



# MealTimes



Spotlight On

## Patricia: Changing the Tune on Health

**N**ow that I've found you  
I want to stay around you  
So make me yours,  
Make me yours.

Patricia loves music. But there's one particular song that melts her heart – "Make Me Yours" by Bettye Swann. It's a ballad about finding happiness in being loved.

"My favorite song to sing is 'Make Me Yours.' It's an old song. I can play it for you," she says jokingly while gesturing toward her smartphone.

Patricia, a Chicago native who moved to San Francisco in 1984, is in good spirits this day. With her infectious laugh and talkativeness, most would think she was this way every day. But what people don't know are the struggles she faces daily.

"I don't go around telling people I have cancer, but my body tells me different things," she says. "Something as simple as cleaning my house is a hard job."

Doctors diagnosed Patricia with cancer in both kidneys in 2000. During an ultrasound examination of thyroid tumors, doctors discovered the tumors in her kidneys. They immediately told her to make an appointment to see a specialist.

Rather than visit a specialist, Patricia said, "I boxed it out of my mind for a couple years," and acted as if the cancer didn't exist.

But it did exist, and the pain she started to experience eventually prompted her to visit Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center.

"I remember SF General gave me an MRI, and the doctor had these pictures of these kidneys and said, 'These are healthy kidneys right here. And these are your kidneys,'" Patricia recalled.

The cancer was so severe that the hospital admitted her right

**"This food gives me energy" – PATRICIA J.**

away, and surgeons worked on removing the tumors for two days.

Since then, she has had multiple surgeries to remove life-threatening tumors from her kidneys.

"That's the way they treat it – with surgery," Patricia said. "As long as they can keep them contained inside my kidneys, I'm good. If the (tumors) get big, I got to go in."

But there was another form of treatment that she was made aware of by a case manager at the single resident occupancy in the Tenderloin that she lived in – medically-tailored nutrition.

With a referral from the case manager and a nurse, Patricia began receiving Project Open Hand meals and groceries in May of 2014.

Patricia's high-calorie, high cholesterol fast-food items were eventually replaced with fresh produce from the San Francisco grocery center and prepared, medically-tailored meals. Her vegetables of choice are asparagus and cabbage. Her

eating, but it also gave her a sense of well-being.

"If you're feeling sorry for yourself because you are sick, and you think you are the only one, come here cause everybody in here has got something seriously wrong with them.

"I used to come over here when I was feeling bad and just walk up here because I felt a sense of community," Patricia said.

She may not have found love at Project Open Hand, but she did find a piece of happiness and has stayed around since.

Eleven percent of Project Open Hand total clients live with a form of cancer. The Wellness program offers a medically-tailored nutrition intervention to support the critically ill like Patricia. To help us continue services that include medically-tailored meals, fresh groceries, and nutrition counseling and education, please donate at <https://www.openhand.org/donate>.

Marcus Tolero, Marketing  
and Communications Officer

favorite meals are chicken, beef patties, and tilapia.

She also met with Project Open Hand nutritionists and tried to incorporate their lessons. Instead of frying food, she now chooses to bake most of her food.

"I changed my eating habits... this food gives me energy," Patricia said. "You got to eat to live. But I used to live to eat."

Project Open Hand not only gave her a healthy way of





Paul's Letter

Access to Nutritious Meals for the Chronically Ill

Dear Friend,

I am excited to share the latest developments in our nonprofit associations of food and nutrition service providers in California (CalFIMC.org) and across the country (FIMCoalition.org).

As a supporter, I am sure you are familiar with our most important research program to date, the California "Food is Medicine" Pilot Project. The three-year initiative targets Medi-Cal (Medicaid) patients who suffer from ongoing congestive heart failure. Our nutrition intervention provides 12 weeks of meals that adhere to evidence-based nutrition guidelines at no cost to the patient.

In addition to nutrient-rich food, the Medically-Tailored Meal Intervention includes nutrition therapy whereby a registered dietitian administers a CalFIMC-approved nutrition education curriculum, in home, virtually or nutrition education by phone, wellness checks, and an assessment of program participants.

Why focus on the chronic condition of heart failure? Heart failure is a substantial burden on the U.S. healthcare system, affecting 5.7 million Americans at an annual cost of \$30.7 billion. Sixty percent of these costs is attributed to direct medical expenditures, a large portion because of hospitalizations for decompensated heart failure.

I'm delighted to inform you that early indicators are consistent with what Project Open Hand has demonstrated in our earliest evidence-based research studies. Medical nutrition interventions improve health outcomes for our patients and decrease hospitalization costs and readmission rates for high utilizers of health care services.

The pilot project – led by Project Open Hand as administrator – continues across the state with six community-based nonprofit organizations implementing programs. Each organization has tailored services to its local area to advance the value of this groundbreaking nutrition intervention model.

At the national level, FIMC partners continue to advance public policy that supports access to food and nutrition services for people with severe illnesses. Our partners' research is garnering national news headlines, and we are continually assessing best practices in providing medically-tailored meals and nutrition education and counseling to clients with chronic conditions.

I will continue to share updates on milestone achievements through the end of the pilot in 2021, and I welcome your questions or requests for additional information.

