



WESTERN COLORADO
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

HUNGER MATTERS

Hunger Matters provides updates about our community efforts to alleviate hunger in western Colorado

Our Inaugural Issue Welcome Donors and Friends

This is the first edition of our Community Foundation's new *Hunger Matters* e-newsletter, which will be distributed three or four times a year to donors and friends. Our intent is to share news and information on what is going on in Mesa County and western Colorado with people who are interested in this topic.

On behalf of our communities, we want to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all the hunger relief organizations and their staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly in 2020 to provide food assistance to people in need through the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only did the need for food assistance double and even triple during certain months last year, but organizations needed to reorganize service delivery to cope with fewer volunteers and change operations to include more drive-through services, mobile food pantries, and home-delivery of food boxes.

We also want to thank our generous donors who supported our Community Foundation's Virtual Canned Food Drive and other COVID Emergency Response initiatives in 2020. We distributed \$1.4 million in grants to nonprofits meeting basic needs during the crisis, much of that directed to food assistance.

If you have questions, want to learn more about our work or have suggestion on what you would like to see in future *Hunger Matters*, please [get in touch with us!](#)



Vehicles line up to receive food from Clifton Christian Church's mobile pantry. Local food pantries saw a large increase in demand during the last twelve months during the COVID pandemic.

Expanded Warehouse
Community Food Bank in New Home

The Community Food Bank (CFB) in Grand Junction has been providing food to families for over 40 years. Over those years, the number of clients served has been increasing steadily. Space at their rental warehouse was cramped, and office space was not adequate for their needs.

The agency has had a goal of securing a larger space and owning its own warehouse for a long time. In October 2020, CFB purchased a combined warehouse/office structure at 476 28 ½ Road. They took several months to renovate and build-out the new warehouse, opening in December 2020 in time for the holidays. The new facility off of North Avenue is more centrally located and accessible via public transit. It has increased cold and freezer storage for fresh food items. The new facility also doubles the amount of space that CFB had without increasing their costs, enabling the food pantry to see a future where they can provide additional services to clients, including nutrition education and enrollment assistance in federal food assistance programs.

Our Community Foundation granted nearly \$100,000 from several donor-advised funds for the capital campaign to help CFB get situated in their own home.

To learn more about Community Food Bank, see [here](#).

In 2019, Community Food Bank served a total of 18,000 individuals, providing over 160,000 meals. When COVID-19 hit in the Spring of 2020, the agency distributed approximately 80,000 meals to people in need in just three months. This increase in demand has held for the past twelve months.



*Community Food Bank has been providing a drive-through food pantry to comply with social distancing protocols and public health requirements due to COVID-19
Photo Credit: Bright Star Strategies*

Expanding Grocery Rescue and Food Recovery Efforts Refrigerated Truck for HomewardBound

Our Community Foundation is pleased to provide grant funding to [HomewardBound](#) to purchase a refrigerated truck for pick up and delivery of donated, perishable food items. This truck will be used primarily by HomewardBound but, in time, may be shared with other food pantries, as a Mesa County

Food Recovery Network gets organized.

A number of Mesa County's food pantries, and almost all of the larger stores selling food (grocery stores, Sam's Club, Walmart) participate in a grocery rescue program coordinated by Food Bank of the Rockies. Surplus food items and items that are still good but have passed their "sell by" date are set aside at the store for pick up by a hunger relief agency that has been assigned a time and date for the task. The hunger relief agencies frequently send volunteers in their own cars, or maybe a pick-up truck, to pick up the food and deliver it back to their own kitchens and food pantries. Quantities of donated items vary from day to day, and sometimes the agency picking up food does not have a way to store all of it. Keeping perishable items sufficiently cool, with scheduled temperature readings to comply with safe handling standards, is paramount.



HomewardBound is one of the groups that picks up food through grocery rescue. They also pick up prepared food from the Sodexo kitchens at Colorado Mesa University and, starting in 2019, St. Mary's Hospital. With efforts underway to expand the sources of pre-cooked foods (from hospital cafeterias, the college dining hall, and catered events), the need for a larger refrigerated truck became apparent.



WASTE NOT, WANT NOT CAFETERIA
Trained as a chef, Daryl D'Amico enjoys preparing dinner in the Pathways Family Shelter kitchen. His culinary concoctions blend standard ingredients from the soup kitchen pantry shelves with whatever fresh items have been donated that day – items that otherwise would have been thrown away -- turning them into tasty and sometimes unique meals for guests at the homeless shelter.

News Briefs

Focus on Food Waste Mesa County Landfill Study

It is estimated that 40% of food that is produced for consumption in the United States is wasted each year. This includes food that is never harvested or brought to market due to imperfections, as well as food items that sit too long in consumer refrigerators and end up spoiling. In 2018, a local group, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, surveyed what was disposed of in the Mesa County Landfill. [The survey](#) showed that 68% of landfill deposits were divertible, reusable, recyclable, or compostable. Of this divertible



of this divertible

waste, over 12% was food waste.

Our Community Foundation is working with donors and organizations who care about reducing food waste to expand and better coordinate local food rescue efforts and deliver edible foods to hunger relief organizations, helping fill bellies instead of filling up the landfill.



#GJStrong Fund
Awards \$250,000
To Help Alleviate Hunger



Our Community Foundation is pleased to announce that grants totaling \$250,000 have been awarded to 12 organizations to help with ongoing hunger relief for Grand Junction residents. The City of Grand Junction allocated the funds in February and WCCF managed the process through the #GJStrong Fund for Hunger Relief.

Grants include support for expanded operations at food banks and pantries in response to the ongoing pandemic, covering higher food and operating costs, and meals for seniors and families. For a full list of organizations receiving funding, click [here](#).

Hunger is a problem here in western Colorado...

where one in two children qualify for free or reduced price school lunch and one in eight residents do not know where their next meal may be coming from. Our regional Community Foundation has been working on expanding hunger relief efforts, including the development of summer mobile meal programs - the Lunch Lizard (Mesa County) and the Meal Monkey (Garfield County) - and providing funding and technical assistance to address unmet needs and expand programs.



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