

GRANTING HOPE

Introduction



Howard is a 57-year-old father and grandfather who is happy to be alive. In 1994, Howard was diagnosed with HIV and now has AIDS. He lives on less than \$10,000 a year, hardly enough to pay for food and the demanding care required by this disease. Fortunately, within a year of being diagnosed, Howard ran into ‘Open Arms.’

Opened in 1986, a Twin-Cities-based organization called Open Arms prepares and delivers free nutritious meals to the homes of people in the area living with HIV/AIDS, including their dependent children and related caregivers. Deliveries typically consist of a breakfast snack along with a full lunch and dinner—cooked and prepared largely by volunteers.

In 1974, the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church (two former Lutheran church bodies which, along with the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, formed the ELCA in 1988) established appeals for funds in response to increasing hunger in the United States and around the world. Lutherans viewed the formation of these hunger appeals as a temporary response to address world hunger. Thirty-two years later, after the merger of the hunger appeals into what is now the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, hundreds of thousands of people in the United States and around the world are being fed and are learning how to be financially and economically independent because of these efforts.

Every day, Open Arms drivers deliver meals to hundreds of clients. One stop on this daily route is Howard’s apartment in Minneapolis, located in back of a duplex and up a rickety staircase. Drivers know to knock loudly, as Howard is hard of hearing. Sometimes, he waits at the door for the welcome company. “The Open Arms volunteers always come at the same time and bring a smile to my face,” Howard says. Without Open Arms, he would not eat balanced meals and, at times, would go hungry.

Howard is able to battle his illness with nutritious meals and daily smiles from the staff at Open Arms, but he worries about how much longer he will be around. “I’ve played it out for 15 years, and when you see the statistics, you wonder,” Howard says. He is grateful for Open Arms and the people who support this life-giving ministry. “God bless everybody, and thank God I’m alive.”

In this online catalog, you will read about 263 programs supported by ELCA domestic hunger grants. These ministries offer hope and assistance to many thousands of people who live in poverty in the United States. Some serve urban areas of homelessness and poverty, and others are in smaller communities where the need for food, shelter, or medications is great.

ELCA World Hunger does more than just give food to people who are hungry: it addresses the root of the problem. In addition to relief programs, ELCA domestic hunger grants fund projects in organization and development that strengthen the foundations of communities impacted by hunger and poverty. If the foundation of a community or household is not strong, food assistance will only prolong the inevitable outcome of a person or family starving, because they cannot maintain steady employment or organize their communities to fight hunger as a united body.

Through offerings collected each Sunday in Lutheran churches, private donors, fund-raising efforts, and other resources that help create a network of giving through the World Hunger Appeal, the ELCA continues to work for the end of hunger and poverty in God’s world.