



# OPEN TABLE

MORE LOVE — LESS HUNGER

## News from Around the Table



### Celebrating 35 Years of Volunteers

Open Table is celebrating 35 years of operations this year thanks to the hard work of dedicated volunteers. Hundreds of volunteers sort donations, fill grocery bags, cook and package meals, and execute an efficient drive-thru distribution every week. Demand for our services has grown significantly in recent years, and our volunteers have stepped up to meet the need. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to you, our volunteers, for your unwavering commitment to our mission every day.



### Annex Renovation Begins

We are excited to announce that the renovation of our Annex building and walkway has begun!

Please be aware of the following closures during the construction phase.

- The walkway between 33 Main Street (Open Table Pantry) and the Annex is CLOSED.
- The side entrance to 33 Main Street is CLOSED.
- Please enter 33 Main Street from the FRONT door.

These closures are for your safety and to maintain clear access for construction workers and equipment. Thank you in advance for your patience! We look forward to sharing updates over the coming months.



### Food Collaborative

MetroWest Food Collaborative hosted their 2nd Annual Food Access Summit at the Hudson Town Hall on Thursday January 25th. This year's Summit focused on the critical issue of food insecurity among older adults in our communities. Our Executive Director, Alex Depalo, was a member of the panel "Provider Perspectives on Food Access for Older Adults in MetroWest."



### Help Wanted: Food Drive Coordinator

Join us in coordinating community food and kids bag drives! Responsibilities include managing inquiries from corporate, community, and school groups, providing information, and liaising with Open Table to arrange donation collection. This behind-the-scenes role requires approximately 5 hours per week. Apply now to make a difference in your community! Email [volunteer@opentable.org](mailto:volunteer@opentable.org) if you are interested.



### Volunteer Spotlight: Julie & Tom

Julie and Tom volunteer every Tuesday afternoon in the Open Table kitchen to prepare take-away lunches for our Senior clients. They started in this role in 2018, when Open Table was open for in-person shopping, creating delicious and nutritious buffet meals from "Save our Surplus" donated foods. Learn more about Julie and Tom and some of their most memorable meals on our website.

[Read More](#)



### Chopped - You Be the Judge

The judges are in! This year, we are excited to announce our two expert judges: Sarah Blackburn, editor-in-chief, co-owner, and publisher of Edible Boston and Edible Worcester; and Jeanine Calabria, cookbook author and former Open Table Executive Director. The third judge of the night could be YOU if you join us on Friday, May 3rd, at Nashawtuc Country Club and win the judge auction. Tickets for Chopped go on sale on March 1st. Be sure to grab yours before we sell out.

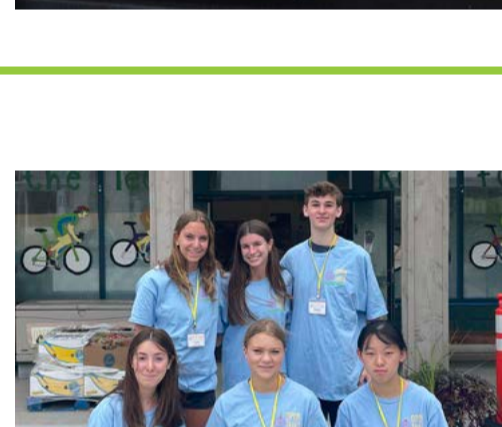
[Learn More](#)



### Summer Student Internships

Our Summer Student Internship program is back this year, offering 2-week sessions for high school students starting on June 17th. Participants can earn 40 hours of community service, acquire new skills, and gain valuable non-profit work experience to enhance their résumés, all while making a real difference. Applications will be available starting on March 15th.

[Learn More](#)



### Lunar New Year

The [Action Chinese-American Civic Society](#) partnered with Open Table to commemorate the Lunar New Year this past week. Their generous contribution of these special gift bags not only enrich our clients' grocery offerings but also help promote multicultural awareness and education within our community. Happy Year of the Dragon!

In addition, we extend our gratitude to our regular farm and grocery store partners, as well as to these wonderful donors who recently donated goods or funds in support our mission:

- Jackie Adlison
- Agilent Technologies Foundation
- Barrett Sotheby's International Realty
- Isabella Chautin
- Concord Carlisle High School
- Concord Museum
- Concord-Carlisle Human Rights Council
- Dignity Matters
- Discovery Museum
- Donelan's Supermarket, Acton
- DoorDash
- Gilson Family Foundation
- Ellen Given
- Google
- Lexington Lowell Community Foundation
- Lexington Catholic Community
- Diana Mokler
- Nashoba Area Social Justice Alliance
- ORIX Corporation
- Kristen Rice
- Roy A. Hunt Foundation
- Dan Shields
- Takeda Pharmaceuticals
- The Fenn School
- Trinity Episcopal Church
- Wayland Council on Aging



### Fun Food Facts: Mandarin Oranges



One of the joys of winter is the abundant availability of juicy, easy-to-peel mandarin oranges. Originating in Southern Asia thousands of years ago, mandarins are one of only five ancient species from which all citrus fruits are derived. The fruit's name is most commonly thought to be associated with the orange robes worn by counselors in the Chinese imperial court. There are many varieties, including clementines, satsumas, and tangerines. Even oranges, grapefruit and lemons are hybrids of the mandarin.

It wasn't until the 1800's that cultivation of mandarins spread to Europe and the US. Mandarin orange trees love the Mediterranean climate and Spain and Italy quickly became major growers. In the 1880s the Italian Consul planted seeds at the Consulate in New Orleans, and the fruit soon found its way to California.

Mandarins have long been symbols of wealth and good luck in Chinese and Japanese cultures, often given during the Chinese New Year. This tradition spread to the US and Canada. Japanese immigrants would receive boxes of the fruit from friends and relatives in Japan, and in time that tradition collided with the story of Saint Nick giving gold coins or balls to three little girls. And now it is common for a mandarin or orange to show up in the toe of Christmas stockings.

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#### Our Contact Information

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