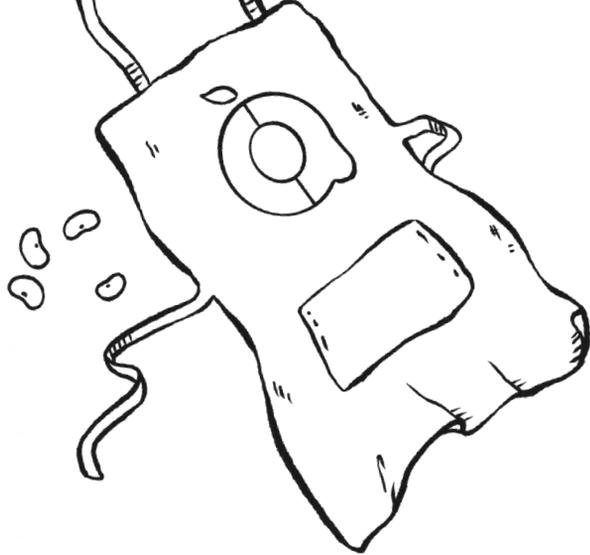


IMPACT REPORT

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025



DEAR FRIENDS



When I take a step back and reflect on the past year, it's hard not to dwell on the challenges we faced and the impact that outside forces continue to have on the clients we serve. However, **meeting the moment** is engrained in the fabric of Open Arms. Stepping up in the face of uncertainty is as much a part of our history as the meals we deliver.

In moments like this, I often imagine our founder, Bill Rowe, in his south Minneapolis apartment in the mid-1980s, asking himself, "What can I possibly do right now?" as the HIV/AIDS epidemic tore through his community. He must have been angry; he must have been scared. But undeterred by the enormity of the need, Bill didn't blink. The parallels between 1986—when Bill began by serving five people meals cooked in that same apartment—and today are striking. Challenge creates opportunity, and Fiscal Year 24-25 clearly demonstrated our resilience and our unwavering commitment to some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

After the change in presidential administrations, uncertainty surrounding the future of state and federal funding created chaos for nutrition providers like Open Arms. Difficult, painful decisions followed. Pausing new client intakes, reducing staff, and scaling back services were distressing but necessary temporary steps. And yet, despite all of this—and despite the uncertainty that still lingers as I write—Open Arms is still here. Still cooking. Still delivering. Still showing up.

And showing up mattered. What did "meeting the moment" look like in FY24-25? It looked like **1,484,845 meals** produced in our kitchens and **3,678 people served**—numbers that surely would have made Bill's jaw drop in awe. It looked like more than **6,500 volunteers** contributing the same number of hours as **35.9 full-time employees**. It looked like a record **1,912 nutrition education and counseling sessions** delivered by our Registered Dietitians. It looked like **more than 12,000 pounds of fresh produce** grown on our farms. It looked like earning **Accreditation from the Food Is Medicine Coalition**.

It looked like launching our **East African Menu** as part of our growing **Cultural Meals Program**. And finally, it looked like a community that showed up with critical financial support, empowering us to fulfill our mission by caring for our neighbors living with serious health issues.

History informs our present-day actions, reminding us that Open Arms was built for difficult moments like these. Food as medicine has always been our vehicle, but resilience, compassion, and community have been our force. As we move into 2026 and the 40th anniversary of Open Arms, we do so with the confidence that—just as Bill did in 1986—we will meet whatever comes next with kindness, hope, and an unwavering commitment to our clients.

With gratitude,

Leah Hebert Welles

CEO, Open Arms of Minnesota





WHO WE ARE:

It's a simple notion: people who are sick should not be without food. Yet, every day, our neighbors with life-threatening illnesses find themselves unable to shop or cook — and, often, without the support network to help.

That's where we come in. Open Arms of Minnesota is a nonprofit organization that prepares and delivers medically tailored meals at no cost to critically ill Minnesotans and their loved ones.

OUR MISSION

By providing food as medicine, we nourish our clients and build community.

OUR PURPOSE

We create an inclusive and joyful community to provide high-quality medically tailored meals, nutrition education and hope to our clients.

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Hand lettering & illustration by Leah Meilander
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“We would be totally lost without Open Arms. Our social security is just not quite enough. It could be doubled and maybe still not enough. Without folks like you, we'd be done. We do thank you.”

– A Client of Open Arms



Community

As neighbors feeding neighbors, we are committed to creating an inclusive community that celebrates life and honors dignity. We intentionally cultivate a joyful community where all members feel genuinely welcome and personally known. We are deeply connected in our work to achieve a common goal and engage in sharing ideas to enhance our collective efforts. We believe that all people who are ill — no matter their economic status — should have access to appropriate nutrition.

