



# VOLUNTEERING FOR BUSINESSES



Volunteers Participate Virtually or In Person

## THE OPEN TABLE MODEL



**Relationship Transforms US.**

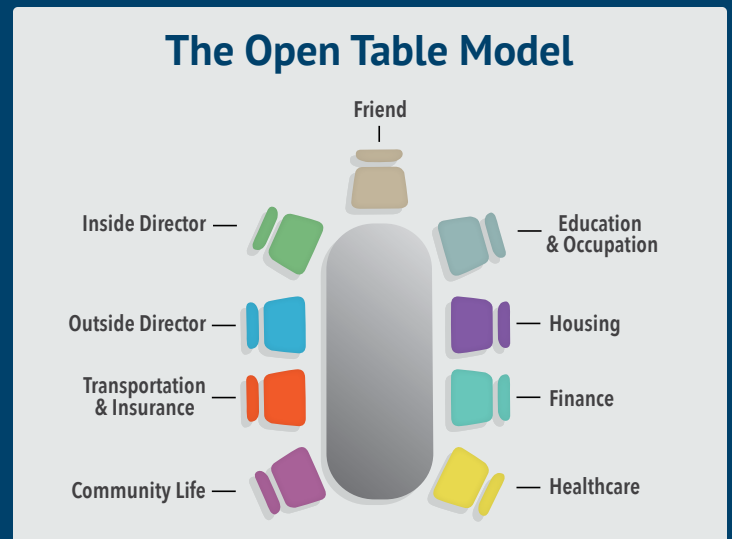
An Open Table in Ohio

The Open Table Model is a reflection of the human potential of every person. Through relationship and accessing social networks, a group of trained volunteers empowers an individual or family with complex challenges to implement their plans to develop the better lives they envision for themselves and their children.

# Open Table is a Trained, Structured Model

Now in existence since 2005 and trained in thirty states, organizations implementing the evidence-informed Open Table Model benefit from online training through Open Table University built on a theory of change, tools to measure fidelity, and ongoing support from Open Table.

☛ Read the Baylor University case study on Open Table [here](#).



## What Does the Research Show?

**2013 Graduates Studied in 2015**  
- two years after their Tables:

**95%** remained in relationship with Table members.

**85%** had a better job and/or were in college or technical school.

Two **Case Studies** show an **ROI of \$7.00 - \$20.00** for every dollar invested.

☛ Read the Evidence Base Summary [here](#).

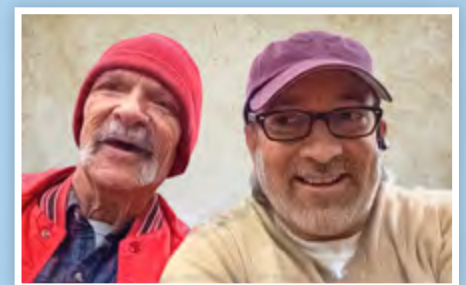
## What Is a Table?

Volunteers are trained to form a "Table" and develop long-term relationships with the "Friend" -- the individual or family they are serving. Guided by a Life Plan defined by the Friend, Table members and the friend access their social networks to support implementation of the Life Plan. Tables range from four to twelve volunteers based on needs and number of family members. Over the course of a year, Tables meet weekly for an hour and share friendship and activities outside of Table meetings. At the end of twelve months, Tables form an "After Plan" that defines the ongoing, supportive relationships developed through the Table.

## About Open Table

Relational and social capital are the source of human development. When they are freely accessible, everyone can flourish. When they are out of reach, human potential collapses. In Open Table, relational capital is a sustaining, reciprocal, social connectedness between people in which each party gives to and receives support from the other. Social capital is a person's own knowledge, skills, and networks.

Through the grassroots models of Open Table, organizations provide access to transformational resources for people with complex needs and communities working to create social change. These models have been trained to thousands of people, organizations and social entrepreneurs in more than 30 states to organize the relational and social capital of the community. Open Table believes that relational and social capital are not about win-win culture; rather, relational and social capital seek to build a society in which everyone wins.



Jon and Ernie, Open Table Founders

[www.theopentable.org](http://www.theopentable.org)

Open Table, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization



## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TAKES A SEAT AT THE TABLE

### Founded by Businesspeople

The original Open Table team, including the organization's founder and CEO, included people representing an array of businesses. They used their business experiences and skills to build long-term relationships and leverage their personal and professional networks to encourage and empower the plans of individuals and families to develop better lives. Today, thousands of people from businesses have served as Table members through community organizations and agencies. Both large and small companies now participate in Open Table initiatives.



### Train the Trainer Model

The Community Engagement Coordinator (CEC), recruited from among staff of the participating business, serves as a key success asset of the Open Table implementation process. With ongoing training and support from Open Table, the CEC will assume organizational responsibility and leadership for and Open Table pilot and ensuing expansion. An individual CEC – or a team – will typically dedicate .25 of an FTE effort.



### Virtual Volunteering

Open Table is a hybrid participation model. It can be implemented virtually, in-person or as a combination of the two. Specialized training for the virtual operation of Tables is available.

### Online Training and Ongoing Support

Open Table's executive team provides direct support to plan, learn, and implement the model. An online, on-demand, training system called Open Table University is Open Table's training platform and delivery system for all the resources needed to implement Tables. Technical support is provided through a Community Engagement Team and a responsive HelpDesk.





## Pilot Approach

The Open Table pilot project development comprises a process to evaluate and understand how to move from an initial pilot program to a permanent, sustainable implementation of Open Table on a larger scale in the organization.

Of central importance to this process is the development, alongside the nuts-and-bolts implementation of Tables, of both process evaluation and outcomes measurement. This data helps understand impact on the Friend and Table members, as well as learning about how to scale the model within an organization.

## Flexibility

Tables can serve anyone. A business can serve Friends referred by organizations it partners with as well other employees and new hires who need support to succeed.

# BUSINESS SKILL BUILDING

## Soft Skills Development

Open Table research and experience, through fifteen years of implementation, documents how soft business skills can be experienced, learned and reinforced through participation on a Table:



**Relationship Building:** Table members experience the formation of long-term relationships with the Friend and with each other through reciprocity, vulnerability, meeting people where they are, and active listening.



An Open Table in Virginia

**Cross-Collaboration:** An array of departments that may not work closely together collaborate to build a support system and solve challenges for a Friend.

**Consensus-Based Decision Making:** Table members work together with the Friend in a consensus-based, consultative environment where the Friend (customer) makes the final decisions.

**Customer Centric Management:** The unique skillsets of each Table member combine to support the friend in the most effective way. Table members learn that each person has encouraging positive support to provide to the Friend.

**Relational and Social Capital:** Open Table participants learn to map and access the vast networks of support that exist through their own relationships and the company.