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April 2026

# MONTHLY



## Celebrating a Milestone for Healthy Starts

### Nourishing Healthy Starts Welcomes Its 200th Baby

This spring, Operation Food Search's **Nourishing Healthy Starts** program is celebrating the birth of its **200th baby**, a milestone that reflects the growing impact of this innovative program designed to **support healthier pregnancies**.

NHS uses a holistic, relationship-based approach to **improve birth outcomes** and support the health of the entire family. Through **biweekly groceries, nutrition education, maternal health advocacy, and peer support**, expectant families are given personalized care during one of life's most critical periods.

That **sense of connection** is what stays with many participants. "**It put an ease on me throughout my pregnancy**. I didn't have to figure out how I was going to get what we needed," said Darlinda, a program graduate. "It's basically **like a village**, our village at Nourishing Healthy Starts."

**Food insecurity during pregnancy** can increase the risk of poor nutrition, chronic stress, delayed prenatal care, and negative birth outcomes for both mom and baby. By **addressing these challenges early**, NHS helps ensure a stronger foundation for families and a healthier start for children.

The healthcare system is impacted, as well: **a single NICU stay can cost tens of thousands of dollars**, with more serious cases costing much more. By helping mothers access nutritious food and support during pregnancy, NHS is working to **improve outcomes before crises occur**.

The program's impact is clear: babies in families facing food insecurity are significantly more likely to be born at low birth weight. Through Nourishing Healthy Starts, however, **85% of babies have been born at a healthy weight**.

Every healthy birth means one more child beginning life with a stronger foundation and one more family growing with greater support. Together, these outcomes are helping build **a stronger, healthier St. Louis**, one family at a time.

[Learn More](#)



## OFS MetroMarket Launches Outdoor Season

When the warm weather arrives, our **fresh food markets move outdoors**, with our farmers trucks bringing produce, proteins, and other grocery items to **neighborhoods with little access to fresh food**.

What was once a seasonal program now **operates year-round**, and the program is expanding to **665 markets**, reaching more families than ever with dependable, affordable food access.

Customer feedback is essential to the growth of the program and has helped determine market locations. "We make a point to **listen to the community** to ensure we're offering the food they prefer at locations that are easy to access," said Jessica Murphy, OFS MetroMarket Senior Manager. "We're really pleased that **shoppers report eating more fruits and vegetables as a result of the markets**, and we want to keep making a positive impact."

Whether MetroMarket arrives through one of our farmers trucks or operates as an indoor market, families can count on **convenient access to fresh groceries** at affordable prices — often at or below cost.

**To learn more** about MetroMarket and see the schedule, visit the link below.

[View Schedule](#)



### Give STL Day Is May 7 Support Expectant Moms & Families

Pregnancy should be a time of hope—not uncertainty about the next meal.

Through Operation Food Search's Nourishing Healthy Starts program, **expectant mothers and their families receive biweekly groceries, nutrition education, and personalized support** to help improve birth outcomes and build a healthy foundation for the future.

This month, NHS will hit a major milestone: **the birth of its 200th baby.**

On May 7, your gift can go twice as far. Thanks to a generous **\$15,000 matching gift from Stern Brothers**, every dollar donated on Give STL Day will be doubled.

Mark your calendar for Give STL Day and help create a healthier future for moms, babies, and our community.

**Healthy Moms. Healthy Babies. A Stronger STL.**

*Early giving is now open! Visit the link to make your contribution and have your gift matched and your impact doubled.*

[Give Early](#)



### Canstruction® Delivers 15,000 Food Cans for the Community

Operation Food Search's inaugural Canstruction® St. Louis was a major success, uniting **creativity and community impact** at Plaza Frontenac.

Architects, engineers, contractors, designers, and students built **large-scale sculptures from canned goods** to raise awareness about hunger and inspire visitors.

After the exhibit, staff and volunteers deconstructed the displays, collecting approximately **15,000 canned goods—filling 82 barrels**—to support local families through OFS's partner network.

#### Award Winners:

- Best Original Design: Team Casco/Paric/Dierbergs – *Ode to MO-Bot*
- Structural Ingenuity: Team SLU School of Engineering – *The Eats Bridge*
- Best Use of Labels: Team ICP/Lawrence Group/New+Found – *The Jewel Box*
- Most Cans Used: Team HOK – *"We Can Do It" Rosie*
- People's Choice: Team Arcturis – *Chef Octopus* (38% of 988 votes)

Thank you to the teams, volunteers, and supporters who made this event possible!

## Ways to Give



### Donate

Give a one-time gift or become a Hunger Healer with recurring donations.

[Give online here.](#)



### Honor Someone with a Gift

Recognize someone special while helping solve the problem of hunger in a directly impactful way.

[Learn more here.](#)



### Get Your Gift Matched

Search for your company to see if it matches gifts or volunteer hours.

[Search here.](#)



### Plan a Legacy Gift

Include OFS in your estate plan and help ensure a better future.

[Learn more here.](#)

## Give Us a Follow



Join our social community and help spread the word about OFS and our mission to create a future free from hunger.



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