



openarms

Opening Our Arms Wider
to Nourish Our Neighbors

A Capital and Capacity Building Campaign: Background

Open Arms of Minnesota has launched a fundraising campaign to increase our capacity to nourish critically ill Minnesotans and their families in need. Fueled by a strong, passionate community of volunteers, donors and partners, our goal is to open our arms wider by serving more neighbors with our free medically tailored meals and nutrition services. This campaign will allow us to expand our message of love, hope and wellness to a rapidly growing list of Minnesotans facing life-threatening illnesses, who are in urgent need of our services.

With Open Arms, we nourish body, mind, and soul.

Founded in 1986, Open Arms of Minnesota (OAM) has brought nourishment, compassion, and hope to tens of thousands of people in the Twin Cities. At the height of the AIDS epidemic, our founder Bill Rowe prepared and delivered meals from his own kitchen to friends who were dying in isolation because of HIV/AIDS. Although he brought them nourishing, comforting food, perhaps the most important delivery he made was the message of care and hope. His compassion and dedication has driven Open Arms to open our own arms wider to serve not only clients with HIV/AIDS, but also clients with other life-threatening illnesses including cancer, congestive heart failure, end-stage renal disease, ALS and more.



Today, OAM is the only nonprofit organization in the state of Minnesota preparing and delivering hundreds of thousands of free, medically tailored meals every year to a community of clients whose lives are drastically changed by life-threatening illnesses. Although there are other organizations that provide food for individuals in need, there is no other organization that combines the services of Open Arms of Minnesota to grow, prepare and deliver free, made-from-scratch meals, medically tailored for someone facing a life-threatening illness and accompanied by individualized nutrition education from a registered dietitian. Clients are referred to Open Arms by a network of healthcare partners from the Twin

Cities' most established systems, including Health Partners M Health Fairview, Allina, North Memorial, Hennepin Healthcare and the Minneapolis VA Health system.

Although OAM does not use income as a qualifier for services, 80% of our clients are struggling with food insecurity and/or poverty. They are some of the state's most vulnerable citizens, oftentimes dealing with more than one significant health issue on top of a serious illness. And in the age of COVID-19, our immune-compromised clients are even more isolated, quarantined to their homes due to the extreme risk that COVID-19 poses for them.

In Fiscal Year 2020, OAM prepared and delivered over 600,000 meals to more than 2,000 primary clients, their caregivers, and dependents. Due to COVID-19, Open Arms has experienced a 35% increase in need for our services, and we are on track to prepare, home deliver and ship more than 720,000 meals in FY 2021.

We build and engage community.

WHAT we do is special, but HOW we do it is truly unique. Our purpose is to build a joyful and nourishing community that provides medically tailored meals and hope for people experiencing a significant health crisis or living with a life-threatening illness. The OAM community is powered by **passionate, dedicated volunteers** who are integral to the operation and success of the organization. Open Arms' volunteer community is easily our biggest asset.



Open Arms' volunteers take a lead role in hand-delivering meals to our clients living throughout the 7-county metro area, reducing isolation for many of Minnesota's most vulnerable and immune-compromised individuals. Additionally, hundreds of volunteers every day help Open Arms prepare and package thousands of meals in our kitchens, grow and cultivate food at our five farm locations, and help ship thousands of meals per week to our clients living in rural and out-state Minnesota.

In Fiscal Year 2020, despite drastically reduced numbers due to COVID-19, more than 5,700 volunteers donated approximately 60,000 hours of their time in the gardens, in the kitchen, on the road for meal delivery, and in the office, helping with administrative tasks and fundraising.

Partners help us deepen our connections and strengthen our community.

In addition to our core meal preparation and delivery program, Open Arms provides:

Kitchen of Opportunities: Open Arms manages the Kitchen of Opportunities, a second off-site kitchen location in a unique partnership with Metro Meals on Wheels. OAM staff members produce 2,000 meals every day at the Kitchen of Opportunities, using our unique knowledge of healthy and delicious food to elevate the nutrition offered to disabled and homebound seniors in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The meals are purchased by Metro Meals on Wheels and distributed to their members, which generates earned revenue for OAM to support our core programs. **In Fiscal Year 2020, the Kitchen of Opportunities produced more than 308,000 meals for disabled or homebound seniors.**



Open Farms Program: Launched in 2011, Open Farms is our urban garden program, which produces organic vegetables and herbs used throughout the year in client meals, CSAs and special events. Currently, there are five gardens located in Minneapolis, St. Paul and Afton. Open Farms are located on sites that would otherwise sit empty without us; in Minneapolis, we have taken over partial blocks owned by the city, and in St. Paul, one of our gardens is a partnership between OAM and Shalom Senior Housing. **During the summer of 2020, staff and volunteers harvested more than 13,000 pounds of produce grown at our Open Farms locations to be used in client meals and sold as part of a community shared agriculture (CSA) program, resulting in earned revenue for Open Arms.**

Summer Meals Program: Each summer, Open Arms collaborates with local community centers in Minneapolis' Phillips neighborhood to provide more than two meals per day to children at risk of going hungry when school is not in session. **During the summer of 2020, Open Arms provided neighborhood children and families in need with more than 4,500 meals.**