

**CELEBRATING THE DOORS WE OPENED TOGETHER -  
THE KEYSTONE COMMUNITY FOOD CENTER IS NOW OPEN!**

**Thank you for opening doors to food security for neighbors today and for years to come!**



The new large food market gives us the flexibility and space to offer our participants a wider variety of food and household staples.

After five years of dreaming, planning, and working together, the Keystone Community Food Center is open! Thank you for every dollar given, every word of encouragement, every act of advocacy, and every time you helped to uplift our mission and share the importance of this project. **We honestly can't thank you enough!**

While we are operating from the new building, some construction elements will still be finalized over the next few months.



Through every step of the campaign, our community and partners have been alongside us to expand access and support!



Our number one goal for this new building was to create a welcoming and dignified space for everyone.



More food for more people! The warehouse has greatly expanded our capacity to receive and distribute food and household essentials.

Volunteers keep Keystone running! Our new building expands our capacity to engage volunteers.



The garage is a game-changer for our mobile services team as we expand neighborhood-based food distribution and delivery services.



**YOU ARE THE KEY**

*An update for our Keystone supporters*



Winter 2024

**A NOTE FROM ADERO RISER COBB, PRESIDENT**

I'm overjoyed to share that we started this new year in a powerful and meaningful way with the opening of the Keystone Community Food Center! After years of preparing, it felt incredible officially to open the doors to the new building on January 3rd. At this time when so many more people are turning to Keystone for extra support, it is heartwarming to welcome people into our new, inviting, and comfortable building. Thank you for being the key to a more connected, supported community!

You are the heart of this important work that provides support and connections through programs that so many neighbors in our community depend on.

*With heartfelt gratitude, Adero Riser Cobb*



Thank you for helping us deepen and deliver on our promise to support our neighbors.

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**THANK YOU FOR STANDING ALONGSIDE NEIGHBORS LIKE JUDY**

Day in and day out, your kindness and generosity provide needed support and help neighbors feel connected. As we look back on 2023, we are grateful for all the ways you and our Keystone community came together to support our neighbors and strengthen our community.

We're honored to share that Judy, who you may remember hearing about at year-end, got the support she needed during her housing crisis. After years of navigating through so much alone, Judy found the support she needed. Keystone staff helped leverage housing funds through multiple sources and, in just a few days found an affordable apartment in a neighborhood where Judy is happily living today. You can feel the relief through her short and sweet recollection of her experience with Keystone when Judy shared, **"I couldn't afford to move... then I got ahold of you guys, and bam, I had the money to move. I feel safe and happy in my home again."**

Your support helps neighbors in big and small ways every day. Thank you for standing alongside your neighbors when they needed you the most!



Your support - in every way, in every season - gives support to neighbors!

*Watch for your invitation for the grand opening celebration of the Keystone Community Food Center coming later this spring!*



## YOUR FOOD DONATIONS EPITOMIZE COMMUNITY SUPPORT



We are grateful for everyone who organized food drives or contributed in-kind support. Your contributions provide an incredible variety of foods that our neighbors enjoy and appreciate!

We love hearing your stories about being connected to Keystone, like Julie at Primrose School of St. Paul shared, *“We believe it is important to teach children the importance of giving without expectation. This experience gives our students a way to experience what it really means to help others.”*

**Minnesota FoodShare Month is coming soon**, and is a great time to join your neighbors to help stock the food shelf and support your community.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR MN FOODSHARE MONTH: February 26th - April 6th**

## THANK YOU FOR GIVING YOUTH ACCESS TO ENRICHING AND MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES AFTERSCHOOL

Every student deserves the opportunity to succeed in school. For some students, having access to additional support outside of school is a component of their path toward school success. With your support, Keystone helps bridge the educational and opportunity gaps to support youth through our Teen Tutor Program, which is expanding this year to support middle school-age youth. Teen Tutor is a unique program model where Keystone hires local teens who provide literacy tutoring and enrichment activities for school-aged kids.

The program is offered in the North End neighborhood in Saint Paul, supporting youth primarily from Karen and Burmese-speaking families. Youth participate in homework help and academic enrichment, guided literacy support designed specifically for English Language Learners, and various activities designed to nurture the whole child.

After hearing from youth and families alike, more students in the “age gap” between being a student and being employed as tutors were looking for opportunities to stay connected to the program. With additional community support, we are piloting expanding programming for youth in grades 6-8.

Adrian, a Teen Tutor, says he’s glad he can keep working with Niveah now that he’s in 6th grade and continue to help him grow. Niveah says his favorite part of the program is working with the tutors, especially Adrian, who have helped him gain new confidence with his favorite school subject - math.

Thank you for giving youth like Adrian and Niveah access to enriching programs that give them confidence and a sense of community! Your generosity ensures youth are supported by caring adults who want to see young people reach their potential.



Adrian shared, *“I enjoy working with all of the students, but I feel I have a special bond with Niveah. I am proud of the way he is developing. He participates more and is focused on his homework. He seems proud of himself, too, which is cool.”*

Niveah shared, *“When I get something wrong on my math homework or a test, I like that Adrian helps explain the problem to me in a different way. I really like working with the tutors.”*

## YOU GIVE JOY AND OTHER LOCAL SENIORS HAPPINESS, HEALTH, AND CONNECTION THROUGH EXPANDED ARTS PROGRAMMING

We do it while driving in the car. We do it while shopping at the grocery store. We even do it in the shower. Singing is a powerful activity enjoyed by so many people! More and more, you'll hear music floating through the halls at Keystone's West 7th Community Center location.

With the generous support from our community, we've been on a mission to offer more arts-related programming for older adults, and over the last year, we've been expanding to add more music-based programming, too.

Teisha Magee, Keystone's Director of Senior Services, explains, "Music can be quite inaccessible. It's expensive, too loud, crowded, or there are other reasons why some older adults stop enjoying music or participating in musical arts, and we wanted to change that."

Keystone has partnered with VocalEssence through its Vintage Voices program to help incorporate more singing and music into the everyday lives of older adults. For the last few months, we have been offering a Community Sing-Along led by a conductor and pianist from VocalEssence.

During the sing-alongs, singers of all musical experience and ability levels gather in the lounge, coming together first with community conversation, breathing exercises, and even light physical stretching before singing. Once everyone is warmed up and comfortable, signing begins, and soon, you can hear songs from Bob Dylan to Dionne Warwick permeating throughout the hallways.



*“What a delight it has been to participate in this group. There is so much joy, respect, and delightfulness to this singing group.”* ~ Joy, Sing-Along Participant

There are many benefits to singing in community, including expanded lung capacity, better posture, and the release of endorphins in the brain that cause you to feel happiness and satisfaction.

Joy, a Community Sing-Along participant, can vouch for those happy feelings. She shares, *“I have been looking since 2016 to find a choir or singing group to lift my spirits since I retired. I couldn't find one that I wanted, and then, in October of this year, I joined Keystone's Community Sing-Along. The first time I came, I cried -- I was so happy.”*

The fulfillment and sense of community that Joy and the other senior participants have felt during the Community Sing-Along has been unmatched! Thank you for your generous support which helps expand arts programming, making music and singing more accessible to older adults.



Singing in community offers numerous health benefits. Our participants love the warm, fuzzy feeling they get from being in this group!

**Know an older adult who loves to sing?**

Visit our website for upcoming Sing-Along dates, or information about our choir!