

# MediTimes



Spotlight On

## Arlene's Story: Sun Signs & Oakland Pride

Arlene has been receiving Project Open Hand food since 2007

**A**rlene is a firecracker – bold, vibrant, and free-spirited. She says exactly what's on her mind at any given time, and when she speaks, she speaks with an excitement that she seems to be trying her best to suppress.

As an Oakland native, Arlene confidently walks around Uptown, a neighborhood she could navigate effortlessly with her eyes closed. It only takes one afternoon spent with her to feel the hometown pride seeping from her.

Arlene received a Bachelor of Arts in communications and public policy from UC Berkeley, despite struggling with a severe mental illness for most of her life. She's worked as a bank teller in the past, and she often reads astrology books

for fun.

"I have a really great memory, and I like to memorize all of the sun signs," Arlene disconnectedly mentions, immediately following a con-

**"I didn't take medication because I was in denial. In fact, I didn't take medication for 10 years."**

–ARLENE

versation on her mental illness. She quickly switches from intimate and heavy conversations to lighter ones – making her remarkable story a bit more digestible for herself and everyone else.

"A lot of people don't believe in astrology, but I do. People have characteristics as a result of their signs. The way a person acts and thinks is accredited greatly to astrol-

ogy. I'm a Taurus – the bull."

Arlene discovered Project Open Hand in 2007, after having been diagnosed with HIV 17 years prior. Upon diagnosis, Arlene decided she wasn't going to take medication for

the illness.

"I didn't take medication because I was in denial. In fact, I didn't take medication for 10 years."

At 91 pounds and fighting an HIV diagnosis, mental illness, and pneumonia, Arlene's body finally gave up.

"I fell, unconscious, in my apartment and my mother and grandmother found me. An ambulance took me to Fairmont Hospital. I was suffering badly and was hospitalized for three days at Saint Rose Hospital in Hayward. I don't really remember it."

2018 will mark the 11th year of Arlene's nourishing partnership with Project Open Hand.

"I take my medication now and eat good food like I'm supposed to. I eat three meals a day even. Project

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Open Hand has helped me get the variety of foods I never used to eat – meat, milk, vegetables, and grains. I get a healthy diet from this grocery center.” Arlene glances around at her surroundings – a dietitian’s scale, stacks of printed recipes, bins of dried grains – and she smirks and lights up a bit, as if she’s seeing it all for the first time.

With an estimated 5,649 Alameda County residents living with HIV, and the majority of newly

diagnosed HIV patients being African American, Project Open Hand’s nearly 30-year-old Oakland grocery center is crucial to the city’s health, now more than ever.\*

Arlene lives close by and can easily walk to and from the grocery center. She no longer has to carry a cart full of groceries on the bus and is grateful for its location.

Tara Blake, Marketing Communications Officer



Arlene poses outside of Oakland City Hall, just a short walking distance from her home in West Oakland.



### Mark’s Letter

# A solution that “just makes sense”

I start my days early at 730 Polk Street, and this morning was no different than most.

I begin by walking through our kitchen where I greet Bao, Christian, Lea, and the rest of the team that has been chopping, sautéing and roasting since 5:00 a.m. During these uncertain times for nonprofit agencies, the bustling and cheerful kitchen is inspiring to me.

By sunrise, I walk to my desk and begin my work, but today, at my

door sat a light blue storage container. I opened it to find Open Hand treasure inside – decades-old memorabilia thoughtfully packed and saved. At the very top of the package sat one card – a note from Project Open Hand Founder Ruth Brinker to Tom Nolan, the agency’s longtime executive director.

Ruth was congratulating Tom on his vision, as he’d recently expanded services beyond HIV to serve other illnesses, as well as seniors. She wrote words like, “This just makes

sense” and “Thank you for your leadership, I am very proud.”

In a little over two weeks, we’ll launch the groundbreaking, state-wide Medi-Cal Medical Nutrition Pilot. The first of its kind in the nation, this project will bring the proven success of Project Open Hand’s medical nutrition model to critically ill individuals throughout the state.

We are taking this important next step in Project Open Hand’s path in the midst of a federal government that seems determined to discourage donations to nonprofits and eliminate vital health programs for the most vulnerable.

This “one-two punch” would put most organizations on their heels, but we move forward in partnership with the State of California, our supporters, volunteers, and clients, hoping this transformational project that “just makes sense” will also serve as a beacon of good and make folks proud.

As you read this quarter’s MealTimes, be proud as Project Open Hand continues to bring life-saving nutrition to those in need, because you’re part of that too.

 Mark Ryle, LCSW, Chief Executive Officer



Chef de Cuisine Lea Walker stirs 30 gallons of stew in a kitchen braiser. Lea typically begins her day at Project Open Hand at 5:00 a.m.



## From the Archives

The New Year marked one full year serving clients at our Adults with Disabilities meal site right here at 730 Polk Street – where Project Open Hand’s kitchen and grocery center operations exist as well. This is the first Adults with Disabilities meal site to ever exist in San Francisco.



**Over the last year, Project Open Hand has served 13,110 meals from our Adults with Disabilities meal site**



**Project Open Hand**  
openhand.org

*Project Open Hand’s mission is to nourish and engage our community by providing meals with love to the sick and the elderly. MealTimes is published quarterly for the friends and clients of Project Open Hand.*

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Tara Blake, Marketing Communications Officer

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### Let’s Connect



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**FOOD = LOVE**



## Community

# Ann & Matt: Dedicated Donors & Volunteers

**G**iving back to the community has been ingrained in both Ann Morrival and Matt McWright since a very young age.

Matt was a Division 1 lacrosse athlete in college and received a doctorate in clinical psychology. Originally from upstate New York, he enjoys writing and photography, and he speaks of a creative side that many may not understand upon meeting him briefly.

