

FOOD IS MEDICINE™
— COALITION —



A HEALTHY FUTURE

Stories of Resilience

INTRODUCTION

[The Food Is Medicine Coalition](#) (FIMC) is an association of community-based nonprofit medically tailored food and nutrition service providers. As a provider community, we believe that individuals should not have to face the dual crises of illness and hunger. With over 30 years of experience in the field, delivering millions of meals annually, our research shows that access to nourishment that meets the complex medical needs of a person, taking into account their illnesses, allergies, medications and personal needs, can improve health outcomes and quality of life, while lowering healthcare costs.

On the following pages, you'll meet some of the clients we serve and read about how medically tailored meal (MTM) delivery and nutrition services have improved their lives.

The White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health poses a unique opportunity to increase access to MTMs and improve outcomes for millions of Americans impacted by severe diseases like cancer, HIV, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and more. Our meal plans are tailored to fit the specific medical and dietary needs of the recipients by Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) and provided via referral from a medical professional or healthcare plan.

Despite robust research results, there is still no dedicated federal funding for MTM, save for people with HIV. FIMC agencies raise the majority of our budgets from our communities and there are still gaps in access to this service across the country.

FIMC has submitted a set of policy proposals and priorities that would increase equitable access to medically tailored meals through Medicaid and Medicare and build on our body of research on the benefits of MTM.

To learn more about the proposed policy recommendations from the Food Is Medicine Coalition, please follow [this link](#).

A Place to Nourish Your Health

APHN.org

Serving New Haven County, CT | Founded 1983



We provide services for those who face stigma or challenges in receiving culturally competent care



When Larry approached APNH: A Place to Nourish your Health in 2012, he was a victim of pervasive stigma and homophobia. Larry had avoided getting tested for HIV for a long time. He was afraid that the wagging tongues in his small living community would spread the news that Larry was getting tested for HIV, that he was probably “some sort of queer.” By the time he entered our doors, he was quite sick. His viral load had increased to the point where he was given a diagnosis of AIDS. A member of our Prevention Team tested Larry and gently broke the news to him that he was, indeed, HIV-positive. He was immediately assigned a case manager, Kevin, who connected him with medical care. Because he was visibly ill, he was able to see an infectious disease specialist the very next day. The doctor prescribed a course of anti-retroviral therapy and told Larry that he needed to stay adherent to this life saving medication. Unfortunately, Larry had comorbidities to manage as well as his HIV+

diagnosis, diabetes being among them. Larry was referred to Caring Cuisine, the Home Delivered Meal Program of APNH, as well as APNH’s in house Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT). Larry receives 2 meals per day, delivered directly to his home once per week. Without the stress of worrying about having enough food to eat, Larry is able to stay adherent to his HIV medications. Although Caring Cuisine meals are unable to cure Larry’s diabetes, receiving Caring Cuisine meals has helped Larry manage his diabetes in multiple ways. He reports that he is eating healthier because of Caring Cuisine, he now understands correct portioning and food combining. In addition Larry is able to make better food choices for himself when at the grocery store. Using Caring Cuisine meals as a model for healthy eating has prevented Larry from needing to receive the expensive intervention of dialysis. Larry also reports he feels less isolated and alone knowing that a volunteer from Caring Cuisine will be visiting him every week.

A Place to Nourish Your Health

APHN.org

Serving New Haven County, CT | Founded 1983



“When Ken revealed the barrier to taking his daily HIV medication was because he didn’t have food to take the medication with he was immediately referred to the Caring Cuisine Home Delivered Meals”



Ken found out he was HIV positive 18 years ago. At the time, he knew nothing about HIV, and felt overwhelmed and extremely isolated. “I lost so many friends at that time. They all left me. I wanted to end my life.”

He was so devastated by the news that he found himself easily swayed into the world of drug use as a way to bury his feelings, grief and pain. Addiction soon consumed Ken’s life. He became more isolated and alone.

One day he noticed people (some whom he knew) going into a large house. Thinking it might be a new place to get drugs he gathered all the strength he had left, opened the door and went inside. What was going on surprised him! It was a men’s relapse prevention group. Ken had found the community of APNH. With Case Management

support he was connected to a local clinic. When Ken revealed the barrier to taking his daily HIV medication was because he didn’t have food to take the medication with he was immediately referred to the Caring Cuisine Home Delivered Meal Program of APNH. Much has changed since that pivotal moment when Ken walked through the doors of APNH to his first Relapse Prevention meeting. Over the years, Ken has learned how to live and flourish as a person living with HIV and an undetectable viral load. Ken is no longer in need of Caring Cuisine and as his undetectable viral load indicates, he takes his medication daily. He is living drug free, in a stable living situation, actively looking for employment.

“Without Caring Cuisine and APNH I would have died a long time ago.”

Ceres Community Project

CeresProject.org

Serving Marin and Sonoma counties, CA
Founded 2007



We create health for people, communities, and the planet through love, healing food, and empowering the next generation



“The last patient I referred to Ceres was a young woman in the midst of a 24-week treatment for Hepatitis C. She was losing hair, severely fatigued, depressed, and most dangerously, her white blood cell counts were dropping to the point where she would need hospitalization.

But then something miraculous happened. She started to receive meals from Ceres. She started to feel better, and I was amazed when her labs showed a normalization of her white blood cell count! In the eight years that I have been treating

Hepatitis C, I'd never seen such a dramatic improvement. Thank you, Ceres. My patient is now cured of her Hepatitis C and I bet we wouldn't have made it through without your support.”

