



Meal **times**



Spotlight On

Angela: Learning the Fundamentals

The year was 2001 and Angela knew she was at a crossroads in her life.

She worked as a Branch Manager at a bank in her hometown of Columbus, Ohio and her salary afforded her to live comfortably and take care of her three teenage sons.

Her supervisor was priming Angela to take over his position as Vice-President. But although the new role would advance her financial career, her passion was in art.

"I knew right then and there, If I go one step further in this company, I'll never be an artist, so I quit and followed my passion," Angela said. "I quit everything and went to the Columbus College of Art and Design."

Although the decision to go back to school was a difficult one that included a lot of sacrifice, she knew it was the right one.

"I learned a lot of discipline in art school. You have to learn the fundamentals - that's why you have to do everything. If you're not a painter, you still have to go to paint classes. If you're not a drafter, you still have to go through drawing classes."

She eventually focused on photography, and after she graduated in 2008, she made another big decision. Because her kids were now adults and were able to take care of themselves, she packed her car and moved to San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood to follow her path towards being an artist.

And it paid off. Angela had her

photographs published in the San Francisco Chronicle. Her work was also displayed at galleries like 6th on 7th Gallery in San Francisco.

Everything was going well for her, until April of 2020.

During a workout session, Angela was feeling extremely weak. She tried to drink more water, but it wasn't enough. Something didn't feel right.

"I couldn't get enough water. My body felt like a desert inside. I was so thirsty," Angela said.

"I was on death's bed. I was destroying my body without even knowing it, but now I'm helping my body." - Angela

She spoke with a nutritionist from her doctor's office, who recommended she visit her doctor who did a blood and urine test.

Finally, when her doctor called her with results, Angela realized her condition was severe.

"The doctor calls me on a Monday and said, 'Angela, you're a strong woman and you have a strong body. But I want you to hang up the phone, get your phone charger, and get to the emergency room.' When I got to the hospital, the doctor put me in the ICU," she said.

Angela's blood sugar level was at a dangerous 1,000. She had to stay in the ICU for three days where she was given an insulin drip and they pumped fluids through her to bring her levels back down.

"My diet was not good. I love sugar. I was drinking soda and eating ice cream all the time. I never paid attention to what I ate," she said.

Angela's sweet tooth had finally caught up to her. She was diabetic, and now had to rely on insulin and medication to control her sugar levels.

During her next visit to her doctor's office, the nutritionist there told her about Project Open Hand's services. Angela quickly signed up with a referral.

Upon her arrival, she immediately noticed the COVID-19 safety protocols at Project Open Hand - the social distancing, the plexiglass barriers, masks, hand sanitizers, and efforts to protect clients from any surface exposure.

"I feel safe. POH makes me feel safe," she said. "They have everything prepared for you. And I see them wipe down surfaces. I don't feel threatened. Everything is spread apart. I don't have to touch anything except for the grocery bag."

Since the beginning of COVID-19 till the end of February 2021, Project Open Hand has given 1,323 bags of groceries and 36,465 frozen meals to its diabetic clients. In that time, Project Open Hand has served 1,100 diabetes clients in San Francisco and Alameda counties -

542 Of them were new clients like Angela.

When Angela first arrived, she met with a Project Open Hand Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and discussed a nutrition plan.

"I was on death's bed. I was destroying my body without even knowing it, but now I'm helping my body. When I came in, they educated me about portions and what I should eat more of and eat less of," she said.

Angela, who comes to the Project Open Hand grocery center in San Francisco every Friday, said the selection of healthy foods, like eggplant and squash, and the continued nutrition education she receives has had immediate effects. She has more energy, and along with her medication, is now able to control her sugar levels.

Twenty years ago, Angela went to art school to learn the fundamentals of being an artist. Twenty years later, she had to learn the fundamentals of eating right.

"I am so fortunate to have the support of Project Open Hand, from its staff to its access to food. They've helped me retrain my brain, and that feels good."

Will you please consider a gift today? Just go to www.openhand.org/donate to make a one-time gift or join the Supper Club with a monthly gift.

Thank you.



Paul's Letter

A Year of COVID - What It Revealed



Dear Friend,

Much can happen in the span of one year. And what we experienced and saw during this past year of COVID-19, revealed a lot about us and what was already in Project Open Hand's DNA.

Just like Ruth Brinker did during the HIV/AIDS health crisis of the 80s, we had to answer the call for help from our clients and the community.

During the past year, we increased our storage capacity, which led to the production of more meals. Staff members stepped in where volunteers would normally help. Our number of meal deliveries per week to clients increased from 523 (pre-COVID) to where it is now today - 750.

The Community Nutrition Program reimagined their entire operation. They have the time to focus 100 percent of their energy on getting as much healthy nutrition out to the community as possible since congregating has been put on hold. To support shelter in place, they now provide a week's worth of frozen meals to every senior and adult with disabilities in just one visit.

We implemented a home-delivered grocery bag program for clients who were isolating at home or didn't want to shop in-person for their groceries. And we did this all while adhering to strict COVID-safety guidelines.

The past year also revealed kindness from you and other members of our community. You supported the special Fundraising campaign with a goal of \$500,000, money to help us mobilize and ramp up our services early on.

From individual donations and Facebook Fundraisers to emergency grants and contributions from generous organizations, we exceeded that goal and gained new supporters. But what's even more amazing: many of you continue to give. And we are truly grateful!

But the year of COVID also revealed and reminded us of harsh realities: systemic racism and injustices experienced by our communities of color, police brutality against African Americans captured in the horrifying video in which George Floyd was choked to death by a police officer, and the recent increase of hate crimes and violence against Asian Americans because of racist rhetoric associated with COVID.