Abundance

We operate on the abundance model, believing that the resources and compassion we need to support our work are available in our community. We strive to always be able to say, “Yes, there is room for one more at our table.”

OUR CORE VALUES

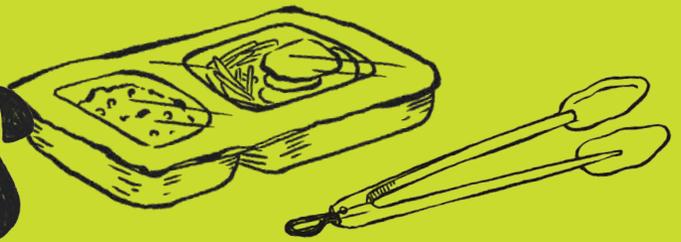
Innovation

We take calculated risks to expand our thinking, programming, and worldview. We actively seek creative solutions to challenges. We are committed to excellence by going above and beyond, and by the process of continuous improvement.

Hope

Hope is the secret ingredient in all our recipes and in every interaction with our stakeholders. It is how we provide an experience that is as transformative for our donors, volunteers, staff, and clients as it is for our community. Hope is grounded in and generated in our physical space and is delivered with every meal.

Meals



Medically Tailored Meals (MTMs) are at the heart of our Food Is Medicine mission—and they're far more than a set of dietary rules. MTMs are fully prepared, home-delivered meals intentionally designed for people living with serious, complex, or chronic illnesses who may not have the strength, stability, or access to shop and cook on their own.

At Open Arms, our clients include individuals navigating HIV/AIDS, Cancer, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), Multiple Sclerosis (MS), End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD), Congestive Heart Failure (CHF), and/or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). Every menu reflects the combined expertise of our registered dietitians and chefs, who collaborate to craft meals that are both medically appropriate and genuinely enjoyable to eat. Each meal begins with high-quality ingredients and is prepared in our state-of-the-art kitchens by staff and volunteers who understand the healing power of food. For our clients, an MTM isn't just a meal. It's nourishment, stability, and care delivered right to their door.

In FY24-25, our meals program continued to adapt and evolve with the introduction of the East African Menu as part

of our innovative **Cultural Meals Program**, which already includes a Hmong Menu with a Latin American Menu on the way. The **East African Menu**, developed in collaboration with consulting chef Jamal Hashi, our Registered Dietitians, and community members, features such dishes as coconut roasted chicken with basmati rice, sauteed kale, and tomatoes, and fish curry with yellow rice. Said Chef Jamal about expansion of the program, "Open Arms recognized something that I always believed in - that food is more than nutrition. It's identity. It's dignity. What Open Arms is doing is what humanity should be doing. It is the core of being a human. To help one another, to create a place where people can come, eat, and be of service to one another."



1,484,845

 meals produced in our two commercial kitchens

914,669

 meals delivered to **3,687** clients

1,293

birthday cakes delivered to clients

9,701

Protein calorie packs delivered to clients with low BMI or at-risk for malnutrition

918

medically tailored grocery bags delivered to HIV+ and high-risk pregnancy clients

570,176

meals delivered to **Metro Meals on Wheels** recipients, helping to improve the quality of life for older and homebound Minnesotans



If meals are the hero of the story, then Nutrition Services is the unsung hero behind the scenes.

Food is medicine is more than just meals. Meals are most effective alongside free nutrition counseling and education from registered dietitians (RDs) and dietetic technicians (DTRs); support with menu selection; ingredient labels for every item; comprehensive nutritional screenings and assessments for clients and caregivers; written nutrition guidance; and recommendations for additional food resources—**this is the Open Arms standard.**

Navigating one's health journey can feel overwhelming, which is why human connection is an essential part of our process. Our Nutrition Services team ensures that clients receive not only nourishing meals, but the knowledge, support, and partnership needed to feel confident in their care.

Everyone at OAM is so kind. It is so special to know that there are people to help you get through the hard times. Nutrition is such a big basis of health and it is so nice to have one less thing to worry about with my meals coming.

– A Client of Open Arms

Nutrition Services

1,912

clients nutrition education and counseling sessions were conducted with our nutrition staff through phone calls, virtual visits, and extra written information.

(an OAM Record)

6,789

nausea relief packs delivered to clients with various illnesses

81.2%

of the clients who had a malnutrition score indicating they were at risk for being malnourished upon application decreased their risk while on services

200+

written nutrition resources sent to clients

I'm very moved by the support and care. You've taken a desperate time and turned it around. it's a crazy world and this has been such a blessing. I just wanted to call and tell someone thank you because this has brought such a smile to my face.

