

News from Around the Table



The Heart of Open Table

February is the month of celebrating love – after all, it's got Valentine's Day. But for us at Open Table, February is about the love we have for our volunteers, those generous people who give willingly of their time to ensure their neighbors have enough to eat. It's our volunteers who spend hours of their day and week to sort and pack groceries, store food, prepare meals, pick up donations, deliver food bags, organize fundraising projects, create social media posts, none of which would happen without their generous gift of time. It's these volunteers who put the Love in More Love, Less Hunger, and we appreciate and love them this month and every month.

In 2022 our amazing volunteers made it possible to:

- Provide groceries to over 4,000 people
- Sort, bag, and distribute 625,346 pounds of food
- Cook and package 51,370 meals
- Fill 244 shifts weekly, resulting in over 24,000 volunteer hours

Without you, our volunteers, none of this would have been possible. You make a difference for so many people in our community.

Thank You!



Volunteer Spotlight: Gretchen Findlay, Volunteer Manager

This month we honor our own Volunteer Manager, Gretchen Findlay. Gretchen's story begins in 2018 as an Open Table volunteer. At the time, she was looking for an opportunity to share her skills and meet new people; she learned about Open Table from a friend. Gretchen volunteered setting up the pantry for in-person shopping and checking in shoppers as the registrar. She soon found herself spending every Tuesday here, working back-to-back shifts and getting to know the pantry systems.

In early 2021, Gretchen saw the posting for a Volunteer Manager in the Open Table Newsletter. She was drawn to the position and a chance to build on her background in nonprofit and charitable services. Gretchen was hired and jumped in headfirst, learning the newly adopted CERVIS platform and acclimating to an ever-changing organization.

As the Volunteer Manager, Gretchen spends her time recruiting, registering and placing new volunteers, balancing the right number of volunteers for each shift, filling last minute vacancies, and often working shifts herself. She strives to find meaningful opportunities for each volunteer and to make personal connections with as many volunteers as possible.

"The generosity of our volunteers' time and talent makes it possible for Open Table to serve so many. The staff provides the structure and framework, but **the volunteers are the heart and soul of Open Table**. It is an honor to work beside them in this role. "

And Gretchen is creative – she created the beautiful window display!



It's Time to Get Chopped!

Our annual fundraising event is back! Chopped for Charity will take place at Nashawtuc Country Club in Concord on Friday, April 28th; tickets are on sale NOW! This year's quintessential cooking competition pits chefs Ben Elliott of Saltbox Kitchen, Kelcey Scolnick of Wright-Locke Farm, and Matt Kenah of WECO Hospitality against one another to see who can make the most out of the same ingredients. Masterful judging will be done by Andy Husbands, author, pitmaster and owner of The Smoke Shop BBQ; Tiziana Dearing, host of Radio Boston on WBUR; and Peter Malloy, executive chef at Nashawtuc Country Club. TV and radio personality Chef Joe Gatto will be the evening's Master of Ceremonies.

This night of glitter and glam will of course feature raffle baskets, live and silent auctions, delicious food and a cash bar. The event will honor Jill Block and Wade Rubenstein and, in memoriam, Debra Stark.

Don't miss out on the Open Table event of the year by getting your tickets now!

[Learn More...](#)

[Get Tickets!](#)

Needed: Kitchen Assistant

Want to use your cooking talents to make a positive impact? Join our team! We're looking for a part-time Kitchen Assistant in our Maynard kitchen, where you'll work with the kitchen manager and a group of committed volunteers to create healthy, prepared meals for our Mobile Meals program. Join a great team and put your talents to good use!



[Learn More...](#)

Full information can be found [HERE](#). To apply, send a cover letter and resume to jhackney@opentable.org.



The Nashoba Area Social Justice Alliance made Kids Bags on MLK Day

The Best Partnerships...

It's hard enough to have to ask for food; it's harder when you don't have the transportation to get the free food. That's why Open Table began delivering groceries and prepared meals to suburbs like Hudson, where we currently serve an average of 170 households a month. We could not do this without the support of our partners and funders, including the [MetroWest Health Foundation](#). A recent grant from their organization is allowing us to bring healthy and culturally appropriate foods, as well as prepared meals, to convenient locations where clients can easily get them.

At Open Table we understand that people need more than food. Families may need diapers; women may need menstrual products; and seniors may need incontinence products. These things aren't covered by SNAP and WIC, and aren't what donors are thinking of when supporting a food pantry. Thankfully the [Emerson Health Community Benefits Grant](#) Program has funded a project where we can provide these items to our clients. Their generosity and caring gives our clients better health, dignity and overall well-being.

Here are the other supportive donors we want to thank this month:

- [Acton Boxborough United Way](#)
- The Beveridge Family
- Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation
- [Concord Lions Club](#)
- [Crosby's Marketplace](#)
- [Debra's Natural Gourmet](#)
- [Donelan's Supermarket, Acton](#)
- [Drumlin Farm](#)
- Dunkin/The Pesce Network
- [The Fenn School](#)
- The Forseter Family & Friends
- [Gaining Ground](#)
- Alexandra Gibbons
- Sofia Girolimetti
- Great Brook Farm State Park
- [GW & Wade](#)
- [Holden Fruit & Produce](#)
- Linda Lyons
- Caroline McBride
- [Nashoba Area Social Justice Alliance](#)
- [New England Deaconess](#)
- [Roche Bros., Acton](#)
- [Rotary Club of Concord](#)
- Saint Stephens Knanaya Church
- [Siena Farms](#)
- [Stop & Shop of Acton](#)
- Janice Smith
- [Sudbury Farms](#)
- [Trader Joe's](#)
- [Trinity Congregational Church](#)
- [Verrill Farm](#)
- [Willard School](#)

Fun Food Facts: Leeks



We are deep in the heart of winter – even if the temperature says otherwise – so what better time to try a [leek and potato soup](#)? This classic flat potato soup is creamy and delicious and warming on a winter's day.

Leeks, of course, are those bulbous looking stalks you see in the grocery store and don't know what to do with. A milder version of an onion, they add a sweetness to whatever you're cooking. They can collect a bit of dirt in their layers, so rinse them well, or better yet, cut them up and soak them before cooking.

Leeks were probably first cultivated by the ancient Egyptians – images of leeks adorn the walls of their tombs – but are now considered a national emblem of Wales, and are worn on Saint David's Day, March 1st. And leek growing is becoming a competitive sport, particularly in coal-mining areas, as the "manure from pit-ponies" makes great leek fertilizer.

Bonus: leeks have high concentrations of folate and polyphenols, both of which make this a heart-healthy veggie.

[Get Recipe](#)



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