

Meal Times

NEWS FROM
Project Open Hand



Summer Issue, No. 103



It's the FINAL STRETCH for
The Giant Race Benefiting
Project Open Hand!

Help us raise \$400,000
by August 23.

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GAIL AND PEGGY'S STORY

Sisters by Choice

While sharing a table seems like a simple thing, it has the powerful, positive impact of building social connections, friendships—and even sisterhood.

Gail and Peggy met at the Project Open Hand senior lunch site in the Castro neighborhood about two years ago and have developed such a strong friendship that they describe themselves as “sisters by choice.”

“We were both coming for lunch and sitting with a big group, then one day, someone pointed out that Gail and I are both retired nurses,” Peggy explained. “Once we got to chatting about that and the many other things we have in common, we really hit it off.”

We learned that we're both from Ohio; we both love the Giants; and we both have difficult older sisters,” Peggy said, laughing.

A retired emergency department nurse and health educator, Peggy moved to San Francisco four years ago to be closer to family. Gail, who lived in the Castro in the 60's and 70's, returned to San Francisco in 2013. She spent 20 years as an Army nurse, serving in Vietnam and Operation Desert Storm, Saudi Arabia, as well as 25 years working in Veterans' hospitals.

“Right from day one, I felt really welcome here,” Gail said. “This community center is my home away from home, a real focal point of my life. I come to see Peggy, I enjoy the great activities, and the meals taste good.”

I haven't always had the best eating habits, so coming for lunch, I know I'm getting good, healthy food at least one meal a day,” Gail added.

A couple of years ago, when a fellow lunch guest suffered a stroke, Peggy and Gail began fielding anxious questions from their peers about how to prevent and respond to strokes. They saw an opportunity to share knowledge and expertise from their many years of professional nursing

and “Ask the Nurses” was born.

Since October 2013, these “sisters by choice” have taught health-education workshops twice monthly at the Castro Senior Center. Their “Ask the Nurses” class addresses health challenges commonly faced by seniors, including stroke, heart attacks, fractures and falls, and diabetes. In the coming months, they have sessions planned about cancer and dementia.

“We think it's important to give back at every age,” said Peggy, who turned 80 last fall. Gail will celebrate her 72nd birthday this summer.

As Gail and Peggy's friendship has blossomed, so has their community. Gail said, “People who break bread together talk together, share common struggles and help each other. When we saw there was a need to give back, we jumped at the opportunity.”

LEARN MORE
ABOUT OUR SENIOR
LUNCH PROGRAM

and find a lunch site
near you at
[OpenHand.org/
seniors](http://OpenHand.org/seniors).



Best friends Gail (left) and Peggy met through our Senior Lunch Program



Project Open Hand

OpenHand.org

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San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 447-2300

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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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Mark's Letter

As the youngest of five children raised deep in the heart of Texas, I have a real appreciation for family. My folks raised a family of helpers, standing by each other in good times and bad.

By the time you read this issue of MealTimes, I will be in the final days of training for the Giant Race Benefiting Project Open Hand. But I'm not going it alone.

On August 23, the Ryle family is coming to San Francisco to stand (run) by me in The Giant Race. My brothers Tim and Rick, my sister Debbie, my mom and dad and I will swap our cowboy boots for sneakers to run in San Francisco's premier road race.



Mark (second from right) and his siblings, circa 1970

Last year, I ran the 10K and my team raised \$9,000 to support Project Open Hand's meals with love for sick and elderly neighbors. This year, I'm doubling my distance to the half-marathon and increasing my fundraising goal to \$25,000.

Every little bit of support goes a long way toward ensuring Project Open Hand's clients get the medically-tailored meals they need to get stronger and heal.

When we expanded our food and nutrition services to other critically ill individuals back in July, we began to understand the incredible need for our work beyond HIV and seniors.

Today we're seeing very, very sick individuals with heart disease, cancer, diabetes and hepatitis C—all who are benefiting from our nutritious meals and healthy groceries. This year, we have more new clients than any year since 1992. These clients are very sick, very poor and very vulnerable.

