



# Meal Times



Spotlight On

## Upendo: The Good Feeling

It is a warm and sunny Tuesday afternoon in San Francisco's Mission District and Upendo is ready to fill her grocery bag with the produce on the display table in front of the Project Open Hand Mobile Grocery Van.

She holds the day's shopping list in her hand and checks off the foods she wants to bring home including grain, dairy, and proteins. She gives the list and bag to a Project Open Hand staffer, who returns a few minutes later with a bag full of groceries that will last a week.

"I look forward to every Tuesday because it's always something fresh. Even though I can't afford it, I know there will be fresh stuff in my house for my family. That alone makes you feel better, even if you're not feeling good," Upendo said.

Seven years ago, there was no 'feeling good' because that was when Upendo received life-changing news from her doctors – she was diabetic.

Upendo, who grew up in San Francisco's historic Fillmore District, began treatment with diabetes medication.

But over time she noticed that her condition wasn't improving the way she thought it would.

Her A1-C numbers were still high and depression began to take its hold.

"I was trying my best to do it myself, but it wasn't working," Upendo said. "The depression would take my appetite. Some days I would need to eat, and my doctors were like, 'you have to eat something.'"

A concerned family friend recommended that she look into Project Open Hand.

Upendo signed up a little over a year ago. With a referral from a family care physician, she started to shop at the POH Grocery Center on Polk

Street, SF. But the commute across town proved to be a burden, and traveling alone was worrisome.

Then staff told her about the mobile grocery van.

The Project Open Hand Mobile Grocery Van offers convenience and accessibility for clients who are unable to travel far distances. The van currently has stops in the Mission District and Bayview.

When Upendo was able to

shop for nutritious groceries and pick up meals closer to home, her health improved measurably.

"A lot of things changed. Just me feeling better, the stomachaches and headaches went away because I was finally eating balanced and healthy," she said. "My weight and my A1-C numbers went down."

She was so ecstatic about her health improvements that she even told Outreach Coordinator Isabel Eskin Shapson, who manages the Mobile Grocery Van, during a visit.

"She came up to the van and

she had this big smile on her face and she was like, 'I just came from the doctor, and they are so happy with my weight – it's going down. My blood pressure is looking good.' She just started rattling off these things her doctor was really happy with, and she attributed it to the services we offer," Shapson said.

When Upendo first became a Wellness client, she received the medically-tailored meals

because it was easier to prepare in the microwave. Soon she started to incorporate fresh produce and proteins. Her favorite Project Open Hand grocery item is the tilapia.

"I would encourage (a person with a critical illness) to see what it has done for me! It has made me feel better and I am able to get around better and not feeling so sick in the stomach and aching all the time," Upendo said.

Seven years ago, Upendo received life-changing news that she was diabetic. But with a change in diet and a new appreciation for healthy eating, she is changing her physical health and mental wellbeing.

That's 'feeling good.'

The Project Open Hand Mobile Grocery Van brings fresh produce, groceries, and life-saving meals directly to the communities where critically ill clients live in San Francisco and Oakland.

To help us continue to bring this life-changing service to our clients, please donate at [openhand.org/donate](https://openhand.org/donate).



## Paul's Letter

# Addressing Social Determinants of Health

Dear Friend,

We often believe that disparities in health outcomes are strictly a result of access to quality health care.

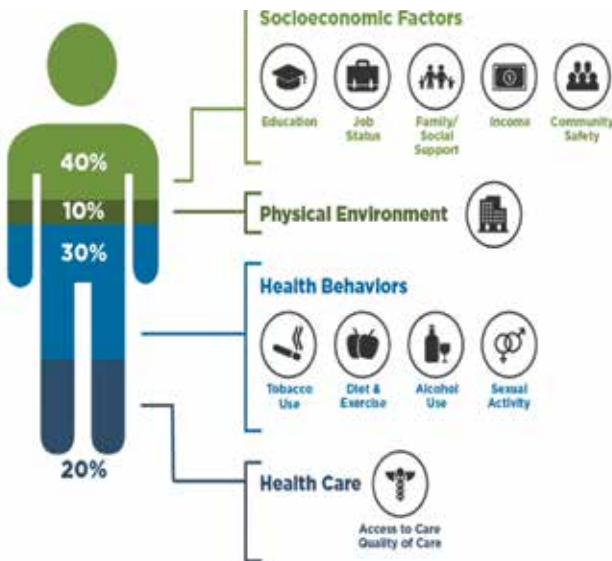
But it's not. Health care makes up only 20 percent of the conditions that shape our health. Other factors like income and education, where we live, and behaviors like whether we drink or smoke, contribute as much or more to our long-term well-being.