– A Client of Open Arms



Serving so many of our vulnerable neighbors amongst so much uncertainty reaffirms the “client first” mindset that guides every decision at Open Arms. **3,687 clients. 3,687 stories.** Each one unique, each one deserving nourishment, care, and dignity.

Most of the people we serve are over the age of 60. Many are navigating life with complex medical conditions while also trying to stretch limited budgets to cover their nutrition. Too often, clients come to us right on the edge of malnourishment. Some are caring for children or partners who rely on them. Many live alone, isolated from the resources and support networks most of us take for granted. As we often say, the meals themselves become more than meals.

Meals become a symbol of kindness, dignity, and nourishment. For clients and their families able to cook for themselves, but still in need of medically tailored nutrition, Open Arms piloted a medically tailored grocery bag program.

CLIENTS



3,687

Total Clients



1,631+

In-person visits completed to clients' homes

In addition to the medically tailored grocery bag program that opened our services to new and more diverse clients, our work in the maternal health space gained momentum through partnerships with organizations such as the Native American Community Clinic (NACC) and M Health Fairview. Serving communities outside of the Twin Cities metro continued to be a clear area of growth as well. Through partnerships with the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families, and the Department of Human Services, clients in rural Minnesota received shipments of Open Arms meals alongside nutrition education and counseling.

Percentage of meals delivered to clients with...

24% Congestive Heart Failure

17% HIV/AIDS

16% Cancer

15% End Stage Renal Disease

14% Other Conditions

8% Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

5% Multiple Sclerosis

1% ALS

What clients say about our meals:

96% Getting meals from Open Arms has improved their quality of life.

98% The meals have helped them to continue to live at home & remain independent.

98% Getting meals from Open Arms helps them save money.

95% Getting meals from Open Arms has helped them improve their health.

90% The meals help them stay out of the hospital and/or emergency room.

98% Open Arms' meals help them eat a variety of foods.

93% Getting meals from Open Arms has helped them follow the treatment plan of their condition.



VOLUNTEERS

According to reporting from the Star Tribune in fall 2024, Minnesota ranked third in the nation for volunteerism. Open Arms was proud to help carry that momentum forward, welcoming pre-pandemic levels of volunteers back into our kitchens, bakeries, farms, and delivery routes.

As new corporate and civic groups, faith communities, and students—from college-aged to much younger—walk through our doors, our impact deepens across the region. In FY24-25, **6,524 volunteers** contributed an astounding and Open Arms **74,589 hours of service**—a record for the organization and the hourly equivalent of **35.9 full-time employees**.

With more volunteers stepping up to support our clients, Open Arms continues to look for innovative ways to streamline operations.

In winter 2025, we implemented a new digital platform for volunteer meal-delivery drivers. **Onfleet**, an app-based smartphone tool, strengthens confidentiality for clients and drivers, eliminates paper routing, improves communication, and provides real-time updates for drivers, clients, and staff.



6.5K VOLUNTEERS

*My delivery driver is a treasure!
I look forward to each delivery with
her and the friendship that we have
built. She does so much for me and
I am beyond grateful for her care.*

— A Client of Open Arms

6,524

total number of
individual volunteers

(6,392 previous year)



74,589

total number of
volunteer hours

(73,493 previous year)

1,584

individuals attended
a new volunteer
orientation

(1,518 previous year)

5,387

volunteers in
our kitchens
& bakery

(aprons donned)

8,123

client delivery
routes filled by
volunteers

(trunks filled)

3,714

volunteers who
came with a
corporate group

158

brand new
groups who
volunteered

110

delivery drivers and

478

client deliveries on
Thanksgiving Day!



PARTNERS

If our volunteers are the heart and soul of Open Arms, our donors and funders are the force that keeps us moving forward.

Just as Open Arms' mission wouldn't be possible without the hard work and dedication of our volunteers, it also depends on the unwavering support of our donors and partners. Their generosity provides the essential ingredients for our meals, the seedlings that grow in our farms, and the dedicated staff who make it all possible.

This year, that force was tested in extraordinary ways. In the face of significant cuts to federal and state funding, our community stepped up with remarkable strength and solidarity. Our partners show up for us in countless ways—from hosting community fundraisers to attending signature events like Moveable Feast and the Great Minnesota Bake Sale. They rally their networks for our Turkey Drive, support of our team at the Twin Cities Marathon, and stand alongside us when we show up in the community at events like Twin Cities Pride. Their generosity and presence strengthen our mission at every turn.