Disparities in health outcomes because of societal and economic inequities were magnified by the increasing evidence that racial and ethnic minority groups are being disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

This past year revealed and reinforced why we must continue the work we do.

Social isolation negatively affects the health and well-being of people with disabilities

and older adults, often resulting in avoidable medical expenses. And recent studies have shown that 43 percent of adults age 60 or older in the United States reported feeling lonely.*

In our Staff Spotlight, you'll read about Dispatcher Steven Arboleda and how visits from our delivery drivers or volunteers are cherished by our home-bound clients because that interaction is the only time they will see and talk to another person during the day.

And as more people in the community are diagnosed with critical health conditions, there will be more demand for our services, like our cover-story client Angela. They will need not only need food security, but also nutrition security to maintain their health.

This past year of COVID-19 challenged us beyond our comprehension and capacity. But your continued support through it all revealed a path to better days. Thank you!

Paul Hepfer
Chief Executive Officer

* Source: Administration for Community Living

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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

Spotlight: Conducting an Orchestra

Steven Arboleda is a dispatcher at Project Open Hand, and he has one daily goal in mind - successful delivery of medically-tailored meals and groceries to Project Open Hand clients.

It sounds easy, but it's actually a complicated "orchestra" of moving parts with Steven as the conductor.

Every day Steven supervises a staff of eight delivery drivers and a host of volunteers. He creates route sheets for each of them, organizes all the meals for delivery, including important information about each client. Is the client mobile? Is the client home? Do you have to call the client before a delivery?

He will do whatever it takes to ensure a successful delivery, because for Steven his job goes beyond just caring for the community. He is giving back to the neighborhood he grew up in.

Steven, a San Francisco native, grew up just blocks away from Project Open Hand's office in the Tenderloin District. He has seen the neighborhood change throughout the years. But the one thing that he knows is constant is that there are people who need access to life-saving nutrition in the Tenderloin and neighborhoods across the city.

"The work we do down in distribution is the main staple of Ruth Brinker's vision, back when she was delivering meals to her handful of neighbors at the beginning," Steven said. "What she started has trickled down to us."

Steven started at Project Open Hand five years ago as a driver. At that time, he learned every route and figured out how to create better efficiencies in meal delivery. But the one thing he took away during those days of being a driver - the connection you create with the clients.

"I created a bond with the client. As a driver, you see these clients

almost every day, and they get to know your face," he said.

But that familiarity between driver and client was threatened when COVID-19 and the restrictions that followed hit the Bay Area last March. And for Steven, he knew the impact would be felt by the clients because the visits by the delivery drivers were the only form of human interaction.

"There are some clients that just want to speak with us for five minutes, because we, the driver or volunteer, may be the only person they see all day. We do get clients who love to talk, and now we're just limited because we have to be safe," Steven said. "It's kind of sad, because it's part of what we do. We're not just here to give food. We're also addressing social isolation."

Although interaction with clients had restrictions, the delivery of meals and groceries continued, and the demand increased.

Prior to March 2020, Project Open Hand averaged 523 deliveries a week. Since then, Project Open Hand has seen that number increase to 750 deliveries a week.

"When COVID-19 hit, there were so many things changing daily, but you had to adapt. Eventually we got into a flow and we responded really well."

Steven, who now lives in the city's South of Market, said that he will continue to adapt and do what it takes to make sure clients receive their deliveries of nutritious food every day.

"I've worked at jobs before where I just worked. Here, at Project Open Hand, the mission is different. I feel like there is more purpose to what I do. I'm doing something good," Steven said.

And doing good is the most anybody can do for their neighborhood.



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 from November 1, 2020 through January 31 2021. If you have questions about this list, please contact donations@openhand.org or 415-447-2300.

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* Designates members of The Supper Club, Project Open Hand's monthly giving program. To learn more about The Supper Club, visit: www.openhand.org/give/supper-club.



From Our
Kitchen
to Yours



Smokey Cabbage Soup

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp canola oil
- 1/2 cup onions, yellow, diced
- 2 tbsp garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tsp paprika, smoked
- 3/4 tsp chili powder
- 1/2 tsp caraway seed
- 6 oz tomato paste, canned, no sodium added
- 1/4 cup white wine (optional)
- 14.5 oz tomatoes, canned, diced or crushed, no added sodium
- 1tbsp peppers, chipotle, canned, in adobo sauce, pureed
- 1-1/3 cup vegetable borth or water
- 1-1/2 tsp dill weed, dried
- 9 oz coleslaw mix, pre-shredded
- 1/4 cup celery, 1/2" diced
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 2 tsp lemon juice and zest

Instructions

- Heat a medium pot over medium high heat. Once heated, add in the oil and allow to heat up.
- Add the onions and sauté until translucent, about 5-8 minutes.
- Add garlic, paprika, chili powder and caraway seeds. Sauté until fragrant, about 2 minutes.
- Add tomato paste and roast until color deepens, about 5-8 minutes.
- Add wine, if using and reduce by half.
- Add diced tomatoes, pureed chipotle peppers, broth and dill. Stir well. Cover with lid and bring to a boil.
- Add cabbage and celery. Lower heat to a simmer for 20 minutes.
- Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Add lemon juice and zest to brighten the flavor. Adjust to taste.

Project Open Hand Plate Club (continued from pg 3)

CHINA PLATE CLUB (CONT.)

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Learning the Fundamentals

Spotlight:
Steven the Conductor
of Meal Deliveries
of Smokey Cabbage Soup

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