

Meat Times



Cover Story

Celebrating 35 Years in Oakland

This October, our Oakland Center celebrates its 35th anniversary!

The Oakland Center opened its doors on October 17, 1989 – the day of the Loma Prieta earthquake. With one of the only functional commercial kitchens at our San Francisco location, we opened our new East Bay location early, so Project Open Hand could provide food to those impacted by the quake.

Vicki Giusti, a retired Project Open Hand employee, was there that day, helping to coordinate efforts. She remembers the scene as being chaotic, but unforgettable:

“I keep thinking about when the volunteers in the Project Open Hand t-shirts came off BART with the food, and the people who met them,” she said. “It’s just amazing how people can gather together and make things happen.”

For several weeks afterwards, Project Open Hand produced 15,000 meals a day for those affected by the disaster.

Client-centered services

That history of providing support to those who need it most continues through our work in the East Bay today.

Today, colorful and bright produce in deep, leafy greens, strawberry reds, and vivid oranges line the refrigerators and shelves of the open-floor concept grocery center. Bustling with clients nearly every weekday, and serving

almost 4,000 people annually, the San Pablo Avenue location in Oakland serves as the heart of our East Bay operations.

Last year, thanks to donor support, the Oakland office was renovated to double our space. The renovations allowed for a large-enough area for clients to be able to shop for themselves at the grocery center and attend cooking demonstrations, and the creation of private spaces where nutritionists could conduct client consultations.

“It’s just amazing how people can gather together and make things happen.”

“With this newly remodeled space, we’ve created more client choice. They have the same selection of produce here as in San Francisco, but they’re able to go grab the food themselves now, like you would at a grocery store,” says Sami Wilkinson, Manager of the East Bay Wellness Program.

“It allows for a more dignified experience for our clients, which was our goal with the remodel.”

“For so many years, this space was not reflective of the impact we have here,” Wilkinson continues. “Having this space remodeled right around the anniversary is really exciting, and it’s so timely.”

East Bay needs are growing

An overwhelming 86% of

clients who use our services in Alameda County live below the federal poverty line – and many of them are adults who are over the age of 65.

Last year, the increased demand for services in the East Bay – which includes Alameda and Contra Costa counties – has been startling, particularly those living with HIV/AIDS.

We served 58% more HIV/AIDS clients in the East Bay by providing them with 163%

more medically tailored meals and 89% more medically supportive groceries than we did the year before.

This dramatic increase comes at a time when other resources provided during the COVID-19 pandemic have phased out.

Despite this uptick in service, the East Bay Project Open Hand team stays optimistic, says Wilkinson.

“Clients get to meet with the same staff over and over because we’re such a small team,” says Wilkinson. “I think it gives them a sense of belonging here, as well as the opportunity to get to know people. And whenever there’s a new client who comes to shop here, we make it a point to welcome them to the space and show them how the

shopping process works.”

Kudos from East Bay clients

We are proud to provide services for so many people each year. Here’s a look at what some of our clients in the East Bay shared:

“Your services taught me how to eat, opened me up to new foods, and have helped with my health,” says one East Bay client.

“I was a self-professed ‘carnivore’ before. Now, I’m eating vegetables, and the meals have helped with that. I rarely go to the grocery store, so your grocery boxes have really helped with that.”

On to the next 35 years

In 1989, Project Open Hand extended our reach into the Bay Area community and gave the country a new model of care for people living with serious illnesses through meals with love to people living with HIV/AIDS.

Now, as we look at the future of the organization, it’s the dedicated support of donors, volunteers, and team members, who will help us serve Oakland and the Bay Area for the next 35 years. Thank you!

To find out more about the Oakland Center’s history, other stories, to volunteer or donate, go to www.openhand.org

by Kimberly Kollwitz, Manager, Marketing and Communications



Our New Chief Nutrition Officer

Providing Nutrition to Those Who Need It Most

Hello Friend,

I am thrilled to join Project Open Hand as its first-ever Chief Nutrition Officer. I come here with 16 years of experience in hospitals, having most recently served as the Director of Food and Nutrition Services at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital, where I helped improve the quality of patients' food.

To make this new position possible, we first brought together two key departments, Nutrition Services and Kitchen Operations, under one shared, strategic vision. To do this, we've merged the two to create our new Nutrition and Culinary Service Department.

Bringing these two teams together puts the two most important components of Medically Tailored Meals - food and nutrition intervention - at the forefront of our operations.

Almost half of all Americans have one or more preventable chronic illnesses, many of which are related to poor diet. Providing clients with foods that have positive health impacts like fresh, seasonal vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats, means they receive the foods they need to heal.

But food is not just meant for healing; it's also a way to show love and care for someone. Food also nourishes and builds community.

Creating the first-ever Chief Nutrition Officer at Project Open Hand demonstrates just how committed our organization is to putting people - and food - first.

We are continually striving to provide the best service to our clients. Through this new Nutrition and Culinary Service Department, we're building a supportive food environment that shows how much we care about our clients by honoring food traditions, providing accessible services, and improving access to nourishing food through our purchasing decisions.

With an eye towards increasing our business with food producers from underrepresented communities, produce in our Grocery Centers are now both seasonal and sourced from black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)-owned and operated farms.

This is an area where Project Open Hand, as a community-based organization, should be - and will now be - especially strong in.

This investment in the new Nutrition and Culinary Service Department means improving and growing the various meals we provide to clients, while increasing the quality, nutrition, and variety of what we offer to support clients on their health journey.

