, or emergencies.

Mariana is far from alone in her worries about what the future holds if prices continue to climb. As it is, her family barely gets by. She keeps her family fed with healthy fruits and vegetables, as well as chicken, beef, and other essentials thanks to weekly orders from The Open Door.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index reported this October that the cost of food at home rose 13% from September 2021 to September 2022. For example, the cost of eggs rose by 30.5%, and flour increased 24.2%.

“We haven’t walked out of the grocery store recently reeling from the cost of buying groceries? For those who are on the cusp financially, it has been devastating,” President and CEO Julie LaFontaine said. “People are choosing between rent, utilities, and food. The Open Door fills that gap, but we need help from those who can give, especially as requests for food assistance continue to trend upward.”

This summer and early fall, as food prices continued to rise, requests for food assistance at The Open Door climbed 31% over the same period last year.

“Unfortunately, through COVID and the past two years, things changed. The price of goods and services went up,” says James, a 61-year-old Marine veteran of Gloucester with a fixed monthly income of $1,700. “Using The Open Door saves me a considerable amount of money when it comes to groceries.”

Lisa*, a 79-year-old single woman in Rockport, first came to The Open Door for help with an application for SNAP (Food Stamps). She also uses The Open Door Mobile Market to get fresh produce and eggs. Food is far from the only basic need that’s gotten more expensive over the last year: rent, utilities, and the cost of transportation continue to rise. The cost of fuel has increased 58.1% and electricity rose 15.5% from September 2021 to September 2022, according to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics.

There’s a break-even point where your money isn’t stretching as far as you need to cover the basic things in life.” ~Lisa, a client.
However, in Massachusetts National Grid projects electricity costs will rise 64% this winter.

For Abby, 58, of Rowley, getting groceries from the food pantry felt surreal at first.

“The first month, it was so embarrassing. Every time I pulled into the driveway, I was like, I can’t believe we have to do this,” Abby says.

“I have no money, and I have to feed the kids.” ~ Abby, a client.

A single, working mom, Abby fell far behind on bills last year when her children’s father stopped paying child support.

“The stress is crushing me,” she said. “I can’t focus at times. I’m petrified we’re going to get evicted.”

For Abby and many others, the cost of food is one less thing to worry about thanks to The Open Door. It can be the difference between eating, paying rent, getting medicine, keeping the heat on, or filling the gas tank.

Your help makes all the difference for local people like Mariana, James, Lisa, and Abby.

Donate today and help put food on the table tomorrow by visiting FOODPANTRY.org/donate. Checks may also be made out to The Open Door and mailed to:

The Open Door
28 Emerson Avenue,
Gloucester MA 01930.

*Names have been changed.*

Food Pantry Coordinator and ESL Advocate Carolina Sosa stocks oranges in The Open Door Fulfillment Center.
Congratulations to Our 2022 Award Recipients

Outstanding Community Partner Award
Ipswich Family YMCA

“Healthy living and social responsibility are two of our huge tenets. Partnering with The Open Door was almost a no brainer; We share a lot of the same values looking at health and keeping people healthy,” Ipswich Family YMCA Executive Director Chris Bevilacqua said. “To be able to have a partner like The Open Door that can champion those values has been great.”

Helen Muise Award
Volunteer Tony Gross

“I come from a family of service, both my mother and father were very involved in the community politically and actively through different organizations,” Gross said. “It was just a natural fit for me, so I kept volunteering more and more.”

Helen Muise Award
Volunteer Grace Hamada

“People don’t come in to [Second Glance] just to shop. They come in for social time. It’s a very special place like that, it’s not just a store,” Hamada said. “Everything you see here is donated and all the money you spend here goes to The Open Door. That’s one of the things that brought me in.”

Charlotte Pope Award
Volunteer Marc Nicastro

“I know people personally who have utilized the services at The Open Door and just knowing they have food in the refrigerator and on the table is rewarding,” Nicastro said.

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From left: Gloucester Mayor Greg Verga, volunteer Tony Gross, volunteer Grace Hamada, Sen. Bruce Tarr, and President and CEO Julie LaFontaine at the Autumn Breakfast.
Dear Friends,

Given our current economic condition, it would be easy to dwell on the challenges of our times. However, as the year draws to a close, I find myself reflecting with gratitude on the power of community and the collective difference we can make with simple acts of service.

Sometimes we think we must do big things to change the world, but it is truly the practical daily acts of service right where we live and work that make a lasting impact on people’s lives. When what we hold in common is dearer than our differences, the human spirit triumphs over adversity.

One of our dispatch team members took the call of a woman last summer. She had reached out to find food resources for her family. Her daughter had special dietary needs due to a gluten allergy. She was struggling to buy food that would keep her nourished and healthy. We told her we could help.

“The Open Door is an answer to my prayer,” she whispered through her tears. “I said a prayer before I called that I would find the help we needed, and I did.”

Simple, practical acts of service can be the answer to the anguished cry of a mother’s heart. These are things we can all do.

Now coming into the months when we give thanks, there are families in our community who are struggling to make ends meet. Your support is needed.

With rising energy costs and grocery bills climbing, people are making difficult choices to make ends meet. Paying rent or buying food? Heating the house or buying food? Food should never be a choice. It is a right and a necessity.

Last year, The Open Door improved the lives and health of more than 8,500 unique individuals. We need your help to meet the needs of our community.

Will you donate today to set the table with nourishment for the body and hope for the spirit?

Julie Hazen LaFontaine
President and CEO

COMING IN SPRING/SUMMER 2023

THE OPEN DOOR FOOD AND NUTRITION CENTER

Want to help us cross the finish line for our capital campaign?
Email us at donate@foodpantry.org and thank you!
Second Glance Expands with SG Home

This November, Second Glance expanded its footprint at the Pond Road Plaza in Gloucester with a second building dedicated to furniture and home décor for every room of your home.

Whether you shop for one-of-a-kind home decor, classic or funky furniture, or are getting away from fast fashion, sales at Second Glance support hunger-relief programs at The Open Door. Shoppers and donors feel good knowing their dollars and treasures help keep local people fed.

To make a donation appointment, visit FOODPANTRY.org/booknow

Second Glance and SG Home are both open from Wednesday to Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Seasonal Sunday hours.

Questions? Call us at 978-283-4298 or visit FOODPANTRY.org/theglance

Follow Second Glance on Facebook and Instagram @secondglancethriftstore for the latest themed shopping dates, updates and announcements.

FOOD COSTS ARE AT A 40-YEAR-HIGH
HELP FEED LOCAL PEOPLE

FOODPANTRY.ORG/DONATE
OR DONATE BY MAIL

Checks can be made out to The Open Door and mailed to:
28 Emerson Avenue
Gloucester MA 01930

Thank you!

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