

OPEN ARMS OF MINNESOTA

SAINT PAUL, MN



Open Arms of Minnesota is a nonprofit organization that prepares and delivers nourishing meals free of charge to critically ill Minnesotans and their loved ones. Their belief is that food is medicine, and there is always room for one more at the table. By fusing Open Arms' strong sense of communal values with Rippe's desire to help people feed their communities, this project became something truly synchronistic for everyone involved in bringing the vision to fruition.

After successful work on a prior Open Arms venture, Rippe Associates was asked to assist starting with the early phases of this project: finding an ideal spot for their expanding operations, across the river from their Minneapolis location. The business model had shifted over the years, moving from focusing solely on freshly prepared hot meals to producing and sending out a week's worth of high-quality medically tailored meals.

Several potential sites were finally narrowed down to the "one" that would best fit the reimagined production process, yet a new challenge presented itself: how to convert a two-story office building, with really low ceilings, into a large food production facility. Through a lot of work in the pre-design phase, and going through quite a few different iterations of layouts, developing

Details

Opening Date: January 2023

Location: Saint Paul, MN

Equipment Cost: \$1.7 million

Kitchen Size: 7,800 SF

Scope

Community driven non-profit production facility

the best use of space for exhaust hoods and the like wasn't simple, but not impossible. Ensuring food safety through intentional design was also at the top of mind, as many of the prepared meals would be going to immune-compromised individuals and those with life-threatening illnesses.

With a goal to make this facility one that elevates the volunteer experience, each space, its purpose and the people using it, were all taken heavily into consideration through a very collaborative process. Creating a space with connectivity between those volunteering, while allowing for preparation, storage, and packaging all while keeping an open floor space with lots of natural light streaming in truly makes this a unique community building.

Open Arms' shipping program is slated to double in scope between now and 2025, thanks to the newly dedicated space for packaging and shipping. The kitchen gives them the capacity to increase meal production by 30% in three years, and the refrigeration/freezer capacity has increased their storage by 50% as it contains their largest freezer, which will store more than 60,000 meals. With this expansion, more people than ever before will have access to life-sustaining meals and resources.

