

# COMMUNITY FOOD CENTER UPDATES



The new Keystone Community Food Center (1800 University Avenue in St. Paul) will allow us to expand food resources and other essential services to support people throughout Ramsey County.

## WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW WITH THE CAMPAIGN?

- After years of preparing, we're thrilled to share that demolition is underway! Highlights include:
  - Preparation for a new layout of the building that will enhance operations and the participant experience
  - Installation of a mitigation system in the garage area that will hold our Foodmobiles
  - Removal of hanging power lines, ceiling tiles, and other elements that won't be in the new design
  - Preservation of the 1922 Terrazzo floor and other elements that will be revitalized for the new layout
- We have a bill pending at the Minnesota legislature for a one-time cash appropriation investment of \$2.6M for our new center. We are anxiously waiting to see how this legislative session wraps up. More updates to come!



## WHAT IS COMING NEXT WITH THE CAMPAIGN?

Once demolition is complete this spring, construction will begin! The first projects include updating the utilities to the site, and the flow of storm and sewer drainage.

## WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN

**Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, we are finally in the demolition phase of this project!** As this legislative session ends, there may be opportunities for you to help advocate for the bill so watch for more information. We are also working on closing the funding gap so we can fully complete this project. Please visit our website and social media for construction-related progress and watch for our updates in every edition of this newsletter this year.



Thank you for helping get us to the hard-hat stage of this project!

During demolition, we've uncovered a few surprises including this door with a car-handle doorknob! A neat surprise to discover in a building that once was a Ford dealership.

## HEAR WHAT THE COMMUNITY IS SAYING!

We invite you to scan the QR code to listen to Allison O'Toole, CEO of Second Harvest Heartland, talk about why Keystone's new Community Food Center is necessary for all of Ramsey County.



# YOU ARE THE KEY

AN UPDATE FOR OUR KEYSTONE SUPPORTERS

THANK YOU



## A note from Mary McKeown, President

Spring is here (finally)! As we transition into this new season, I am filled with awe and hope for everything you make possible at Keystone! I'm inspired by the generosity you showed during our recent Minnesota FoodShare campaign. It is always incredible to see our community come together by hosting food drives and giving to help make sure our neighbors have the food and support they need!

As I prepare to transition out of my role as president of Keystone, I've been reflecting on what has meant the most to me in this role over the last seven years. I mean it sincerely when I say it is you! Conversations with you – our supporters, volunteers, and community members – have uplifted every day of my time at Keystone. Thank you for working alongside us to help make our community a more connected and supportive place!

I look forward to remaining part of the Keystone family, and seeing how Keystone continues to grow and evolve to support this community that means so much to us all!

With sincere gratitude, *Mary*

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## YOUR SUPPORT HELPED FILL YOUR NEIGHBORS' FRIDGES

Thank you for your generosity during our recent MN FoodShare month campaign! **Your kindness ensured your neighbors like Therese could fill their fridges with nourishing food.**

Therese and her family have always been financially careful, but for her and so many other families, being frugal is no longer enough due to increases in grocery prices and other costs. More neighbors are turning to Keystone as a reliable source of kitchen staples like eggs and protein, and your generosity helped provide food and support to all those who needed it most! **Thank you!**

*"I never thought that I would be in this situation, but I am, and I need help with groceries. Because of Keystone, I know that I have a crisper drawer with apples and oranges in it – these are things that on our limited budget, we don't buy." - Therese*



*"Every time we visit the Foodmobile I think about the volunteers and staff -- they are such giving people. If they weren't there, I wouldn't be able to get groceries and support."*

- Therese, program participant



## YOU MADE OUR MN FOODSHARE MONTH A SUCCESS

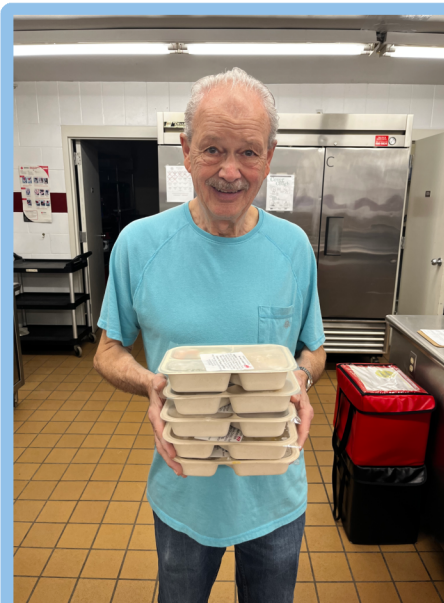
We appreciate your amplified support during the month of March! While our food shelves appreciate your support year-round, we were overwhelmed with gratitude seeing your generosity during the 2023 Minnesota FoodShare Month. So many of you gave generously and held donation drives that exceeded our expectations. From the bottom of our hearts, we are so thankful for you and your support!