I continue to be amazed by the powerful and generous support I receive from my family—my parents and siblings, as well as

"Last year, I ran the 10K and my team raised \$9,000. This year, I'm doubling my distance and my goal is \$25,000." – Mark (center)

my Project Open Hand family. I'd like to give special thanks to the San Francisco Giants for continuing to be such fantastic partners to Project Open Hand through The Giant Race.

Whether you are a new supporter of Project Open Hand or a long-time friend of our agency, I look forward to running alongside you through the many months and years to come, growing our work and nourishing our community.

Sincerely,

Mark Ryle, Co-Chief Executive Officer

HELP MARK
REACH HIS \$25,000
FUNDRAISING GOAL

Donate now at
GiantRace.com

Building Community in the East Bay



Oakland Mayor Schaaf (center, in blue shirt) welcomed HIV-care providers to City Hall

PARTNER WITH US: We welcome opportunities to partner with caregivers and community service providers who assist people living with critical illness. Contact Michael Haritos at mharitos@openhand.org or (510) 622-0222.

VOLUNTEER IN OUR OAKLAND GROCERY CENTER:

Contact Cady Smith at csmith@openhand.org or (510) 622-0223.

DONATE: Make a donation to support our East Bay Programs at OpenHand.org/Donate.

CELEBRATE: Attend the Toast and Jam jazz brunch at Oakland's Preservation Park, September 26th. More information at OpenHand.org/ToastandJam

Project Open Hand was delighted to meet with Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf this spring, joining our fellow members of the HIV Contractors Coalition of Alameda County on a visit to City Hall. The group encouraged Mayor Schaaf to join collaborative efforts aimed at breaking down barriers to care that confront our East Bay clients.

Project Open Hand Executive Vice President Artrese Morrison (front, second from left) said, "We were delighted that the mayor was not only receptive to meeting with us, but also valued our efforts and their alignment with her safety initiative. She shares our belief that everyone should feel safe and secure with their personal health status. With the Mayor's leadership and support, our coalition will be able to continue to address the complex needs of neighbors living with HIV."

PAUL'S STORY

Project Open Hand Opened My Eyes

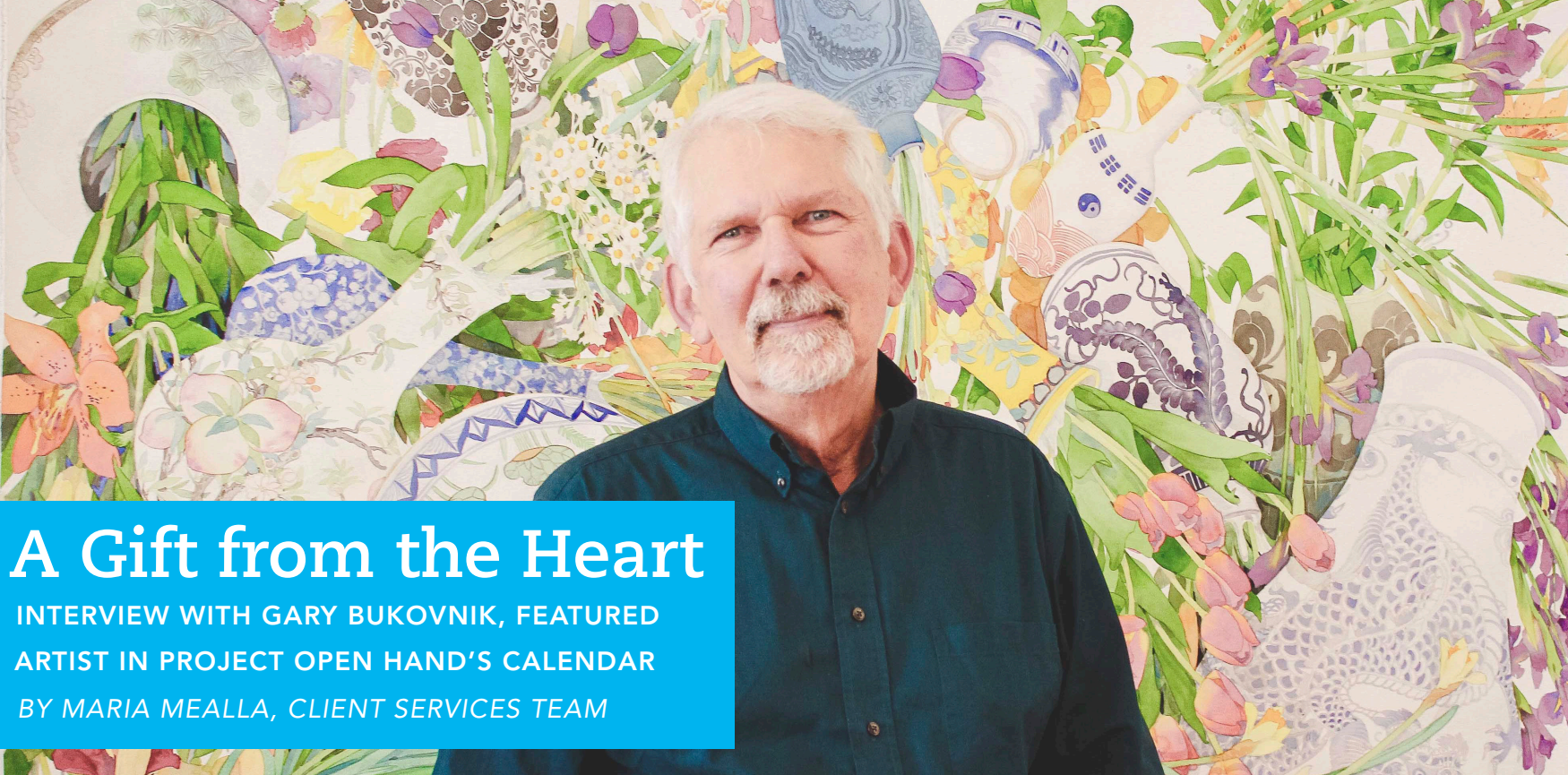
Diagnosed with HIV in the late 1980s, Paul considers himself lucky to be a long-time survivor and is thankful he has had access to resources like Project Open Hand.

