



OPEN ARMS OF MINNESOTA

Kitchen Campaign: Building the Future of Open Arms

It seems like a simple notion that people who are confronting critical illness shouldn't do so alone and without one of life's basic necessities, food. But it happens every day.

Every day in Minnesota someone is diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, breast cancer, or some other disease, and that diagnosis changes people's lives. For some, it mobilizes a personal support network. Family, friends, and colleagues arrange transportation to doctor's appointments, assist with household chores, and drop off home-cooked meals. For others, who lack that strong support system, a similar diagnosis can throw their lives into chaos. Frequent medical appointments and complicated treatment schedules result in a loss of work. Sick parents find it difficult to adequately care for their children. Escalating medical bills mean there is less money at the end of the month for essential needs like shelter and food. At Open Arms, we know this happens every day because our clients tell us so.

Since our founding in 1986, Open Arms has been committed to bringing compassion, dignity, and hope to people living with HIV/AIDS by preparing nutritious meals and delivering those meals to our clients' doors. In the process of providing over one million meals

to people with HIV/AIDS, we realized that we had developed a model of care that could also benefit others in our community.

In 2003, we began sharing that model – nutritionally appropriate meals prepared in our kitchen and delivered, free of charge, to people diagnosed with breast cancer, Lou Gehrig's disease, multiple sclerosis, and other chronic and progressive diseases. And we didn't just serve the person who was ill. We delivered meals to anyone in a household affected by disease, including caregivers and dependent children.

Year after year, for over two decades, Open Arms kept up with increasing requests for service. In the process, we developed the expertise to tailor menus to meet the specific nutritional needs of people affected by many different diseases. We created a sophisticated volunteer network of nearly 1,500 people to help prepare meals in our kitchen seven days a week, and to then deliver those meals within a 225-mile area of the Twin Cities. And every day, more and more people learned of our work, and asked for our help.

Today, the physical limitations of our facility are what stand in the way of Open Arms making an even greater impact in the community. We know

WE ARE BUILDING A KITCHEN WITH A HEART SO WE CAN TAKE OUR UNIQUE MODEL OF CARE, HONED OVER TWO DECADES OF SERVICE, AND SHARE IT WITH AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE.

the need is greater than what we can currently serve. We know we can do more. And to do more, we need a larger building with a better equipped kitchen.

Open Arms has announced our most ambitious project to date: a capital campaign to construct a new building to serve more people who are sick and need nutritious food in order to lead dignified and independent lives for as long as possible. The heart of our building, a state-of-the-art kitchen, will create a welcoming environment where all who enter can see our mission unfold: *With open arms we nourish body, mind, and soul.*

Every meal at Open Arms is prepared with love, care, and compassion, and is indeed created to nourish body, mind, and soul. A new kitchen will allow us to do more – to provide a breakfast, lunch, and dinner to 1,000 clients, their caregivers, and dependent children each week – nearly three times the number of clients we can currently serve.

We will have the necessary space to increase volunteer opportunities by adding more kitchen shifts and expanding meal deliveries from five to seven days a week. Our kitchen will have walk-in coolers and freezers that will allow us to safely store a larger number of meals and to finally accept donations of perishable food. With a separate baking area we can

increase the variety of desserts we offer and can even begin baking our own bread. But a larger facility will do much more for Open Arms than just increase meal production.

Open Arms' success depends on the quality of our meals, the satisfaction of our clients, and the commitment of our volunteers. Volunteers are essential to our service, and whether they work in the kitchen, deliver meals, or assist with administrative tasks, their needs are being integrated throughout the design of the new building. Our current shortage of parking will be addressed with a large parking lot that will be especially convenient for drivers who need to get in and out of Open Arms quickly to make their deliveries. A "prep room" will provide a comfortable space for volunteers and kitchen staff to don aprons and head coverings and thoroughly wash their hands before entering the kitchen and beginning to work with food. We will also have a dedicated space where volunteers can interact with one another and with staff members to strengthen the genuine personal connections that volunteers have told us make their experiences at Open Arms especially meaningful.

Our Kitchen Campaign was launched with the donation of property, perfectly situated for our operation, at the intersection of Bloomington Avenue and 25th Street in Minneapolis. Our new



location will be a convenient drive for our corporate partners who deliver meals over their lunch hours. We will be centrally located to the freeway system, which is essential for the efficient delivery of meals in the Twin Cities and surrounding suburbs. The property is on a bus line and is just minutes from a light rail stop and the city's bike trails, all of which will make us accessible to volunteers and clients. This location also reaffirms our decade-long commitment to the Phillips Neighborhood, a specific area in Minneapolis that continues to need champions. As much as possible we will incorporate "green" components into the design and construction of the building, and will try to include gardens and public artwork in the landscape.

Open Arms is at a singular moment in our history. We have a unique opportunity to expand our services to meet an ever-increasing need to provide nutritious meals for people with serious illnesses. We will continue to open our arms wider than ever, but we can not do this alone.

For our vision to become a reality, for our Kitchen Campaign to be successful, we need the participation of everyone, with gifts large and small. Together, with your generous support, we will do more than just build a new home for Open Arms – we will build a future where no one who is sick in this community will also go hungry.



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