



# Mealtimes



Spotlight On

## Michael: Life Is Priceless

**M**ichael B. loves the outdoors. When it's a sunny day, he'll be at the beach. If the weather is temperamental, he can find a little protection under the tall cypress trees that fill San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

On every one of his journeys, a four-legged friend is always by his side, and on this sunny Tuesday afternoon, he and his blind five-year-old terrier mix, Barney, head to Project Open Hand on Polk Street for weekly groceries.

The grocery center lights up with energy and joy as soon as he walks in with his dog. Clients and staff members want to pet Barney and feed him treats.

"He is priceless. We were meant to be at this time in my life," Michael said.

Life is certainly priceless to Michael, who credits Project Open Hand Nutrition Services as one of the reasons why he has lived as long as he has.

"From the many years I dealt with doctors, (I learned) if you eat fresh foods, you get the proper vitamins, and in some ways that's better than pills. It's one of the best medicines," Michael said.

Michael was born in Placerville in 1959. After five years, he moved to Half Moon Bay with his family. When he got older, he moved to San Jose and stayed in the South Bay during the 1970s and 1980s.

He had a career in electronics as an assembler and electronic test technician for computers followed by retail work.

But everything changed for Michael in 1987.

Michael explained, "In '87 we were just finding out about (HIV/AIDS). My friends were dying all around me. I wasn't sick yet, but I decided to just be safe and get

tested after I saw my best friend pass away."

Michael was tested and the results came back positive. He immediately started medications, but continued to work in retail to pay his bills.

"It was hard. Working with customers is stressful, and then you add the fear of dying of HIV – it was a hard life back then," Michael said.

When his condition worsened in 1994 and his doctors gave him two months to live, he decided to make a change. He switched to part-time work and moved to San Francisco to seek better medical treatment. At a medical clinic in the Mission District, therapists recommended Project Open Hand.

He received a medical referral and signed up. Over time, he began to feel the positive effects of having nutritious meals to supplement his treatments.

Michael went on full disability in 1996 and has lived in an

apartment for residents with disabilities and HIV/AIDS for the past 21 years.

Michael said, "Receiving Project Open Hand meals was a big part in saving my life."

He now has the continued energy to perform activities such as volunteering, cooking his own meals with fresh produce and grocery staples from Project Open Hand, and,

most importantly, embracing the outdoors with his furry companion, Barney.

"Project Open Hand has added a lot of years onto my life because I'm healthy now. Sometimes, I think I'm more healthy now than before HIV," Michael said.

Of the thousands of clients who participate in Project Open Hand Wellness Program services, 35 percent are diagnosed with HIV/AIDS.

In a recent evidence-based research study led by Project Open Hand in collaboration with UCSF, patients with HIV/AIDS and/or Type-2 diabetes who receive complete nutrition for six months showed a 63 percent decrease in hospitalizations and 58 percent fewer emergency room visits.

You can help provide nutritious, life-saving meals to the critically ill like Michael by donating today. Visit <https://www.openhand.org/donate>.

Marcus Tolero, Marketing and Communications Officer



# The Foundation of Everything

**G**reetings. I am honored and humbled to join the relatively short list of CEOs who have helped to guide this organization over the past 30 years.

Most recently, and most familiar to me, is Mark Ryle who was such an important part of POH over the past six years. Mark has been a tremendous support to me in my first 30 days at Project Open Hand and I will endeavor to live up to his leadership and vision. Additionally, I'm grateful to the staff, and particularly the ones I work closely with on a day-to-day basis, who have been extremely helpful and supportive during my first few weeks.

Starting this journey in mid-March, which is National Nutrition Month, only to be followed up by April and National Volunteer Appreciation Month, helped to provide a perfect backdrop to set the stage for what makes Project Open Hand such an amazing organization.

National Nutrition Month began in the mid 1970s as a way to help encourage Americans to think about nutrition and acknowledge the incredible importance proper nutrition plays in our lives. As you know, Ruth Brinker recognized the life-sustaining role nutrition played for people dealing with critical health issues when she prepared and delivered her first meals to people with HIV/AIDS in 1985.

Thirty years later, providing people who are dealing with complex health conditions

with high-quality nutrition services is at the foundation of everything we do at Project Open Hand. National Nutrition Month is a chance for the rest of the nation to reflect on not only the important role nutrition plays in preventing illness, but also the role it can and does play in healing. With your help, we can live that concept every day at Project Open Hand where we provide meals and groceries that are the sustenance and medicine for thousands of people to realize a healthier life.

It's one thing for an organization to have the knowledge and understanding of how to translate the nutritional science to health menus; however, preparing and getting over 2,500 of those meals out the door every day and to people in need is quite another challenge altogether. So, with April being National Volunteer Appreciation Month, we celebrated our volunteers, 9,000 strong, because if nutrition is the foundation of this organization, volunteers hold it all together.

Again looking back to Ruth, the first volunteer, she mobilized the community and these volunteers started Project Open Hand. From preparing thousands of meals to delivering meals all over San Francisco and Oakland, we quite literally could not do what we do without our amazing volunteers.

And then of course, you as a supporter are part of the life-blood of Project Open Hand. We can't serve the Project Open Hand community without you.

I look forward to serving this great community and make those who are here now and those who helped build this organization very proud. And I hope you'll be right by my side! Thank you!

Paul Hepfer  
Chief Executive Officer



## Kitchen Upgrade



Over one million medically-tailored meals are generated from our commercial kitchen every year.

Many of those meals are packaged for hand delivery to homebound clients daily or picked up by clients frozen to be reheated and eaten during the week.