To impact not only the immediate health outcomes of our critically-ill clients but to ensure their long-term quality of care, we need to examine these "social determinants of health."

Our mobile grocery vans travel to underserved neighborhoods in San Francisco and Oakland to bring medically-tailored meals and groceries to our clients who face mobility or transportation issues, like our cover-story client Upendo.

Our Community Nutrition Sites spread across San Francisco, provide a blanket of nutritious meal services, 365 days a year, for seniors and adults with disabilities. Just

as importantly, our hot, balanced meals are served in community centers that offer arts, exercise and a setting to decrease the risks of isolation and loneliness.



Our Wellness Program clients, many of whom suffer from cancer, HIV/AIDS, and diabetes, receive nutrition interventions that include not only medically-tailored meals, but also counseling and education with our team of registered dietitians. If clients are home-bound, life-saving meals are delivered right to their doors. And

clients who are recovering their strength can shop for fresh, nutritious foods at our San Francisco or Oakland Grocery Center.

All of our services – CNP and Wellness – are made available free of charge to our clients – 90 percent of living below the national poverty line.

Addressing social determinants of health is vital in improving health outcomes and shines a light on an important issue -- health disparities are caused by social, economic, and environmental disadvantages.

Thanks to you, our friend and supporter, we are able to be the bridge that connects our clients to the access and quality of care they deserve.

If you would like to make a difference in the lives of our chronically ill neighbors, please donate at [openhand.org/donate](https://openhand.org/donate)  
Thank You!

Paul Hepfer  
Chief Executive Officer



# Thank You to Our Retiring Board Members

Thank you to (left to right) Timothy Barabe, Kristofer Konietzko, Gary Loeb, and Patrick McGovern whose terms of service on the Project Open Hand Board of Directors come to a close in December 2019.



As a retired private and public company chief financial officer with an extensive background in finance, Timothy Barabe has provided invaluable guidance and support as the board chair and board member over the past seven years.



Most recently, Kris Konietzko served as chair of the 2018 Hand Gala Luncheon, setting a new milestone in fundraising in addition to his tireless guidance and support as media relations director with Salesforce.



As an executive leader and general counsel with major pharmaceutical companies in the Bay Area, Gary H. Loeb has provided strategic insight and contributed in an advisory role on key developments.



Serving since January 2015, Patrick McGovern is an award-winning executive dedicated to optimizing public health and patient access and is a life-long change agent on the HIV/AIDS and HCV fronts.

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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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Community

# Staff Spotlight: Isabel Eskin Shapson

A white van pulls into a designated parking spot on 16th and Shotwell Streets on a late Tuesday afternoon.

Isabel Eskin Shapson exits the driver’s side and opens the van’s sliding door. She pulls out a table and unfolds it on the sidewalk. She places crates filled with produce onto it, and keeps the van doors open to access coolers filled with dairy and proteins.

Isabel has set up a farmers-market style display in just a few minutes, and a group of people are already gathered in front of the table.

POH launched Mobile Van Service in Alameda County to bring medically tailored meals to underserved communities.



But this is not a typical San Francisco farmers-market stand. This is the second stop of the day for Isabel, who travels in the Project Open Hand Mobile Grocery Van out into the community every Tuesday to bring nutritious foods to clients who have mobility or transportation issues

Isabel grew up in the Richmond and Haight neighborhoods and went to high school in the city. She attended George Washington University in Washington D.C. and received her degree in international affairs with a concentration in global public health.