"I felt like I always had an angel on my shoulder," Paul explained. "Even though there were challenges, my journey hasn't been a curse in any way."

Paul became a client after hearing about Project Open Hand from his friend, another client who often shared food and groceries with Paul. After tagging along with his friend on a trip to the Grocery Center, Paul learned he was eligible for our services.

"Visiting Project Open Hand opened my eyes. I saw they were helping a lot of people, and I was really glad to find they could help me, too," Paul said. "Getting healthy food from Project Open Hand so I can eat right is one of the things that has folded into my life."





A Gift from the Heart

INTERVIEW WITH GARY BUKOVNIK, FEATURED
ARTIST IN PROJECT OPEN HAND'S CALENDAR
BY MARIA MEALLA, CLIENT SERVICES TEAM

For almost 20 years, world-renowned artist Gary Bukovnik has supported Project Open Hand by creating beautiful, watercolor paintings for our yearly calendars. We had the honor of being invited into Gary's studio to ask him a few questions regarding his art and his involvement with Project Open Hand and were delighted by what we learned.

HOW DID YOU FIRST LEARN ABOUT PROJECT OPEN HAND?

Gary: Many years ago, I heard the moving story about Project Open Hand founder Ruth Brinker and her compassion for those who were ill and dying from HIV/AIDS. As time went on, the HIV crisis grew, taking the lives of my dearest friends. It was devastating for me, as it was for so many others.

Then POH expanded to serve a wider group reaching even more of my friends, including my dear friend Mary. Mary was a wonderful cook, but as years passed, she became very frail. Project Open Hand stepped in, providing meals and greatly improving her last days. I'm still moved and grateful for what you did for her.

WHAT DOES THE POH TAGLINE 'MEALS WITH LOVE' MEAN TO YOU?

Gary: How appropriate it is to see *meals with love* as Project Open Hand's slogan! The volunteers, people from all walks of Bay Area life, give from their hearts. Helping in the kitchen, the grocery centers or with deliveries is emotionally moving and awesome to witness. It's a privilege to create art for the greatest charity organization that I have ever heard about or had contact

with. We have made 19 calendars, and the impact has been beyond my wildest dreams!

