



## Rethinking Healthcare, One Meal at a Time

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### Nourishing Healthy Starts

#### Food, Connection and Support for New Parents and their Children

Since first launching in 2018, **OFS's Nourishing Healthy Starts (NHS) program has been testing a bold idea:** that nutrition support, combined with resources and services that strengthen maternal health, can profoundly impact the well-being of new parents and their babies. The results so far have been strong and encouraging.

To better meet community needs, NHS has evolved over the years, and the current service model has been in place since 2023. NHS now includes three full-time maternal health advocates, each supporting a caseload of about 20 families. In the past two years, **more than 140 healthy babies have been born.**

## Rethinking Healthcare (Continued)

The Social Policy Institute at Washington University's Brown School of Social Work continues to partner with OFS, serving as the program's research evaluator.

**NHS is designed to support families holistically, with food access as a foundation.** Participants receive both nutritious food and a mix of practical, empowering services: cooking classes, cooking tools and kitchen staples, garden education classes launched this summer, and an ongoing support group that helps moms build long-term peer connections. These connections enable participants to share strategies, celebrate wins, and stay connected even after the program ends.

The impact of NHS goes far beyond the kitchen. When a tornado devastated parts of our community this spring, **ten NHS families were seriously affected, and two of them lost their homes.** With the generous support of our community, OFS was able to step in to help cover first month's rent and deposits for the families so they could remain housed. We continue to provide added resources as families recover. In other cases, program participants who face intimate partner violence have needed emergency housing and other support to start fresh. Our advocates connect them with appropriate services and resources and walk with families through the transitions, **ensuring they have what they need to keep their families healthy during even the most challenging times.**

Through every season of change, our commitment remains: to nourish families, foster resilience, and **ensure that every baby has the healthiest possible start in life.**

## "NHS creates healthier families.

Families are learning lifelong skills that will be passed down, creating a ripple effect of health and stability."

- Kristen V. Wild, President & CEO



Manausha and her daughter Aliza: the first child born in the Nourishing Healthy Starts Program in December, 2018.



# 140+

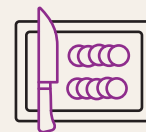
Healthy Babies Born  
within the Past Two Years

## Nourishing Healthy Starts Supports Families Holistically



Nutritious  
Food

+



Empowering  
Services

+



Ongoing  
Support

## Fresh Rx: Community Nutrition Partnering with Healthcare to Expand Nutrition Access

Fresh Rx: Community Nutrition brings the ‘food is medicine’ philosophy to life—**delivering fresh food alongside prescriptions for patients managing chronic illness**. What started as a pilot in partnership with Greater Health Pharmacy has grown into a thriving program now in its second year, bringing nutrition directly into healthcare systems where it’s needed most.



With the help of **Greater Health Pharmacy**, OFS’s program sees bags of fresh, healthy food delivered to older adults in St. Louis City and North County along with their prescriptions for diabetes or hypertension. This innovative approach provides more than just medication—**participants also receive the nourishment that supports long-term healing and health**.

In addition to individual recipients, the program makes a delivery stop at LIV Sober Living, a residential group home for individuals recovering from severe substance use. Each week, **OFS provides a communal food box large enough to create shared meals for up to 20 residents** during their 30-day stay.

And the impact is growing. In addition to Greater Health Pharmacy, OFS works with **St. Louis Children’s Hospital** and **BJC Ambulatory Care**, which purchase healthy food from us to distribute directly to their patients. This model enables healthcare systems to integrate food into patient care in meaningful, scalable ways.

The future of Fresh Rx: Community Nutrition lies in deepening and expanding these partnerships. As more healthcare providers recognize the role of nutrition in healing and prevention, **they’re reaching out to OFS to co-create solutions that meet the needs of their patients**. From pediatric care to chronic illness management, the demand is growing—and we’re ready to meet it.

Our goal is clear: to expand nutrition access across the region and help make food a standard part of healthcare. Because when people have access to healthy meals, they’re better equipped to recover, grow, and thrive.

**A heartfelt thank you to the Foundation for Barnes Jewish Hospital for making this work possible.** Through their partnership and belief in our mission, we’re able to continue building relationships and expanding services—and help improve the health of more individuals in our region.

**Our Goal:**  
**Expand Nutrition Access and Help Make Food a Standard Part of Healthcare**



# What's Cooking in the Teaching Kitchen

## Homemade Tomato Soup with Basil

As we head into soup season, think about making tomato soup with basil (or without). This colorful, tasty recipe uses fresh or canned tomatoes and takes just 45 minutes to make from start to finish. It's a healthy, cost-effective option on a chilly day. Do we even need to mention that you might pair tomato soup with a grilled cheese sandwich?

We offer cooking classes for groups up to 16 in the OFS Teaching Kitchen. Contact Jason Goldman to learn more at [Jason.goldman@operationfoodsearch.org](mailto:Jason.goldman@operationfoodsearch.org).



FEATURED RECIPE  
**Tomato Soup  
with Basil**

Scan to View Recipe →



## Join the Heirloom Legacy Society: A Gift That Lasts Beyond a Lifetime



"We've always been confident that our volunteer and financial support of Operation Food Search have made a difference in our community. Including Operation Food Search in our estate planning, and becoming part of the Heirloom Legacy Society was a natural extension of our personal philanthropy goals."

- Mike and Kate Kupstas

Including Operation Food Search in your will is a powerful way to create lasting change and ensure that, if needed, future generations have access to healthy, nutritious food. By joining the Heirloom Legacy Society, you become part of a dedicated group of supporters who believe in the dignity of every person and the right to food security.

Leaving a legacy doesn't require great wealth, just a generous heart. Whether through a bequest, beneficiary designation, or other planned gift, your commitment ensures that our innovative programs and community partnerships continue to thrive. When you include OFS in your estate plans, you're making a lasting investment in a healthier, more equitable future.



To become a member of the Heirloom Legacy Society, simply let us know if you've included us in your legacy giving.

Please contact Ellen Reed-Fox, CFRE at (314) 451-1950 or [ellen.reedfox@operationfoodsearch.org](mailto:ellen.reedfox@operationfoodsearch.org).