I am honored to join a community of staff, volunteers, and clients aligned with such an important mission.

I look forward to building on the incredible history of Project Open Hand, and meeting all of you, who play such a critical role in our work!

Katie Jackson
Chief Nutrition Officer
Project Open Hand



DINING OUT FOR LIFE EAST BAY Project Open Hand meals with love

DINE OUT. END HIV. #DiningOutForLife #DOFLEastBay

Thursday, 09/26/2024

Sponsored by **DINING OUT FOR LIFE** **WILCOX FOODS**

Dining Out For Life 2024 - Thursday, September 26

We're thankful to the restaurants who participate in and for those who join us at Dining Out For Life each year. Thank you for helping to make our sixth annual Dining Out For Life on September 26th a success.

To learn more about participating restaurants (and to support them all year long) use the QR code or visit our website at www.openhand.org/events



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Project Open Hand

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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FOOD=LOVE



Community

Spotlight: Supporting Volunteers

The Project Open Hand Volunteer Services team aims to make our volunteers' experience memorable, helping them provide essential support to our clients.

Did you know that each week it takes more than 300 volunteers to make our kitchen, grocery centers, and other operations run smoothly and ensure that we can provide meals to thousands of people?

"Volunteers are the backbone of Project Open Hand, and they bring an immense passion and dedication to our work every day," says Director of Volunteer and Grocery Operations, Diana Contreras. "They help us to move our organization forward, and ultimately are the reason that we can do what we do."

Six days a week, the volunteer services team is in the office preparing volunteer stations and coordinating, planning, and leading volunteer shifts in both our San Francisco and Oakland locations, as well as at our eleven Community Nutrition Program (CNP) locations.

"We are the bridge between the volunteers and the agency," says Kelly Wong, a volunteer coordinator. "I like that I get to provide volunteers that help meet our agency needs and help volunteers achieve their goals."

Benefits from volunteering are endless: Making friends and connections that last a lifetime; learning and understanding how a nonprofit operates and directly impacts our community; as well as hands-on experience working in our kitchen, grocery center, warehouse, and other locations.

Volunteers at Project Open Hand are part of a community that gives back to others and who want to see one another grow and excel. Every contribution, no matter how small, makes a significant difference in the lives of so many.

Interested in volunteering at Project Open Hand?

Meet others who share a common goal and help us to provide nutritious meals to those who need it the most. There are plenty of ways to get involved:

- Hot Spots: Sign up online (www.openhand.org/hotspots) for shifts that fit your availability
- Donation drives: Organize a toiletry drive, canned goods drive, or an online fundraiser
- Skill-based volunteering: Offer your professional skills on a project.

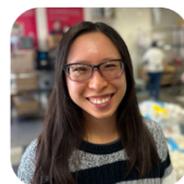
To learn more, visit us at <https://www.openhand.org/volunteer> or contact us at volunteer@openhand.org

Meet the Team



Diana
Director, Volunteer & Grocery Operations
7 years at Project Open Hand

"I am incredibly grateful to be part of a team of compassionate individuals. Every day, my team arrives with smiles on their faces, ready to tackle the day's challenges. It's truly exhilarating to see the positive impact we can make in the community by mobilizing volunteers."



Kelly
Volunteer Coordinator
7 years at Project Open Hand

"Some of the most valuable things volunteers bring to our organization is their hard work and dedication, and the understanding that through working together we can serve our community."



Hong
Volunteer Coordinator
5 years at Project Open Hand

"Being able to see the joy that our volunteers feel from providing services keeps me motivated. It brings me so much happiness knowing that our team can give back to the community while also feeling fulfilled in our work."



Dalia
Manager, Volunteer Services
4 months at Project Open Hand

"Every volunteer that walks through the doors of Project Open Hand contributes something unique and worthwhile to our community; the volunteers' positive attitude, empathy, and drive are the most valuable assets to us. There is always a mutual enthusiasm and respect that shines through."



Project Open Hand Plate Clubs

Makes a difference. MealTimes offers special acknowledgment to Project Open Hand supporters who have made gifts totaling \$1,000 or more from April 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024. If you have questions about this list, please contact donations@openhand.org or 415-447-2300.

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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: openhand.org/give/supper-club.

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From Our
Kitchen
to Yours

Vegan Walnut Taco Meat

Contributed by former Project Open Hand Client and current employee Ana Rivera

Ingredients

- 2 cups walnuts (soaked for at least 30 minutes in water)
- 1 red onion, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ¼ cup sun dried tomatoes in oil, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon avocado or olive oil
- 1 tsp taco seasoning
- 2 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1 lime, juiced

Instructions

1. Once soaked, drain walnuts and put them into a food processor. Pulse until it's a meat-like crumble. (Be careful not to over-process.)
2. Add oil to a skillet and saute the onions until translucent (approx. 2-3 minutes).
3. Add garlic, allow to fry for a minute before sprinkling the taco seasoning across the mixture. Stir to combine.
4. Add sundried tomatoes, allow to cook for 1 minute.
5. Add crumbled walnuts. Stir well.
6. Pour in the soy sauce and the lime juice. Stir well.
7. Cook for another 4-5 minutes. Serve and enjoy!

SAVE THE DATE

Hand to Hand 2024

Friday, November 22, 2024

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Sponsorships available now. Look for tickets coming soon! To learn more, scan the QR code or visit our website at www.openhand.org/events