You gave collectively:  Over 18,630 pounds of food  Over \$133,690



We truly love the enthusiasm and heart our community brought to this year's FoodShare campaign! Your support means everything!

## YOU BRING CONNECTION AND NUTRITIOUS MEALS DIRECTLY TO YOUR NEIGHBORS' FRONT DOOR



*"Keystone Meals on Wheels is a vital component to lowering my blood pressure and cholesterol. My doctor is thrilled! The Wellness Fund makes it all possible"*

~ Michael, program participant

Older and vulnerable adults are among some of the most food insecure neighbors in our community. Lack of transportation, mobility challenges, physical declines, and fixed incomes are some of the driving factors leading to isolation and food insecurity for many people.

Programs like Keystone's Meals on Wheels provide a comforting safety net to many, and while this program operates on a sliding fee scale, the cost is often still a major barrier for many participants. With support from donors like you and in partnership with Metro Meals on Wheels, the Keystone Wellness Fund was established in 2022! The new fund allows qualified participants to receive up to 5 meals per week at no cost to them.

The Wellness Fund came just in time; the number of older and vulnerable adults participating in our Meals on Wheels program has increased by 40% over the last few years. Before the pandemic, we averaged 85 participants getting 1900 meals per month. Now, we are averaging 125 clients getting 2,500 meals per month.

**Thanks to community support from people like you, we are able to meet increasing needs and deliver nutritious meals directly to the front doors of those who need it most.**

## EXIT INTERVIEW WITH MARY MCKEOWN

As Mary prepares to retire from her position as CEO, she shared some of her thoughts about her career and legacy.

### TELL US ABOUT YOUR 20 YEAR HISTORY WITH KEYSTONE

I graduated from St. Benedict College with a social work major, and one of my first jobs was as the Senior Citizen Program Coordinator at the West 7th Community Center. They created a position to start more programs for older adults. With mentorship from the staff at Merriam Park and input from seniors in the community, we started the Meals on Wheels program and developed other activities like exercise classes, care coordination, and more.

That position gave me the "community center bug" and throughout my career, I have enjoyed working in community-based organizations, including 20+ years at Keystone. It has been a sincere honor to lead Keystone over the last seven years.



*"I have a quote taped on my desk that says: Nobody cares what you know, until they know you care."*

*This has been one of the most important lessons I've carried with me throughout my career." ~ Mary*

### ARE THERE THINGS THAT SURPRISE YOU THAT WE ARE STILL DOING OR TALKING ABOUT TODAY?

I think the biggest surprise is the growth in the need for food support. When food shelves were getting started in the '80s, nobody expected those programs to be needed forever. We thought the need would decrease as incomes rose. Unfortunately, the income disparity is bigger than it's ever been. People can't succeed if they do not have enough food to eat.



*"I truly have loved working with our team and our community to turn our idea for a new building into a reality! I am so excited for when we can officially open the doors of the new Keystone Community Food Center!" ~ Mary*

### WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE LASTING IMPACT FROM YOUR TIME AS CEO?

I think my legacy will be a lot of the internal work we did. We had just gone through two big mergers when I took over as CEO, so we had a lot of level-setting to do related to our finances, re-evaluating how we connect with the community, and examining how we best use our resources to deliver quality programs. I'm proud of the internal equity and inclusion work we've done too; we had to look inward, educate ourselves, change our practices, and then walk our talk to continuously keep equity at the front and center as we deliver programs in our community.

### WHAT WILL YOU MISS MOST?

You mean besides the wonderful people? The thing I will miss most is the thing that gave me the most energy – developing programs. It has been so exciting to expand the Foodmobile program, launch our Best Buy Teen Tech Center, and prepare for our new community food center. I am going to miss the creativity of working with our team to figure out how to best design and provide programs to support our community.

### WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO IN RETIREMENT?

This summer we will be welcoming our first grandchild into our family, and I'm looking forward to that excitement. I am also looking forward to spending more time with my whole family, especially my 93-year-old father. I hope to say "yes" every time my dad asks me to golf with him.