*-Fasih Hameed, MD. Associate Medical Director,
Petaluma Community Health*

Ceres Community Project

CeresProject.org

Serving Marin and Sonoma counties, CA

Founded 2007



“With a scary diagnosis, unprecedented health concerns, and towering medical bills, Ceres totally came to the rescue.”



Nils, a writer, educator, community organizer, and single dad to 8-year-old Satya, was already familiar with Ceres when he was diagnosed with testicular cancer earlier this year.

He shares that “During my summer of chemo, it was a great relief to have a steady stream of nourishing food brought to my home. I had very low energy much of the time, and I still had a child to provide for. Luckily, I still had a strong appetite.

Family and friends came through with food as well, but Ceres was such a steady force of care and nourishment, and it came like clockwork. That was the most helpful aspect: the reliability of the meals. Having one less thing to worry about provided a great deal of psychic relief. Plus, the food is really good and healthy.”

Community Servings

[Servings.org](https://www.servings.org)

Serving all of Massachusetts | Founded 1990



Community Servings' mission is to actively engage the community to provide scratch-made medically tailored meals to individuals and their families experiencing critical or chronic illness and nutrition insecurity. We commit, in all our programs and business practices, to prioritize racial and economic justice and health equity.



Chuck is 66 years old and originally from Indian Country, OK. He's a member of the Choctaw Nation. He and his wife have two grown daughters that are his pride and joy. Many of Chuck's tribe and family are impacted by illnesses, like diabetes. He's the oldest living male in his immediate family. Chuck has diabetes and debilitating vascular issues that required angioplasty to increase the flow of blood and oxygen in his leg. He has two stents, and when he entered Community Servings' meal program, his mobility was significantly impaired due to an uncontrolled diabetic ulcer on his foot. His care provider told him it was likely he would need a foot amputation.

Chuck receives a Cardiac Diabetic diet from Community Servings and has

lost over 50 pounds since receiving our meals. His blood sugar levels are now normal. Chuck's doctor told him the nutrition intervention improved his condition so much that he's no longer facing a foot amputation.

There's not one meal that Chuck hasn't enjoyed! He talked about his knowledge of good food that stems from time cooking in his family's restaurant and that he can tell our cooks know what they're doing. He said he's a "soup person" and that they are "spectacular!" "Your kitchen team has talent!" He said he "wants to finish everything he gets in his delivery" and that the complex carbs like lentils and beans have been instrumental in helping him regulate his blood sugar.

Community Servings

[Servings.org](https://www.servings.org)

Serving all of Massachusetts | Founded 1990



“I can say without question that Community Servings has improved my health, made me more positive about eating, and helped me better understand the importance of nutrition.”



When we first met Vania in 2020, she was reeling from an unexpected cancer diagnosis. She worried not only about her aggressive treatment—the removal of most of the lymph nodes in her neck and all salivary glands—but about how she would care for her son, if she could return to work, and how to afford food for her new dietary needs. It’s been nearly three years since Vania first connected with Community Servings. Thankfully, she is in remission from her cancer! But her treatment has hindered her ability to eat for the rest of her life, so she must consume soft foods that make swallowing easier. Eating causes her stress and anxiety because she has a higher risk of choking. The meals from our kitchen not only ease Vania’s mind, but they also provide the

precise nutrition that could be difficult for her to receive on her permanent, medically recommended diet.

Vania says that when she originally applied for meals, she had no idea what to expect. “It’s been a life changer. Looking back, I can say without question that Community Servings has improved my health, made me more positive about eating, and helped me better understand the importance of nutrition. I feel more confident in my ability to eat,” Vania says, “but I’m also motivated to connect with people in my community and spread the word about Community Servings. I want to help those who would benefit from their meals and nutrition programs.”

Community Servings

[Servings.org](https://www.servings.org)

Serving all of Massachusetts | Founded 1990



“Life without Community Servings would be difficult. I’d be in a bind. I don’t know where I’d turn.”



Born and raised in Boston, Marcia, 72, lives in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood. Since the late '90s, she has counted on Community Servings to home-deliver the nutritious, medically tailored meals needed to help keep her multiple health issues in check. When Marcia first contacted us, she was struggling to maintain her weight and experiencing the negative health impacts of diabetes. Over a few years, she lost more than 130 pounds by following the diet our registered dietitian nutritionists prescribed and no longer requires insulin to control her diabetes. With support from our nutrition counseling, she has kept her excess weight off for two decades. Marcia is also a breast cancer survivor and, unbelievably, also had a cerebral spinal fluid leak that required brain surgery to fix the issue, twice.

She has also suffered from a severe infection that got into her bloodstream following one of her surgeries, requiring extended hospitalization.

Fortunately, Community Servings has been able to stand with Marcia through every one of her significant health challenges, changing her recommended diet and delivery schedule as needed to meet her exact dietary, health, and availability needs at that time. Marcia is food-insecure and has limited mobility. She says, “Life without Community Servings would be difficult. I’d be in a bind. I don’t know where I’d turn.” She recently told our nutrition team that her health is the best that it’s been in years and that she considers our meals program a “life-saving solution” to her chronic health issues.

Food & Friends

[FoodAndFriends.org](https://www.FoodAndFriends.org)

Serving the Washington DC Metro | Founded 1988



The only community-based organization in the DC region providing home-delivered medically tailored meals and nutrition therapy to our neighbors living with cancer, HIV/AIDS, and other serious illnesses.



