



Green Ribbon Initiatives AWARD

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Green Ribbon Initiatives, a non-profit corporation founded in the spring of 2013 is pleased to announce recognition of a significant community partnership. Recognition is being given to a partnership between Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota (BCBSM) and The Open Door (formerly known as Eagan/Lakeville Resource Center) for partnering in a way that enhances the lives of community residents through access to healthy foods.

BCBSM is a long time corporate citizen of Eagan and a major employer in the community. For more than 80 years BCBSM has been committed to Minnesota communities. Its mission is to make a healthy difference in people's lives, working to address the changing needs of health care across the state through its business strategies and community-facing work. Corporate commitment to communities is exemplified among other things by:

- Heart of Blue programs for community involvement.
- An annual community giving campaign supporting non-profit organizations across the state.
- Employee volunteering, including the Volunteer Paid Time Off program.

The Open Door is the largest non-profit food shelf in Dakota County providing food distribution across the south metro area. Through its collective programs, The Open Door serves approximately 5,500-6,000 individuals each month and distributes over 1.3 million pounds of healthy food annually. Its core mission is "A healthy approach to ending local hunger through access to healthy food". The Open Door—with the support of the community—is able to assist thousands of local individuals each month through a variety of programs designed to connect those in need with fresh, nutritious options:

- Healthy food support at 2 food shelves in Eagan and Lakeville, 7 Mobile Pantry sites, and The Mobile Lunch Box, bringing healthy lunches and enrichment activities to low-income children during the summer months.
- Family Advocacy/Community resources referral link families to critical, stabilizing services at social service agencies.
- Garden To Table program: 140 community garden plots, which allow families to grow the food their family needs, free of charge.

More information about volunteering opportunities and services provided by The Open Door can be found at its website: theopendoorpantry.org.

- Specific to the partnership being recognized:
- BCBSM has a presence on The Open Door Board.
- BCBSM provides approximately 10 to 20 regular volunteers working with the Open Door and more at special emphasis times.
- BCBSM Community Garden donates produce from the garden(s) to The Open Door, which involves dozens of employee volunteers from BCBSM. In 2015, over 600 pounds of produce was grown and a portion was donated to The Open Door. Significant annual giving, BCBSM and The Open Door partnered in the annual 2015 March Food Drive with cash donation over \$15,000 and over 350 pounds of food donations.

- BCBSM provides on-going financial support to The Open Door through their Dollars for Doers and Community Giving Campaign match.

Michael Sammler-Jones, Director of Community Relations & Internal Communications at BCBSM, reported that he was pleased with this effort to invest in the local community by BCBSM.

Lisa Horn, Director of The Open Door, identified BCBSM as one of the very significant partners that The Open Door has.

Healthy partnerships that engage the community help build community. The BCBSM and The Open Door partnership is an excellent example of the benefits of such partnerships illustrating the truth that by working together great things can be accomplished.

Green Ribbon Initiatives desires to see community engagement awards that:

- Increase the sense of community in Eagan.
- Increase the ability to improve the community at all levels.
- Increase the utilization of volunteers, especially the aging in place.
- Increase awareness of community engagement by a wider circle of persons.
- Recognize community engagement by increasing volunteerism and voter turn out.

Green Ribbon Initiatives was formed for the purpose of identifying and celebrating significant community engagement initiatives and partnerships in Eagan. Awards will be presented to exemplary initiatives in Eagan which build relationships and a collective sense of community in Eagan while promoting sustainable action that strengthens community engagement.

- The recognition process is meant to support and encourage the cultivation, motivation and coordination of multiple levels of community resources available to strengthen community.
- Community engagement is understood as individuals and organizations working together on common interests for mutual benefit and in the interest of the larger community.
- Green Ribbon Initiatives seeks to weave engagement into the community fabric and address barriers to engagement when they are identified.

This partnership is exemplary and significant and meets all selection criteria; we are pleased and excited to make this award.

Green Ribbon Leadership Team

Jim Borgschatz (president), Gene VanOverbeke, Tom Hedges, Brenda Johnson, Dave Unmacht, Paula Forbes, Don Hoeft

More information about Green Ribbon Initiatives Awards, nomination forms, application forms, and ways to help can all be found at www.greenribbon.info.



Green Ribbon Initiatives continues to solicit community partnerships to recognize as well as friends who are interested in being financial partners and in providing other support.