Ann, a Bay Area native, attended St. Mary's College for accounting, receiving her CPA and working for large accounting firms to begin her career. She once moved to London for work and since has returned to the Bay Area and her community, often tutoring in English and reading at local schools.

It only took a few hours spent volunteering at Project Open Hand's kitchen and grocery center for both Ann and Matt to want to embed themselves further in the "food is medicine" movement.

Ann says she is a big believer in the concept of "healthy body, healthy mind, healthy life."

"We saw firsthand how impactful the agency is and how close we can get to the people

who are benefiting: POH's clients. It was so apparent how many people needed the food."

Matt adds, "All of the work at POH is very targeted and thoughtful."

Matt speaks with enthusiasm when he mentions the grocery center component, where clients are able to select their weekly groceries in order to cook their own meals.

"Food banks are incredibly important, but they are very transactional. You may or may not get to know each person's story. *Meals with love* speaks to the relationship and commitment that exists at POH to the clients, not people in the abstract."

Over the last year, Project Open Hand has distributed 45,170 grocery bags, equal to 383,945 meals.

What resonates most with Ann is POH's breast cancer clients served, as her dearest friend recently had breast cancer.

"She had all the resources available to her, and I saw how difficult it still was for her."

Over the past year, six percent of Project Open Hand clients had a breast cancer diagnosis.



Ann and Matt (center) pose with their daughters, Claire Morrival (left) and Maisy McWright (right).

## End of An Era: A Farewell to Avon 39

For the past 12 years, Avon Breast Cancer Crusade has been the primary funder of the POH breast cancer program. The partnership has helped provide more than one million meals, 10,000 nutrition education sessions, 200,000 bags of groceries, and countless hours of support to breast cancer fighters through the years.

As of November 2017, Avon has announced the discontinuation of the AVON 39 Walk

to End Breast Cancer, a crucial fundraiser and engagement tool used by Project Open Hand.

As a community, Project Open Hand remains committed as ever to breast cancer clients and will continue to serve them, but we need support. We encourage everyone to contact Amira Barger, VP of Development and Communications, about ways to get involved, as we collectively support breast cancer fighters in their journey back to health.

☎: (415) 447-2410

✉: abarger@openhand.org



# Project Open Hand Plate Clubs

**Every gift makes a difference.** In each issue of MealTimes, we give special acknowledgment to our supporters who have given a total of \$1,000 or more during the previous quarter (October 1, 2017, through December 31, 2017). Your generosity enables us to provide nourishing food to so many of our neighbors. If you have questions about this list, please contact David Newcomb, Director of Advancement and Community Relations, at dnewcomb@openhand.org or (415) 447-2417.

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

Estate of John Flynn  
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### PLATINUM PLATE CLUB \$50,000 - \$99,999

Anonymous (1)  
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### GOLD PLATE CLUB \$25,000 - \$49,999

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### BRONZE PLATE CLUB \$5,000 - \$9,999

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### BRONZE PLATE CLUB \$5,000 - \$9,999

\* Designates members of The Supper Club, Project Open Hand's monthly giving program.

For a complete list of our quarterly China Plate Club donors, please visit [www.openhand.org/news-blog](http://www.openhand.org/news-blog)



From Our Kitchen to Yours

# Mushroom Zucchini Quiche

## Ingredients

Serves 6

- |                             |                                    |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 tbsp. olive oil           | 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper       |
| 1 small yellow onion, diced | 1 1/2 c. shredded cheese           |
| 1 c. diced zucchini         | 2 c. chopped fresh spinach         |
| 1 1/2 c. sliced mushrooms   | 2 tbsp. sun-dried tomatoes, minced |
| 1/2 tsp. salt               | 6 whole eggs                       |
| 2 tsp. paprika              | 1 c. whole milk                    |
|                             | 1 9" prepared pie crust            |

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees; in a medium bowl, whisk eggs, milk and paprika until combined and set aside
2. Heat sauté pan on medium and add oil; cook onions until translucent
3. Add mushrooms and zucchini to onions; season with salt and pepper; sauté 3-5 minutes until cooked tender; remove from heat and let cool
4. When cooked vegetables are cooled, drain off excess liquid and fold in chopped spinach, sun-dried tomatoes and shredded cheese
5. Place vegetables and cheese mixture in prepared pie crust, spread evenly
6. Pour egg mixture over and gently tap pie pan on counter to release any air bubbles; place quiche on another baking tray to protect against spillage
7. Bake for 35-45 minutes




PROJECT OPEN HAND'S

25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**HAND  
to  
HAND**  
LUNCHEON

*THANK YOU for the outpouring of support at the reintroduction of our beloved 25th Annual Hand to Hand Luncheon on December 14, 2017. Hand to Hand is an opportunity for us to make new friends and reconnect with old ones, strengthening the bonds of community and human connection that are at the heart of what we do. A very special thank you to Emcee Liam Mayclem of CBS 5, and keynote speaker and Food Network star Cat Cora. The funds raised at the event provided 125,000 meals with love.*

*Honoring*

**RUTH BRINKER VISIONARY AWARD**  
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*Project Open Hand Board Member*

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# MealTimes

Cover Story

**Arlene's Story:  
Sun Signs & Oakland Pride**



**What's Cooking?  
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