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NEW FOOD HUB TO OPEN AT GLSS IN LYNN

BY ALLYSHA DUNNIGAN | August 24, 2021



A Meals on Wheels driver reorganizes the meals delivered from a food vendor to the Greater Lynn Senior Services office before transporting them to individual clients on Tuesday morning. (Alena Kuzub)

LYNN — Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS) has partnered with organizations across the community to open the Phoenix Food Hub, offering nutrition-related support to the community.

The Phoenix Food Hub will serve people of all ages with nutrition needs through a one-stop shop where individuals and families at risk of food insecurity can access a variety of resources to effectively address this critical challenge.

Some programs through this hub have already started – in the first-floor space at 8 Silsbee St. that previously housed the Lynn Senior Center – but a grand opening will occur in the fall.

This “food hub” model is designed to address immediate nutritional needs and provide people on site with a range of other nutrition-related services with the aim of eliminating nutrition deficiencies.

Valerie Parker Callahan, the planning and development director at GLSS, said the organization has always been aware of food-insecurity needs relative to its own consumers; it has operated Meals on Wheels and congregate-meal sites throughout its catchment area for many years, she said.

“The pandemic, of course, intensely exacerbated this issue,” Callahan said. “Discussions with the Lynn Food Security Task Force, in which GLSS is a member, made clear that together – as many organizations collaborating – we could strengthen our capacities to effectively reach more at-risk individuals and deliver more comprehensive nutrition supports.”

Callahan said they wanted to use the former Senior Center space to support another kind of center: one that focuses on the nutrition needs of all Lynn residents.

“Having a space large enough to provide food distribution, other vital nutrition supports, as well as wrap-around services – all delivered as a result of great partnering across multiple organizations – is an exciting solution to a hugely important problem,” Callahan said.

As the lead agency in this program, GLSS is responsible for operating the space, managing the infrastructure, and the day-to-day operations.

GLSS is working closely with the Lynn Food Security Task Force to ensure various partners are able to offer their programs to their constituents as effectively as possible.

“Together, we are reaching our goal of eliminating food insecurity for as many people as possible,” GLSS said.

The 4,800-square-foot space will offer a food pantry, operated by a partner organization; food distribution, meal delivery and farmers’ markets; nutrition screening, counseling and education, including one-on-one workshops; healthy cooking classes; supports for getting to markets, reading labels, and managing dietary requirements; and other nutrition-related benefits counseling.

Callahan said other service supports include housing, mobility, stress management, and financial management.

Some of the organizations included in this project consist of the Lynn Food Security Task Force, City of Lynn, Lynn Community Health Center, LEO Inc., New American Center, The Food Project, Mutual Aid Lynn, Lynn Grows and Catholic Charities.



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