About a year ago, Woe was having trouble with her shoulder and her son took her to the hospital. There, they found out that she had heart failure. When she was sent to the heart clinic six months ago, the team at the heart clinic referred her to Food & Friends. This would not have been possible without the support of our donors and our new program to ship meals to Garrett and Allegany counties.

“I love the fruits, the soups, and the dinners. My favorites are the ones with seafood and chicken. I like rice and vegetables, and they put a lot of those in the meals. They come every Thursday. There was one challenge with a FedEx delivery, and Food & Friends called me immediately and

my food for the week was delivered 24 hours later.”

Woe also connects with her Community Dietitian Agata Williams, RDN, LD, who helped her with tips on healthy eating and gave her a salad dressing recipe to complement the dishes we are sending. She knows that Agata or a member of our Client Services team is always there to answer any questions that might arise.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Woe was afraid to go to the grocery store. Even though she is triple vaccinated, with congestive heart failure, COVID-19 could be fatal. Having deliveries from Food & Friends means she is safer in the comfort of her home and neighborhood.

Food & Friends

FoodAndFriends.org

Serving the Washington DC Metro | Founded 1988



“The meals are delicious, healthy, and properly portioned so that I not only feel full, I feel good.”



In March 2016, Vickie was diagnosed with stage 4 ovarian cancer and a pulmonary embolism. At the time of her diagnosis, she had extensive fluid, swelling, and blood clots. She was very sick and in need of immediate treatment, especially since the cancer had already spread to her liver and bones. Self-employed, living alone, and with no family nearby, her diagnosis was daunting, both physically and financially. As a result of surgery, treatment, and numerous hospitalizations, Vickie was unable to work most of 2016. She was too ill and too weak to shop for herself, and she had little money to buy groceries, especially the healthy fruits and vegetables that her body needed. When repeated attempts to sign up for food

stamps proved too physically challenging, Vickie's social worker referred her to Food & Friends to receive our Home-Delivered Meal services.

Home Delivered Meals are designed by our registered dietitians and medically tailored to address illness symptoms and improve health outcomes through nutrition. They are carefully and lovingly prepared for our clients and delivered six days a week by our staff and volunteers. “Food & Friends is such a huge blessing in my life!” said Vickie. “The meals are delicious, healthy and properly portioned so that I not only feel full, I feel good knowing that I am eating fresh fruits and vegetables and not fast or processed foods. Food & Friends allows me peace of mind.”

Food & Friends

[FoodAndFriends.org](https://www.FoodAndFriends.org)

Serving the Washington DC Metro | Founded 1988



"She's changed my way of eating. I have to eat right, but I not longer hate the stuff I need to do."



Tanya lives with asthma and type 2 diabetes. She was in pain and experiencing gastrointestinal issues brought on by her diabetes medication. "I had no appetite," Tanya shared, "and I was going through a depression because my husband died." With her blood sugar levels often exceeding 300, the risk of damage to her kidneys and eyesight was high.

A Food and Friends Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, Rebecca, supported Tanya with information and suggestions she could use to

make incremental changes to help her feel better and manage her blood sugar. They worked together to find ways to keep some of Tanya's favorite foods, like mashed potatoes and corn, as part of her diet by managing portion sizes and food combinations. "She's changed my way of eating," said Tanya, "I've lost weight. She listened to me and didn't rush me. I have to eat right but I no longer hate the stuff I need to do. Rebecca saved my life and she made me feel like I mattered."

Food For Thought

FFTFoodBank.org

Serving Sonoma County, CA | Founded 1988

Food For Thought



healing with
food+love

Food For Thought is a nonprofit organization that provides lifesaving nutrition support to low-income people affected by serious medical conditions across Sonoma County.



Last August, I was really in bad shape. My feet were so swollen, and I was very short of breath. I am a retired nurse and as my condition worsened, I knew that I better see a doctor. I was surprised to be diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, which caused congestive heart failure.

My medical team emphasized that eating a healthy diet would be really important in helping me recover. They referred me to Food For Thought.

I've been enrolled in FFT's Meals That Heal program for a few months now and I have seen an

improvement in my health. After several weeks on the program, I was scheduled for a cardiac conversion. I couldn't believe it, they had me on the table and decided to cancel the procedure because I had a normal heart rhythm.

The Meals That Heal program is really healing me and I am learning to make better food choices. I am very grateful to the team at Food For Thought and the larger community for providing food and nutritional support that I need now to heal.

God's Love We Deliver

glwd.org

Serving New York and New Jersey | Founded 1985



God's Love We Deliver cooks and home-delivers nutritious meals for people living with severe and chronic illness in the NYC metropolitan area. We are a non-sectarian organization, and all our services are provided free to clients and full of love.



Victoria and Santiago live together in their home in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. When Santiago was first diagnosed nearly 20 years ago, Victoria didn't know where to turn. As his dementia and other symptoms worsened, Victoria worried about how to care for him on her own.

Victoria was referred to God's Love by the Alzheimer's Association. Our RDNs created a healthy, balanced meal plan based on her husband's dietary needs. Santiago, who is non-verbal, received pureed meals that enable him to swallow his food more easily. Victoria says, "I was happy when I found God's Love because I had no help before. God's Love is helping me keep my husband alive."

Her husband was a hospice patient when Victoria first called God's Love. But now, our home-

delivered meals have helped to improve Santiago's health and wellbeing. Since coming on our program, Santiago no longer needs medication for high cholesterol, and his doctor has been impressed with his health status.