Thank you for your continued support. **Without you**, we could not provide nutritious meals and groceries that sustain our thousands of clients who we help on their path to recovery and educate to lead healthier lives.

If you would like to learn more, please sign up for our monthly electronic newsletter at <https://www.openhand.org/news-and-blog/enews-monthly>.

*Paul Hepfer*

Paul Hepfer  
Chief Executive Officer



A Summer of Support



Project Open Hand showed its support for San Francisco Pride Parade on June 30 and AIDS Walk San Francisco on July 14. A contingent of nearly 100 marchers celebrated down Market Street in support of the LGBTQ community. At Aids Walk San Francisco, Project Open Hand walkers braved the cold weather to support the fight against AIDS. A big thank you to all our sponsors, supporters, volunteers, and staffers for making this a memorable summer to remember.

Photos by Marcus Tolero, Marketing and Communications Officer

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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: Mina Katimin

Morsinah Katimin, dressed in a striped blue and white hooded shirt and a stylish hat, says her goodbyes to Project Open Hand staff members.

It’s her last day and she is wrapping up some final tasks before she embarks on her next journey.

“I’m going to miss the people here,” Katimin says.

Morsinah, better known as Mina around Project Open Hand, was hired as a senior site coordinator in 2016. She was responsible for prepping and serving food and interacting with clients at two community nutrition sites in San Francisco.

She “enjoyed the interaction,” especially those who needed a meal. She sympathized with them. She understood them because she once stood in that exact same line to receive a Project Open Hand meal.

Mina was born and raised in Singapore. She left her home country in 1978 to attend college in London and Switzerland. In 1981, she boarded a cruise ship destined for New York and attended Columbia University where she received a master’s degree in urban planning.

After receiving her degree, she worked in Japan for several years, promoting regional development in countries such as the Philippines and Malaysia.

After a couple of unfortunate family events (her father’s illness and the death of her mother) forced her to return home, she decided to leave for America again in 2005. She picked San Francisco because of the city’s convenient public transportation.

But her work experience overseas did not help her find an ideal job in San Francisco. She ended up working at the Department of Elections and also spent time as a barista.

When those jobs didn’t pan out and her money dwindled away, Mina became homeless. “I cried. I asked myself, ‘What am I going to do? What am I doing here?’” Mina said.

In 2015, Mina visited the Curry Senior Center on Turk Street, one of 13 sites located in San Francisco where Project Open Hand provides nutritious meals to seniors and adults with disabilities.



After having a successful career as an urban planner overseas to not having a home, the experience “humbled” her.

But little did she know that her visit would lead to an opportunity to work at Project Open Hand when a staffer approached her about a job.

On Thanksgiving Day of 2016, Mina was hired as the Senior Site Coordinator.

Since then, Mina has been on a road back to success. With the help of La Cocina – a nonprofit working to solve problems of equity in business ownership for women, immigrants and people of color – and investors, her turmeric drink JAMU Earth Drinks has taken off and it is the reason why she is headed back home. She will manage a factory that will produce her products, and she plans to start a bee farm.

Project Open Hand has supported many people like Mina through difficult times. You can continue to help others in our community by donating at <https://www.openhand.org/donate>.

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 (April 1, 2019 through May 31, 2019). If you have questions about this list, please contact [info@openhand.org](mailto:info@openhand.org) or 415-447-2300.

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From Our  
Kitchen  
to Yours

# Strawberry and Green Salad

## Ingredients

- (Serves 2 for dinner, or 4 as a side)
- 1 large bunch green kale
  - ½ teaspoon coarse sea salt
  - 1 cup cooked garbanzo beans (or canned, rinsed)
  - ½ cup chopped strawberries
  - ¼ cup shredded coconut, unsweetened
  - ¼ cup pumpkin seeds

### Dressing:

- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast
- Black pepper, to taste



## Directions

Preheat oven to 200 degrees. Remove the stems from the kale leaves and tear into small pieces. Add sea salt to medium-sized salad bowl with kale, and massage handfuls until softened. Set aside. On a baking sheet, toast shredded coconut for 5 minutes, until lightly golden. On a separate baking sheet, toast pumpkin seeds until lightly golden, about 8 minutes. Set aside to cool. Add garbanzo beans and strawberries to the bowl with salad greens and toss gently. Add toasted coconut and pumpkin seeds to bowl and toss to combine.

For dressing, whisk the olive oil and apple cider vinegar with nutritional yeast until mixed. Drizzle desired amount over salad. The remaining dressing will keep in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

# Because of You

our critically ill neighbors  
receive life-saving nutrition.

Thanks to you, nearly 4,000 of our critically ill neighbors have received nutritious, handmade meals to help them regain strength and lead healthier lives.

But we can't do it without you! Will you help continue our mission to provide life-saving nutrition to many more in your community?

<https://www.openhand.org/donate>

Thank you!



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# MealTimes



Staff Spotlight:  
Mina Katimin  
PAGE 3



From Our Kitchen to Yours:  
Strawberry and Green Salad  
PAGE 4



Cover Story  
Patricia:  
Changing the Tune On Health