That's why new machines in our commercial kitchen are exciting news!

Thanks to a generous gift from David Fix, a retired CPA and weekly volunteer, the machine, the Oliver Speed-seal, will allow for more accuracy in food-portioning, an improved seal on meal boxes, and is environmentally-friendly.

# Dining Out For Life Oakland



Uptown Oakland was abuzz when Project Open Hand brought Dining Out For Life to Oakland on April 25. Participating restaurants Lost & Found Beer Garden, Bar Cesar, Bird & Buffalo, Calavera, Hopscotch, Humphry Slocombe, Itani Ramen, and Soi 4 Bangkok Eatery were packed with diners who supported ending HIV in the Town. A portion of the day's proceeds benefit Project Open Hand's nutrition services in Oakland and San Francisco. Thanks to our diners and donors!



*Project Open Hand's mission is to improve health outcomes and quality of life by providing nutritious meals to the sick and vulnerable, caring for and educating our community.*

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### Let's Connect

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## Community

# Volunteer Spotlight: Jarrod Wong

It was 2001 and San Francisco native Jarrod Wong was looking for a volunteer opportunity in the city on the weekends.

He was mainly interested in food organizations, so he began his search online. After filtering through organizations, he eventually landed on Project Open Hand's webpage.

"Once I came to volunteer here, the rest is history," he said.

Eighteen years have passed since he found Project Open Hand online and his passion to help others as a young adult continues to this day.

Jarrod, who grew up in San Francisco's Richmond District and is a Cal Berkeley graduate, had a desire to help people early in his life. He knew many people who were directly affected by the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and early 1990s. Having seen so many suffer from this critical illness, he saw Project Open Hand as the perfect place for him to start his volunteer career.

"Growing up in the era of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in SF, I saw healthy people whittle away to nothing because of the lack of knowledge, in those days, of the healing power of food," Jarrod said.

He fondly recalls his first volunteer experience. He portioned out oatmeal with a group of volunteers on a Saturday morning in the grocery center. They all shared stories about what brought them to here and, "Had lots of laughs as we worked in the grocery center, the oatmeal dust spilling all over ourselves."

Since then, Jarrod has seen Project Open Hand expand its services to seniors and clients battling illnesses outside of HIV/AIDS – and he has grown right along with the organization. He began volunteering in the kitchen chopping vegetables and onions and added on more duties in the grocery center, including his favorite task – shopping for groceries for clients.

Jarrod explains, "Seeing the smile on their faces and helping them shop for groceries for the week makes me feel like I am helping, in a small way, to make their lives easier so that they can focus on themselves without having to worry about where their next meal is coming from. Connecting with the community and helping my fellow San Franciscans is the least I can do for a city that I grew up in. It made me the person I am today."



Jarrod, an auditor for Public Company Accounting Oversight Board in San Mateo, now tries to share his enthusiasm for volunteering at Project Open Hand. He has organized work-group volunteer days with his co-workers and he's a part of Project Open Hand's Young Professionals Council, a group that develops the next generation of civic leaders who are passionate about food justice in the Bay Area.

"It makes you a more compassionate and thoughtful person you can be proud of. To know that you can make a difference in people's lives, whether through meal delivery or chopping vegetables, is inspiring," Jarrod said.

Project Open Hand requires more than 125 volunteers every day to provide nutritious meals to the sick and elderly in our neighborhoods.

Join our Food is Medicine movement and sign up to volunteer today at [www.openhand.org/volunteer](http://www.openhand.org/volunteer).

Marcus Tolero, Marketing and Communications Officer



# Project Open Hand Plate Clubs

**Your gift makes a difference.** In each issue of *MealTimes*, we give special acknowledgment to our supporters who have made gifts to Project Open Hand totaling \$1,000 or more during the previous quarter (January 1, 2019 through March 31, 2019). If you have questions about this list, please contact [info@openhand.org](mailto:info@openhand.org) or 415-447-2300.

### DIAMOND PLATE CLUB \$100,000 +

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\* Designates members of The Supper Club, Project Open Hand's monthly giving program. To learn more about The Supper Club, visit: [www.openhand.org/give/supper-club](http://www.openhand.org/give/supper-club).



From Our Kitchen to Yours

# Four Simple Salad Dressings

## The Basic Formula for Salad Dressing

2 parts oil, 1 part acid (such as vinegar or lemon juice), and seasonings and flavor enhancers to taste (these can include dried/fresh herbs, spices, honey, mustard, chopped onion – the list is endless!)

### Balsamic Vinaigrette

- 2/3 cup olive oil
- 1/3 cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 teaspoons Dijon or whole grain mustard
- Salt and pepper to taste if you do not have a processor or blender

### Mustard Vinaigrette

- 2/3 cup olive oil
- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Lemon Herb Dressing

- 2/3 cup olive oil
- 1/3 cup lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest (optional)
- 1 teaspoon honey
- Salt to taste
- 3 tablespoons fresh or dried herbs of your choice

### Asian Dressing

- 2/3 cup olive oil
- 1/3 cup rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons Dijon or whole grain mustard
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic (or garlic powder)
- 1-2 teaspoons sesame oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

**SIGN UP TODAY!**



AIDS Walk San Francisco is one of the most visible and recognizable events in the Western United States. Notable not only for its size, the Walk attracts a diverse group of participants. People of all ages, races, and backgrounds come together each year in a massive, powerful, and inspiring demonstration of compassion and action.

Visit [sf.aidswalk.net](http://sf.aidswalk.net) to sign up.



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