Several years after we first spoke to Victoria and Santiago, Victoria received her own breast cancer diagnosis. Victoria had received meals and nutrition counseling for the duration on the program as Santiago's senior caregiver; upon her own diagnosis, Victoria knew she would be cared for no matter what. She now speaks to our RDNs about her diagnosis and Santiago's. She is grateful for all this support that ensures she stays on track and can focus on making doctor's appointments. Victoria tells us, "I want to thank you for your kindness. The meals are so very helpful. I love this program."

God's Love We Deliver

glwd.org

Serving New York and New Jersey | Founded 1985



Raphael looks forward to Thursdays because he'll get his delivery, a smile, and someone to ask how he's doing.



Born in Manchester, England, Raphael and his family moved to the Bronx when he was nine years old. A few years after graduating high school, Raphael joined the Army, traveling to Georgia and California on active duty for 2 years. Later Raphael joined NYC Sanitation, but remained committed to his military service by entering the Reserves.

In 2003, Raphael received the call to serve first in Kuwait and then Iraq. He received a diagnosis of severe diabetes while overseas and experienced events that left him with PTSD.

Recently, Raphael found God's Love We Deliver and in August joined our new home-delivered meal program for veterans living with PTSD. His medical team is thrilled that he is receiving medically tailored meals because the results are dramatic: his A1C is decreasing because he is eating less sugar; and having meals delivered to his home keeps his mood calm

because he does not have to worry about going outside, which can trigger his PTSD.

Raphael looks forward to Thursdays because he'll get his delivery, a smile, and someone to ask how he's doing. He loves all of our meals, but most especially our soups, fish entrees, fruit cups, and cake. Prior to God's Love he'd eat primarily junk food or "whatever was easy at the grocery store."

Raphael is so grateful for our program, he tells us, "Thank you very much for all that you do. You've been very helpful to me and to all of the people you serve. I really appreciate what you do."

La Soupe

LaSoupe.org

Serving Cincinnati, OH | Founded 2014



Our chef-based model utilizes our volunteer network to rescue fresh produce, transform into nourishing meals and Soupes, and share to over 130 partner agencies that feed the food insecure.



The Nourish Education Team inspires participants in the Christ Hospital NEST employee support program to take their health into their own hands. Meet Juanita, who has fully embraced her new culinary lifestyle.

Juanita Guilford has energy for days, but get her talking about the NEST Program and the 62-year-old practically turns into an evangelist. “I knew I needed help, but I just didn’t know where to go, or who to ask,” Juanita shares. “I was pre-diabetic. I had high blood pressure and high cholesterol, but I was also taking two buses to get to work, and I needed to get my finances on track. NEST helped me with all of these things. They help you with nutrition,

finances, and transportation, and believe me, I took this all personally and realized the gift I’d been given,” she recalls. “People don’t realize they need this program in their lives,” Juanita shares. The Environmental Services employee of 12 years is a member of the inaugural NEST class, set up to remove barriers faced by entry-level employees, allowing them to thrive at work and at home. Juanita is able to use the hospital’s food pantry to access free, healthy food [from La Soupe], which she can use to make nutritious meals at home. “They took a girl who liked to go out to dinner, and now I think I’m a chef!” exclaims Juanita, “I had skills I didn’t know existed.” Her Facebook followers can see the healthy meals she now proudly posts. Great work becoming a star chef, Miss Juanita!

Mama's Kitchen



MamasKitchen.org

Serving San Diego, CA | Founded 1990

Mama's Kitchen believes that everyone is entitled to the basic necessity of life – nutritious food. Our services improve the health and well-being of individuals and families vulnerable to malnutrition due to critical illness.



When Mama's Kitchen started delivering meals to Dave, he had just moved into his apartment after being homeless for about a year. When our registered dietitian, Stephanie, first visited Dave, she learned that he had recently had some toes amputated from his right foot and had a lot of pain in his left leg. Dave only tested his blood sugar about once a week. He hated drinking water and drank Pepsi all day with no plans to stop. After his third nutrition counseling sessions with Stephanie, Dave had to have his lower left leg amputated and spent weeks in the hospital.

At this time, he was testing his blood sugar more often, and drinking slightly less Pepsi. At the time of his final nutritional counseling session Dave was glad to share, "Now I am testing my blood sugar four times a day. I'm drinking a lot less Pepsi, some days I don't drink any at all." Dave said that he loves our meals; he has graduated from the intensive Diabetes Nutrition Program after the nutrition education with our registered dietitians and now receives meals from the Mama's Kitchen Home Delivered Meal Service.

Mama's Kitchen



MamasKitchen.org

Serving San Diego, CA | Founded 1990

By the end of the program she reported feeling much better, having normal appetite, less swelling, and all labs within normal range.



A client started our program with end-stage renal disease, on dialysis, with secondary diagnoses including T2DM, hypertension, and schizophrenia. At the start of our program, she had a hard time adjusting to dialysis as she was often swollen, had muscle cramps, low energy, poor appetite, high K+ and phos labs, and did not know what to eat. During our education sessions, we tackled many topics including K+ and phos foods, portions sizes, reading and understanding food labels, and the importance of taking medications (especially her phos binder) to help her gain confidence with managing her health diagnosis. She reported that our meals and education sessions have been very

helpful for her in terms of knowing what to eat and in which portion sizes. She now understands that foods high in K+ and/or phos don't need to be completely avoided while on dialysis—something she did not understand before. Not only this, but by the end of the program she reported feeling much better, having a normal appetite, less swelling, all labs within normal limits, and even a drop in A1C from 10% to 7%. While she is sad to end our meals, she is much more confident in her abilities to prepare meals at home and is grateful for her time on our program.