HOW DID YOU KNOW OR DISCOVER THAT YOU WERE AN ARTIST?

Gary: My beginnings were in rural Painesville, Ohio, where we lived with my grandmother, who had a general store in the middle of nowhere. All around it, fields of beautiful flowers were being grown commercially for shipment. In my case, the subject matter chose the artist, not the other way around. My folks wanted me to be a pharmacist. As a kid, I never questioned that. Painting still-life with watercolors is like chemistry; you have to take it apart first to see how to put it back together. It wasn't

until I went to university that I realized I couldn't move forward with pharmacy. Art was the only possible direction.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON RIGHT NOW?

Gary: I'm currently finishing paintings for an exhibition at the Botanical Garden at the University of California Berkeley, opening August 24th. I will be giving a one-day workshop on the 3rd of September to benefit the garden! My next exhibition will open on October 1st

at the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Washington, D.C., then one in Kyoto in November and one at the Shanghai Hongqiao Contemporary Art Museum in December.



WATCH YOUR MAILBOX!

If you are a Project Open Hand donor, Gary's exclusive POH 2016 calendar will arrive in early September.

PROJECT OPEN HAND

Plate Clubs

CONNECT WITH US
OpenHand.org



Every gift makes a difference. In each issue of MealTimes, we give special acknowledgement to our supporters who gave during the previous quarter and have given a total of \$1,000 or more since July 1, 2014 (beginning of our fiscal year). Your generosity enables us to provide nourishing food to so many of our neighbors. If you have questions about this list, please contact Alan Beach-Nelson, VP of Development, at ABeachNelson@OpenHand.org or (415) 447-2410.

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THE GIANT RACE
BENEFITING PROJECT
OPEN HAND
AUGUST 23 | AT&T PARK

Help us cross the finish line!

DONATE Help us reach our \$400,000 fundraising goal by making a donation to one of the amazing “Team Project Open Hand” runners.

VOLUNTEER Visit GiantRace.com to sign up under the “Registration” tab.



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CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL
SEPTEMBER 12-13
GHIRARDELLI SQUARE

The Ghirardelli Chocolate Festival is the sweetest ticket in town, featuring more than 50 chocolate vendors, demonstrations by top dessert chefs, a silent auction, and the popular Chocolate & Wine Pavilion. The best part? 100% of the profits from this event are donated to Project Open Hand.

GET TICKETS today at Ghirardelli.com/Events

VOLUNTEER Sign up at OpenHand.org/Events



TOAST AND JAM 2015 CELEBRATE OUR EAST BAY COMMUNITY
SEPTEMBER 26 | OAKLAND'S PRESERVATION PARK

Celebrate wellness and community with us at this family-friendly jazz brunch and help fund the expansion of our East Bay nutrition services for women fighting breast cancer. We'll also honor the contributions of three amazing East Bay partners—community champions in Advocacy, Nourishment, and Wellness.

GET TICKETS at Openhand.org/ToastandJam.

SPONSOR THE EVENT Contact ABeachNelson@OpenHand.org for sponsorship opportunities, including Founding Sponsor (\$20,000) and Advocacy, Nourishment or Wellness Award Sponsor (\$5,000 each).

Breakfast for Our Seniors Gets More Egg-cellent



The best days begin with a fresh, healthy breakfast. This is especially true for our senior neighbors. So, this summer, we introduced new, healthier breakfasts for seniors at Curry Senior Center in the Tenderloin neighborhood.



Co-CEO Simon Pitchford chats with a senior client over breakfast

For years, we have provided breakfast at Curry—as well as nutritious lunch—but in the eyes of Senior Program Director Noah Lopez, who joined Project Open Hand about a year ago, our breakfast just wasn't up to snuff.

“I'm looking at every aspect of our Senior Nutrition Program with fresh eyes,” Noah said. “I'm continually looking for opportunities for us to do better, and providing healthier breakfast with more variety is one of those improvements. I was able to work with our kitchen and purchasing teams to build a new, healthier menu that better reflects the nutrition and wellness at the core of Project Open Hand's work.”

