

**BUSINESS, LIFESTYLE, NEWS**

## GLSS IN LYNN LAUNCHES FOOD HUB

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BY [ALLYSHA DUNNIGAN](#) | January 10, 2022

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LYNN — Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS) launched its Phoenix Food Hub this month, offering a variety of services to community members of all ages.

The Phoenix Food Hub, which is located at 8 Silsbee St., had a mini-launch with the Food Project's winter farmer's market two weekends ago, which served hundreds of people and will continue every Saturday.

GLSS nutritionists are also collaborating with Lynn Community Health Center to identify people who may have food insecurity or deficit in cooking healthy foods through nutrition screenings.

"This is sort of just a very small version of what we hope to be doing there eventually," said Chief Executive Officer of GLSS Kathryn C. Burns.

In addition to these resources, the food hub plans to incorporate healthy-cooking classes to show people how to cook well if they have diabetes, or how to cook the produce from the farmer's market.

The goal of the Phoenix Food Hub is to bring people together to decrease food insecurity and expand these resources to people who need it.

Director of the Lynn Food and Fitness Alliance Norris Guscott said the idea behind a central food hub was based off of food-related academic research he co-authored years ago that indicated the effectiveness of one-stop food hubs in places like Lynn.

"The mayor's office and public-health department were both looking for an intervention that addressed the social and clinical determinants of health related to food security," Guscott said. "To truly fight food insecurity, we've got to do more than just give people food. In addition to making healthy food affordable, we've got to teach them about the nutritional aspects — how to prepare their food, where to buy their food, and the resources/benefits available to folks."

The Phoenix Food Hub partners with the city's Food Security Task Force and the 14 organizations the task force collaborates with, including Leading through Empowering Communities (LEO, Inc.), New American Center, Mutual Aid Lynn, and Lynn Grows.

"It's a magnificent collaboration," Burns said.

Another partner, Catholic Charities, is incorporating a state-of-the-art food pantry in part of the first floor on Silsbee Street, which is set to open in April.

GLSS is using funds from Mass General Brigham to work with an architect to redesign the first-floor space to better accommodate ways to serve the population, such as making the kitchen handicap-accessible.

“We’re going to have a ton of other wraparound services available,” Burns said.

The food hub also includes resources for housing access, mental-health counseling, stress management, mobility training, and benefits counseling to those eligible for SNAP, WIC, and other nutrition-based resources.

“It’s for all ages, not just the elderly,” Burns said. “It’s just such a fantastic opportunity to collaborate across the city for something that’s so important and really not just food, but a whole lot of things that we call the social determinants of health. That’s not only food, but also housing, education, feeling safe, and those sorts of things.”

The idea behind the work at the Phoenix Food Hub, Burns said, is to offer a place not only for access to affordable, nutritious food, but also other critical support services to help stabilize lives and provide economic opportunities.

During the pandemic, Burns said it became very clear how many people need more resources for food and support, so the launch of the food hub will target that.

As other partners begin to use the space at the food hub to offer resources, Burns said they are hoping to be fully up and running by the spring.

In addition to offering resources, a team of data analysts will be tracking anonymously what services people are using to inform how to continue the model going forward.

The Phoenix Food Hub, which is in the space that was once the Lynn Senior Center, was created with support from [Tufts Health Plan Foundation](#), [Mass General Brigham](#), and many grassroots donations, as well as support from former Mayor Thomas M. McGee, Public Health Director Michele Desmarais, and current Mayor Jared Nicholson.

“Given we are planning on having everyone – nurses, chefs, nutritionists, and patient navigators on staff – I am confident Phoenix Food Hub will address many areas of food insecurity for Lynn residents, especially the most vulnerable,” Guscott said.



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