MANNA

MannaPa.org

Serving all of PA and parts of New Jersey | Founded 1990



Delivering Nourishment.
Improving Health.

MANNA uses nutrition to improve health for people with serious illnesses who need nourishment to heal. By providing medically tailored meals and nutrition education, we empower people to improve their health and quality of life.



Jill is a mother of four who has been fighting metastatic stage four breast cancer for two years – through multiple surgeries, chemotherapy, and the removal of a vertebrae in her spine. Her diagnosis upended the daily routines of her family. “I was very healthy - I was a professional ballet dancer at one time. I didn't feel ill at all... and after one scan they send me to the ER and right to surgery. All of this was so new and they're using all these words I've never heard. I was dealing with an alternate universe, and a tumor growing bigger and bigger.”

As she started chemo, keeping her weight up became critical for treatment, but she was

struggling to find the energy to cook and the appetite to eat.

Since MANNA started providing her and her family with MANNA meals, she has consistently kept her weight up and stable, thanks to the nutritious, and easy-to-heat meals tailored to her needs. “It's a tremendous help that my kids get meals too. They love the food, and they all have their favorites - like the Cajun salmon and the mac and cheese! It's so delicious. We love everything. My kids are picky eaters but this has allowed them to try more things. I'm at chemo all day, and I know they have MANNA meals in the house that they can heat up so they can eat healthy too.”

MANNA

MannaPa.org

Serving all of New Jersey | Founded 1990



Delivering Nourishment.
Improving Health.

“I’ve gained a few pounds in spite of my illness. God only knows how thankful I am for the meals.”



Beth is 61 years old and has been fighting Stage 4 endometrial cancer. For more than eight months, she has been receiving MANNA’s medically tailored meals and her nutrition has improved greatly. With meals tailored to her needs, she can focus on getting well rather than grocery shopping. “I’ve even gained a few pounds in spite of my illness.” For people with cancer, keeping

weight up enough to withstand harsh treatments is essential. With the support of MANNA’s program, Beth is able to keep her weight high enough to continue her treatments and improve her health. “God only knows how thankful I am for the meals.”

Moveable Feast

MFeast.org

Serving Baltimore, MD | Founded 1989



Moveable Feast is the only organization in the Baltimore region that provides meals and groceries to those in need living with HIV/AIDS and other life-challenging illnesses.



Carolyn has lived most her life on the Eastern Shore and has been married to her husband for 41 years. She used to work as a caregiver helping individuals with disabilities with bathing, dressing, feeding, and taking medicine. “I can’t work anymore and that’s kind of stressful,” she said.

At age 69, Carolyn says her health started to decline a few years ago. She currently receives

dialysis three times a week, and each treatment takes 3 ½ hours.

Issues with her eyesight makes it hard to see fine print and details. She feels tired often and has difficulty walking much of a distance.

Receiving meals from Moveable Feast makes life a bit easier for Carolyn. Her husband is there to assist her as well as family members close by, but she says, “I don’t feel like I want to burden them with anything... The meals help out a lot.”

Moveable Feast

MFeast.org

Serving Baltimore, MD | Founded 1989



“I’m encouraged to eat well. I know I wasn’t eating as well as I am now before Moveable Feast.”



Mary is 82 years old and has lived in Baltimore City most of her life. About a year and a half ago, she was diagnosed with lymphoma and has been undergoing treatment at Greater Baltimore Medical Center. A social worker there connected her with Moveable Feast and for the past 12 months, she’s been receiving home-delivered meals.

“Having the food available is just wonderful. I love the meals,” said Mary. “By having the meals delivered, I don’t have to go out except to get things like milk and juice.”

Each Monday, Mary looks forward to having her meals delivered by one of our volunteer drivers, Debbie.

“I’m crazy about her,” Mary said. “She’s always upbeat and loves what she does. She’s a new friend.” Mary lives alone and doesn’t have family in the area. Her closest relatives live in the D.C. area.

She appreciates the nutritious meals and knows it’s helping her stay well. “Each of the meals has two vegetables... I’m encouraged to eat well. I know I wasn’t eating as well as I am now before Moveable Feast.”

Moveable Feast

MFeast.org

Serving Baltimore, MD | Founded
1989



“She tells me the things I need to learn about, what helps and what doesn’t. She cares for her clients and motivates you. That’s the part I love about her.”



Debra has been receiving Moveable Feast meals and services since December 2018. “The meals do help a lot,” she said. “On a fixed income, some things you can’t get that you really need... I thank God for y’all.”

Diagnosed with HIV and osteoporosis, 67-year-old Debra struggles to keep weight on. During her most recent nutritional counseling session with Community Dietitian Isabel Betancourt, she happily reported she had reached her goal weight. “I’m doing the best I can. HIV is an up and down thing,” said Debra.

Having healthy food and supplements delivered to her home has been especially important for Debra. “I don’t have much family support,” she said. What she’s found helpful is the education and motivation provided by Isabel. “She tells me the things I need to learn about, what helps and what doesn’t,” said Debra. “She cares for her clients and motivates you. That’s the part I love about her.”

“Without y’all helping a lot of us senior citizens out here, I don’t know where our meals would come from.”

Open Arms of Minnesota

OpenArmsMN.org

Serving all of Minnesota | Founded 1986



openarms

Open Arms of Minnesota is a nonprofit organization that prepares and delivers nourishing meals free of charge to critically ill Minnesotans and their loved ones. By providing food as medicine, Open Arms nourishes its clients and builds community.



