



The Open Door  
Julie LaFontaine, President and CEO  
28 Emerson Avenue  
Gloucester, MA 01930

Media Contact: Kelsey Bode  
Email: [kelsey.bode@foodpantry.org](mailto:kelsey.bode@foodpantry.org)  
Phone: 978-283-6776 x 226

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## **Cementing the Safety Net: The Open Door Building Project Breaks Ground**



*The Open Door Emerson Avenue team poses with gold shovels at Tuesday's groundbreaking ceremony.*

*(Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)*

**GLOUCESTER**— A new chapter in building food security here on Cape Ann began on Tuesday, with the ceremonial groundbreaking for a new Food and Nutrition Center at The Open Door.

“We never missed a day of service after the pandemic hit,” President and CEO Julie LaFontaine said. “That was possible because of the tenacious community that resides here on Cape Ann and the North Shore; people went above and beyond to help their neighbors. Once again that resilience is exemplified today. This project will build the infrastructure we need to further improve the lives and health of people in the communities we serve by connecting them to good food.”

The capital campaign project at The Open Door’s 28 Emerson Avenue campus will build a new production kitchen, add cold and dry storage, enhance client service areas, increase transportation capacity, invest in technology architecture, and more.

The Open Door estimates the project could be complete as soon as March 2023, contingent on the supply chain.

The project was postponed due to the pandemic, over which time the cost of construction and other capacity investments nearly doubled its cost. The project is estimated to now cost \$4.4 million, and The Open Door has nearly two-thirds of that funding raised thanks to private donations along with some public funding. The nonprofit is seeking to close the gap in remaining funds over the next few months.

Those in attendance at Tuesday’s event included LaFontaine, The Open Door Board of Directors, Sen. Bruce Tarr, Gloucester Mayor Greg Verga, members of the Gloucester City Council, project donors, as well as staff and volunteers.

“The Open Door continues to lead the way when it comes to food security to provide nutrition for everyone in our community,” Sen. Tarr said. “The Open Door and this project gives us the true sense of community. We all work together to make sure that everyone has what they need. In that respect, The Open Door has really been a transformational organization.”

The Open Door provides food resources to 1 in 6 Gloucester residents, and Mayor Verga stressed the importance of the project for the community.

“The expansion of the Food and Nutrition Center at The Open Door will have a major impact on their ability to deliver high quality and meaningful services to our community,” Mayor Verga said. “The impact of The Open Door on the North Shore and our residents is invaluable. We are forever grateful for their commitment to our residents and our community.”

In the past five years, The Open Door has distributed 10,162,725 pounds of food to Gloucester and greater Cape Ann residents.

“This is the final phase of an expansion that began almost ten years ago,” said Board Co-Chair Chris Barker. “Now we get to build a new kitchen, the beating heart of The Open Door. We have hopefully made it through the worst of the pandemic while still meeting the demands of food insecurity. This expanded kitchen should be able to handle whatever the future holds.”

"We are absolutely thrilled to be able to break ground for this expansion of The Open Door; it will enable us to increase both the number of families we serve and the range of services we can provide," said Board Co-Chair Kersten Lanes. "The new kitchen has been a dream of the board and staff for some time. As in any home, the kitchen is where the heart is -- and The Open Door's heart is about to get quite a bit bigger!"

Visit [FOODPANTRY.org/capitalcampaign](https://FOODPANTRY.org/capitalcampaign) to learn more about the project.

### **About The Open Door**

The mission of The Open Door is to alleviate the impact of hunger in our community. We use practical strategies to connect people to good food, to advocate on behalf of those in need, and to engage others in the work of building food security.

Founded in 1978, The Open Door is a 501 (c)(3) tax exempt nonprofit and community food resource center for low-income residents of Gloucester, Rockport, Manchester, Essex, Ipswich, Hamilton, Boxford, Rowley, Topsfield, and Wenham. **In 2021, The Open Door helped stabilize the lives and health of 8,516 people from 4,176 households through the distribution of 1.83 million pounds of food.**

For more information, visit [FOODPANTRY.org](https://FOODPANTRY.org).

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*Gloucester Mayor Greg Verga speaks at Tuesday's groundbreaking ceremony at The Open Door.*

*(Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)*



*Sen. Bruce Tarr addresses attendees on Tuesday at The Open Door Food and Nutrition Center groundbreaking ceremony.*

*(Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)*



*More than 75 elected officials, donors, staff, and volunteers attended the event.*

*(Photo Courtesy of The Open Door)*