More than half of last year's donors returned to support our clients—far surpassing industry norms—and, just as importantly, new supporters joined them. Individuals, companies, foundations, civic groups, and faith communities came together to fuel a powerful locomotive of generosity.

Their commitment ensured that Open Arms remained the sole medically tailored meal provider in the Upper Midwest—steadfast, resilient, and ready to meet the growing needs of our neighbors.

Top Ten Institutions Who Supported Open Arms Through Volunteerism In FY24-25

1. Securian Financial (193 volunteers, 544 hours)
2. HealthPartners (199 volunteers, 533 hours)
3. Medtronic (157 volunteers, 377 hours)
4. JAMF (54 volunteers, 193 hours)
5. Xcel Energy (67 volunteers, 204 hours)
6. Cargill (36 volunteers, 191 hours)
7. Capella University (54 volunteers, 187 hours)
8. Allina Health (70 volunteers, 186 hours)
9. Target (23 volunteers, 173 hours)
10. Best Buy (48 volunteers, 143 hours)



I've been an Open Arms friend and advocate from the very beginning. When I was sick as a little girl, my mom made my favorite foods: grilled cheese sandwiches, tapioca pudding, and red jello with bananas. Later, witnessing chronic health issues with various extended family members, I recognized the curative power of food; not just for the body, but, for one's overall sense of well-being as well. My continuing advocacy and support for Open Arms today gives voice to my own personal values as well as the tangible and intangible things I value most: Kindness, generosity and action.

– Barbara McCleary



Donor Spotlight

\$550K+

Raised through Moveable Feast, our largest annual fundraising gala

\$300K+

Raised through YESvember & Turkey Drive, supporting meals and Thanksgiving Feasts for our clients during the holiday season

Partner Spotlight



Open Arms is fortunate to benefit from the generosity of many outstanding Twin Cities organizations. A common thread among our strongest partnerships is the idea of being a full-circle partner—an organization that not only supports our mission financially, but also helps amplify our message, advocates for us in the community, and fills our kitchens with volunteers. Takeda is one such partner. Thanks to a multi-year grant in FY24-25, Open Arms launched the East African Menu within our Cultural Meals Program. In addition, volunteers from Takeda are a consistent and valued part of our network, serving at our facilities and showing up at our events.



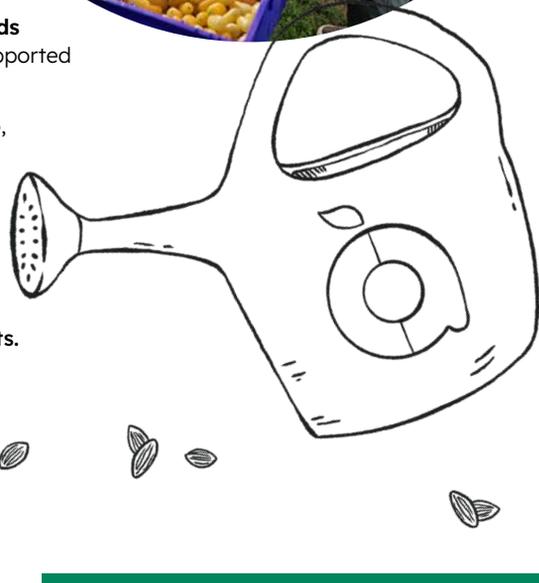
OPEN FARMs



For nearly a decade, Open Farms Manager Kelly Wilson and Assistant Manager Ester Schwartz have been a dynamic urban farming duo. This year was no exception: together, they delivered **more than 12,000 pounds** of produce used directly in our clients' meals, as a part of our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, and as ingredients at our special events.

Thanks to several key grants from Homegrown Minneapolis, Lakewinds Co-op, and Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy, the team accomplished major improvements across our farm sites. They hired two paid apprentices, constructed a second caterpillar tunnel at our Afton Farm, installed new drip irrigation systems in both Minneapolis and St. Paul, and expanded our composting capacity and growing space at the Minneapolis gardens.

These investments not only strengthened our growing operations but also **deepened our ability to nourish clients with fresh, locally grown ingredients.**



12,000+

POUNDS of FRESH PRODUCE GROWN



Summer 2024

5

Open Farms locations

1.7

acres in production

41

different crops grown

7K seedlings started indoors

54

Community Supported Agriculture members receiving weekly boxes of Open Arms produce

12K+ pounds of produce grown

SHOWING UP! Mattered!

1,484,845

MEALS PRODUCED

1,912

*Nutrition
education &
Counseling
sessions*

6.5K

VOLUNTEERS

12,000+

POUNDS OF FRESH
PRODUCE GROWN

3,675

PEOPLE SERVED