Pete (caregiver) met Kathy (client) more than 25 years ago when Pete was a copywriter and Kathy was a graphic designer. Pete described Kathy as one of the most optimistic people he knew, a person who loved life. Over the years, their bond grew and Pete would go on to consider Kathy his best friend.

In June of 2014, Kathy was diagnosed with Lewy Body dementia – a brutal disease that Kathy's medical team said would eventually take her entire personality. With no relatives in the Twin Cities, Pete was asked to become Kathy's primary caregiver, which he gladly accepted. After four years, Kathy's condition took a turn for the worse. She had lost a critical amount of weight due to not eating and the lack of nutrition in her

diet. She was eventually referred to Open Arms by her social worker, and she and Pete were welcomed into the organization's tight-knit community. Pete describes Open Arms as Kathy's lifesaver and said that the meals brought her back to life. This was food as medicine in its truest form. She gained weight, stabilized, and was able to function physically once again. Kathy's spirit was revived, and her life was filled with joy the last few years of her life. Pete reiterates that Open Arms is an organization that fills a gap that no other organization does. Without Open Arms, Kathy would not have been able to remain in her own home for the remainder of her life as she wished.

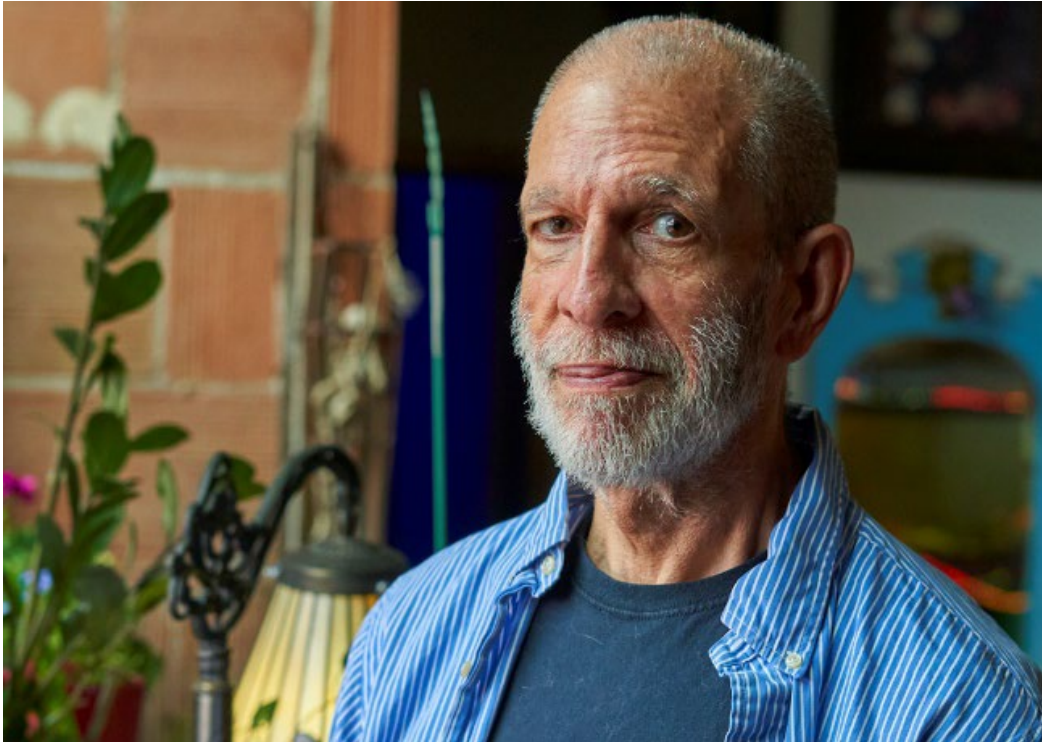
Open Arms of Minnesota

OpenArmsMN.org

Serving all of Minnesota | Founded 1986



“Franco was put on Open Arms’ weekly plan and immediately benefitted from the nutrition of meals that were medically tailored to meet his specific needs.”



Franco, a client of Open Arms of Minnesota, wholeheartedly believes that without Open Arms, he doesn't think he would be alive today. Franco, now 68 and living in St. Paul, was diagnosed with HIV and skin cancer, and then suddenly lost his spouse. Grieving and constantly sick from the amount of medication and treatments, Franco stopped eating and was unable to keep most of his food down due to the chemotherapy. He lost a severe amount of weight and was struggling with depression. Things got so bad that at one point Franco's doctors didn't think he would be alive in six months if he continued his

current trajectory. It was at that moment that his medical team referred him to Open Arms. Franco was put on Open Arms' weekly plan and immediately benefitted from the nutrition of meals that were medically tailored to meet his specific needs. Since all Open Arms' meals are free for clients, he was once again able to afford to eat healthy and gained much of his weight back. Franco's cancer is now in remission and he's cooking his own meals, with Open Arms supplementing what he can buy on his fixed income.

Open Hand Atlanta

OpenHandAtlanta.org

Serving metro Atlanta, GA | Founded 1988



"My doctors are incredibly impressed with how much managing my nutrition contributed to my recovery."



After delivering meals for Open Hand years ago, Will had no idea that he would one day rely on Open Hand meals and nutrition services himself. "I was totally taken off guard one morning when I woke up unable to breathe. That ultimately led to a diagnosis of end-stage congestive heart failure. I knew I had to quickly take back control of my life as the realization of open-heart surgery and a long period of recovery awaited. I don't know what I would have done without Open Hand. Their heart-healthy meals made it so much easier to manage my health during the recovery process... my doctors were incredibly impressed with how much managing my nutrition contributed to my recovery.

