

Dear Friend,

We often hear from our volunteers that they get back more than they give to Project Open Hand. In Debbie Epstein's case, when she volunteered in our grocery center, she "got back" a good friend.

Debbie is a caterer who began volunteering for Project Open Hand in the grocery center on Christmas Day last year. It was while she was volunteering there that Debbie had a reunion with a friend of hers who she thought had died.

Tom had been Debbie's neighbor and close friend years before in San Francisco. But when Debbie got a job that took her out of the country for more than a year, she lost touch with him. Upon her return to San Francisco, another neighbor told Debbie that Tom had become very ill, lost his job and was evicted from his apartment. The friend speculated that Tom was probably dead.

Four years later, Debbie began volunteering for Project Open Hand. One day when she was at the grocery center, she looked up . . . and there was Tom. It turned out he had become a Project Open Hand client.

"Tom is very much alive and looking wonderful," says Debbie. "I am sure that a great deal of that is because of what you (Project Open Hand) do over there."

Granted, a reunion like Debbie and Tom's doesn't happen every day. What *does* happen every day is that volunteers like Debbie await nearly 450 people at our grocery centers. They load grocery bags filled with fresh fruits, vegetables, bread, milk and eggs – nutritious food that help combat malnutrition, weight loss and other symptoms associated with AIDS.

For those who can't come to us, our volunteers go to them. Every day more than a hundred volunteers arrive at our kitchen to pick up hot, freshly prepared dinners. They then fan out across the whole city of San Francisco as well as parts of Alameda County, and bring nutritious meals to over 1,100 people with AIDS who otherwise might not eat.

I'm writing to ask your help in our mission – providing meals with love for people with AIDS.

It was a coincidence, of course, that Debbie ran into Tom at Project Open Hand, but you'd have a hard time convincing her of that. And their reunion is far from the only positive experience she's had.

"I really enjoy volunteering at Project Open Hand," she says. "I get to meet all different people and I'm amazed by their diversity. I've seen homeless people, well-dressed people, men, women with their children, etc. No matter who they are, they are all grateful for the food."

One woman thanks Debbie for every item she takes out of the grocery cart. An older man who is a Spanish tutor has offered to teach Debbie Spanish, since that is what he can offer.

As grateful as our clients are to Debbie, so are we. Because of hundreds of volunteers like her, Project Open Hand is able to serve a person with AIDS a nourishing meal for just \$5 a day.

That means your donation of \$25 can feed someone one of our meals for five days. A gift of \$140 will feed them for a month.

“Kudos to everyone at Open Hand,” Debbie wrote us recently. “It’s a wonderful organization and I strongly believe anyone and everyone should give what they can, whether it be money or time.”

Kudos to Debbie and to all our volunteers. And kudos to you, for caring for men, women and children with AIDS. Without your help, they might literally go hungry. With it, we can assure them that a Project Open Hand volunteer will be there with a smile, a word of encouragement and a hot, nutritious meal.

Thank you,

Tom Nolan
Executive Director

P.S. We welcome your time as well as your financial support. If you’d like to volunteer for Project Open Hand, please call _____.

Yes! I want to help feel someone with AIDS for just five dollars a day. Enclosed is my donation of:

- \$35 (meals for a week)
- \$70 (meals for two weeks)
- \$140 (meals for a month)
- \$280 (meals for two months)
- Other \$____

Payment method:

- Check enclosed
- Please bill my
 - American Express
 - Discover
 - MasterCard
 - Visa

Card #

Exp. Date

Cardholder signature

Thank you!