After college, she travelled to Peru in 2016 and worked for an organization focused on preventative health education.

Isabel returned to the city after a year and a half in Peru, and picked up a job as a temp at a law office soon after. But in her heart, she knew exactly where she wanted to permanently land.

“(Project Open Hand) is such a pillar of the non-profit community here,” she said. “For me, being especially interested in the intersection of nutrition and public health...that is where I wanted to be.”



As the community outreach coordinator, Isabel communicates with community groups for client referrals, attends outward-facing events to promote services, and builds awareness about the organization’s Community Nutrition Sites, where low-cost daily meals are served to seniors and adults with disabilities.

But her work with the Mobile Grocery Van is where she shines.

Her preparation begins days in advance. On Fridays she requests an order of groceries. On Mondays, she will communicate with contacts to remind them that the grocery van will be in their neighborhood. She also speaks with new or existing clients who are interested in the grocery van option.

When Tuesdays arrive, she is off and driving. She visits the Bayview around noon. When clients arrive and sign-in, she helps them shop for groceries from the condensed Project Open Hand shopping list. She also answers any questions from clients and non-clients alike.

After the Bayview visit, she travels back to the POH Grocery Center on Polk Street to restock the van and heads right back out to the Mission District.

“I think it’s important to have this service in the community. A lot of our clients have mobility or transit issues that make it difficult for them to come all the way over here (to the San Francisco Grocery Center),” Isabel said.

The Project Open Hand Mobile Grocery Van has pickup locations in the Mission District and Bayview. Help us continue this much needed service for our clients who face mobility or transportation issues by donating at [openhand.org/donate](https://openhand.org/donate).



# Project Open Hand Plate Clubs

Your gift makes a difference. *MealTimes* offers special acknowledgment to Project Open Hand supporters who have made gifts totaling \$1,000 or more during the previous quarter (June 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019). If you have questions about this list, please contact [donations@openhand.org](mailto:donations@openhand.org) or 415-447-2300.

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From Our Kitchen to Yours



Lentil Mushroom and Apple Loaf

Ingredients

- 1 cup uncooked green or brown lentils

1 bay leaf

1 tblspn vegetable oil

2 cups diced onion, divided

1 tblspn garlic powder

1 cup diced celery stalk & leaves, divided

4 ounces mushroom veggie patty

1 cup grated carrot

1 tblspn dried thyme

1 tspn minced oregano or rosemary
- 1/3 cup peeled and grated Granny Smith apple

1/2 cup protein trail mix

1/2 cup oatmeal

1 medium egg

½ cup flax meal and bread crumbs (optional)

6-8 oz grated Pepper Jack Cheese, divided

2 tspn pepper

1 tspn salt

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line 9"x5" loaf pan with parchment paper and spray or brush with oil.

2. Rinse and strain lentils. Place lentils into pot with 3 cups of water (or veg broth). Add bay leaf and ½ cup each, diced onion and celery. Bring to a boil and season with salt. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, 40-45 minutes. Stir frequently and add water, if needed. Lentils should mash slightly with a spoon when ready.

3. Heat a teaspoon of vegetable or olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Sauté onion until caramelized or until soft and brown, about 30 minutes. Add garlic powder and stir for 2 minutes more. Add diced celery and mushroom patty stirring until crumbled about 2 minutes. Add carrots and apples. Sauté for 5 minutes more. Remove from heat.

4. Combine vegetable mix with mashed lentils. Add oatmeal, trail mix, optional flax meal or breadcrumbs, and cheese. Combine well. Adjust seasonings to taste.

5. Fold in egg and stir gently. Press mixture firmly into pan and bake at 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes, uncovered.

6. Increase oven temperature to 400F and sprinkle balance of cheese on loaf. Bake for 5 minutes more or until cheese is melted.

7. Cool in pan for at least 10 minutes before transferring to a cooling rack. Cool completely before slicing.

Recipe adapted from ANGELA (OH SHE GLOWS) which was adapted from Terry Walters.

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Cover Story

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