"It was very important early on for me to keep my sodium intake below 2,000 grams a day. Most people don't have to think about it, but it was a big challenge. There is so much heavily processed food out there with high levels of sodium, and I just wasn't used to cooking without salt. What's more, I quickly realized that nobody caters to a low salt diet...particularly restaurants. I mean, last year I was so sick that a meal I thought was reasonably low-sodium meal put me in the emergency room. So, my Open Hand meals were such a blessing. They took all the guesswork out of managing my diet, and not having to worry about shopping or preparing food helped out so much when I wasn't feeling well."

Open Hand Atlanta

OpenHandAtlanta.org

Serving metro Atlanta, GA | Founded 1988



“Open Hand has been the one good, stable thing in my life for the last 12 years. They’ve saved my health—I really believe that”



Having lived with HIV for over 15 years, Craig fully understands the nutrition-sensitive nature of his condition, and appreciates the important role good nutrition plays in helping him stay healthy and active.

“Open Hand has been the one good, stable thing in my life for the last 12 years. They’ve saved my health—I really believe that. I had periods when I

didn’t have my HIV medicine, but I always had my healthy meals coming in. And they counseled me that pomegranate juice blocks the absorption of one of my medications... who knew? So, I stopped drinking it each day and my T cells went up 200 points. They literally saved me.”

Project Angel Food

[AngelFood.org](https://www.angelfood.org)

Serving Los Angeles County, CA | Founded 1989



At Project Angel Food, food is love, and food is medicine. Project Angel Food is the only program serving critically ill residents across all 4,700 square miles of L.A. County with free, home-delivered medically tailored meals. We provide our 2,500 weekly clients, most of whom are very low-income and food insecure, with the nutrition they need to improve their health and wellbeing.



“I feel like it’s Christmas every week,” says client Cindy about her home-delivered meals from Project Angel Food. Mother and daughter Cindy and Ashley joined PAF in April 2022. Cindy says the meals have been a great blessing to both of them.

Cindy, 61, has diabetes and receives seven diabetic-friendly meals each week, while Ashley, 32, has ESRD – kidney failure – and Down Syndrome and receives 14 renal meals each week. Cindy is Ashley’s full-time caregiver. They live in Whittier, in southeast Los Angeles County.

Project Angel Food

[AngelFood.org](https://www.angelfood.org)

Serving Los Angeles County, CA | Founded 1989



“Vernel joined the staff of PAF. Now, he helps pack and deliver meals to his neighbors in need!”



Vernel, 70, received Project Angel Food’s milestone 15 millionth meal in June 2022 in a ceremony broadcast on live TV. Vernel, who lives with HIV, came on service in September 2021. He lives in Gardena in south Los Angeles County and receives seven heart healthy meals each week. In May 2022, Vernel attended and participated in PAF’s first Client Advisory Board meeting since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Thanks in part to PAF’s medically tailored meals, Vernel has been feeling better and more energetic. Grounded in his health, he has been moved to give back. In an inspiring turnabout, in June 2022, Vernel joined the staff of PAF. Now, he helps pack and deliver meals to his neighbors in need!

Project Angel Food

[AngelFood.org](https://www.angelfood.org)

Serving Los Angeles County, CA | Founded 1989



"Thank you for all the amazing things you do for your clients."



At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jaydeen reached out to Project Angel Food for help. Age 60, Jaydeen began service with us in April 2020. She lives with diabetes and had mobility restrictions. She receives seven diabetic-friendly meals at her apartment in East Los Angeles each week. Healthy meals and nutritional counseling have helped her control her weight.

Jaydeen has a reputation among PAF staff for being always kind and caring – reaching out to ask how staff are doing and offer them well-wishes. When she saw staff and volunteers on TV for a day of service on MLK Day in 2021, she called to say, “Thank you for working today – I saw Project Angel Food on the news. Thank you for all the amazing things you do for your clients.”

Project Angel Heart

ProjectAngelHeart.org

Serving Colorado | Founded 1991



**Project
Angel Heart**

Our vision is for all Coloradans living with severe illness to have access to nutritious food that supports their health and well-being. To that end, we compassionately deliver comfort and support through high-quality nutrition services, including medically tailored meals, while also advocating for the principles of “Food is Medicine.”



Lorraine was diagnosed with renal disease six years ago. As her disease progressed, her body hurt all over and her energy was depleted. She'd lost the ability to do the things that brought her the most joy, like singing in her band, and spending time with her family. Moreover, everyday activities, especially feeding herself, became harder. She said, “I was struggling. I kept fruit on hand, but it often didn't appeal to me.” Many weeks, she skipped eating because of how difficult it was to find the food she needed.

After nearly three months on our program Lorraine said, “These meals just make me feel

healthier. And they're handy. I can pop them in the microwave, even when I don't feel well.” She receives weekly deliveries of renal-friendly meals designed to help her get the nutrition she needs and stop skipping meals.

Lorraine says the quality of her life has improved dramatically. Now that she's had the opportunity to experience the positive impact of our program, Lorraine hopes others can too. “It's wonderful. I know people who are sick and could benefit, especially from this quality of food. I've seen other programs, and they don't provide what Project Angel Heart provides.”

Project Angel Heart

ProjectAngelHeart.org

Serving Colorado | Founded 1991



**Project
Angel Heart**

“Project Angel Heart deliveries helped me tremendously when I didn’t have the energy to cook nutritious meals or the ability to get to the store.”



Ralph was a long-time supporter of Project Angel Heart long before the day when he found himself in need of their services.

“I’d been HIV positive since about 1984, but my health had always been stable and good,” he shares. However, all of that changed in the summer of 2003 when a side effect of his HIV medication caused debilitating and agonizing attacks of pancreatitis. He spent six months in and out of the hospital.

“The whole experience took a great deal out of me,” he explains. “I wasn’t able to work during that time, and everything was quite a struggle.” During those months, an exhausted and weakened Ralph relied on deliveries of Project Angel Heart’s medically tailored meals to help

him eat healthfully, regain his strength and eventually get well enough to go back to work.

Then, in 2016, the combination of advanced kidney disease and high blood pressure forced him into dialysis. When the pandemic hit in 2020, Ralph, who lives alone and no longer drives, was in no position to venture to grocery stores and could not risk exposure to COVID-19.

“Thanks to Project Angel Heart,” Ralph says, “I was able to stay well and eat full, properly balanced meals that were much lower in sodium and better for my health than frozen, processed foods. Knowing that a volunteer will show up every week with delicious, healthy meals makes a world of difference. It means a lot to know that people care for you.”

Project Angel Heart

ProjectAngelHeart.org

Serving Colorado | Founded 1991



**Project
Angel Heart**

“My bloodwork came back perfect last month, and my feet and ankles aren’t swollen anymore.”



At only 20 years old, Stephanie learned the weakness and pain she felt in her legs was a hereditary degenerative disorder called FSP (familial spastic paraplegia) that eventually leads to paralysis.

Now 65-years-old, divorced and without family nearby, Stephanie says, “I have to rely only on myself, which is scary.” When her doctor became concerned about her elevated sodium levels, Stephanie admitted to relying on TV dinners to feed herself. “It was tough for me to cook and prepare meals,” she says. “I kept dropping things and would burn or injure myself trying to use the stovetop and oven.”

Her doctor connected her with Project Angel Heart. “It’s been such a blessing,” she says. “The

meals are incredibly delicious and healthy, and they’re easy for me to put in the microwave. So now I have meals all week long—it’s wonderful!”

Stephanie receives low-sodium meals from Project Angel Heart and has already seen a positive impact on her health in five short months. “My bloodwork came back perfect last month, and my feet and ankles aren’t swollen anymore,” she declares.

“Everyone from the chefs to the people who decorate the bags to the volunteers who deliver them has been kind and wonderful,” Stephanie says. “And I just love the pictures on the bags! It feels like getting a card in the mail,” she laughs. “Every Saturday when I get my Project Angel Heart delivery, it cheers me up. I know somebody cares.”

Project Open Hand

[OpenHand.org](https://www.openhand.org)

San Francisco, Alameda counties, CA | Founded 1985



Project Open Hand
meals with love

Project Open Hand provides meals with love to critically ill neighbors and seniors. Our food is like medicine, helping clients recover from illness and lead healthier lives.



Chef Adrian was a rising talent. He attended culinary school in New York, followed by internships in France and Italy. His skills took him to San Francisco, where he landed a position as a sous chef at a three-Michelin star restaurant.

“It was a lot of work, intense and amazing work and fabulous food, but all that work you put into it, you need to be able to rest, recover and have the energy to survive,” Adrian said, who is diagnosed with HIV. The non-stop work began to affect Adrian physically. He began to feel sicker. He was unable to control his digestive system. Meds weren’t working. “I wasn’t taking care of myself. And that was a big mistake,” he said.

Adrian stepped down from his job, and his doctor referred him to Project Open Hand to receive services. He also encouraged him to check out job opportunities there. “My doctor said ‘Project Open Hand has great food, and it has volunteers in the kitchen where you can spend some time in the kitchen. You can’t be sitting around and not doing anything.’

In 2009, he became a client and an employee of Project Open Hand. “As a client, I was now eating the same healthy meals that I was preparing at work daily for the many clients of Open Hand,” he said. Not only did his path to better health begin with improved digestion and better adherence to medication, but his career in the kitchen continues to this day.

Project Open Hand

OpenHand.org

San Francisco, Alameda counties, CA | Founded 1985



Project Open Hand
meals with love

“I started to notice that the nutritious meals I was eating was helping me. Project Open Hand was the beginning of my transformation.”



East-Bay native Vicky had a traumatic past — she experienced abuse, homelessness, and drug use. But her most life-changing event occurred in 1994, when she was diagnosed with HIV. Despite the harrowing experiences, she decided to fight for her survival and her health 15 years ago. First, she decided to get clean. She hasn't touched drugs or alcohol since. Second, she got connected with Project Open Hand in Oakland through a medical provider and began visiting the grocery center for life-saving food. “At the time, I was homeless and I was hungry,” she said. “The groceries saved me.” But what she didn't realize then was that her decision to connect with Project Open Hand would lead her down a path of healthy living through nutrition. “I started to notice that the nutritious meals I was eating was helping me,” Vicky said, who also has a heart disease.

“Project Open Hand was the beginning of my transformation.”

She connected with the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist to discuss meal preparation and planning. She took home every brochure and informational packet she could grab. When she moved to San Francisco's Tenderloin District after a life spent in the East Bay, she began visiting the SF Grocery Center and attended Project Open Hand cooking classes. She even signed up to receive meals through our Community Nutrition Program, a communal setting where older adults and adults with disabilities can connect and enjoy a meal, together. “Back then (HIV) was a death sentence. Now I'm a long-term survivor.”

For more information, please reach out to info@fimcoalition.org or visit our website at www.fimcoalition.org.

A HEALTHY FUTURE TITLE | *Stories of Resilience*