

SHARING THE HARVEST

SENIORS STRUGGLE MORE WITH FOOD ACCESS AND ISOLATION DURING EMERGENCIES

Emergency situations negatively impact our most vulnerable neighbors by disrupting their support systems. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us have endured the inconvenience of long lines and limited choices at the supermarket. For seniors already living on fixed incomes however, the addition of health concerns and limited mobility can upend their lives in profound ways.

COVID-19 means seniors without mobile phones, cars, or access to email feel more isolated than ever. Haley Chapin, Executive Director of Tri-Lakes Cares, a Care and Share food pantry partner, reports that the neighbors they serve are no longer allowed in the building due to public health guidelines. This is especially challenging for people with limited mobility, says Chapin, because “they have to pick up their food pantry groceries in the parking lot, so especially on bad weather days, it makes this difficult.”

Suzi Huetten, a client of Tri-Lakes Cares, is a retired legal assistant who lives by herself in Monument, Colorado on a fixed income. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, she sometimes cleaned houses or watched pets to make ends meet when her Social Security income wasn't enough to cover her medical bills. She took on odd jobs because she's fiercely independent and doesn't like to ask for help.

The pandemic means Suzi no longer pet sits or socializes with her community. She lives with respiratory issues that make her afraid to leave the house. “I miss hugging,” Suzi says.

“We as a world have a chance to rise out of this situation better and stronger, more connected and more loving than we were before.”

-Suzi Huetten



“I miss my critters, and I miss face-to-face conversations with my friends. We need to connect with more than words.”

“Fortunately,” Suzi says, “I live close to Tri-Lakes Cares. They send me home with easy-to-prepare meals like soups and fresh salads. They have whole grain crackers and bread. It's real, nourishing food, not junk food, and it's a life saver.”

She talks about her appreciation for the connection she feels through food. **“Though I live alone, every time I pick up healthy soups, I feel surrounded by love and family.”**

Suzi remains hopeful by looking at the outbreak as an opportunity for change. “This is a great opportunity for us to figure out what we want to be as people,” she says. **“We as a world have a chance to rise out of this situation better and stronger, more connected and more loving than we were before.”**

MOBILIZING FOR THE COVID-19 CRISIS

When school is out, hunger begins.

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded in March, Care and Share worked rapidly to mobilize people, food, and school partnerships to support kids and families in school districts affected by the emergency school closures.

“Within hours of the announcement, we were able to transition to a fully-realized emergency food response operation,” said Shannon

Brice, Care and Share’s Chief Operating Officer. “Even with the constraints around the number of people working at one time, and safety precautions like physical distancing in our distribution center, we’ve activated hundreds of volunteers to pack thousands of emergency food boxes for schools in March alone.”



Care and Share volunteers build and pack boxes.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, one in six Southern Colorado children was food insecure. With schools and businesses closed or closing, Care and Share’s team anticipated a surge in need.

“The weekends are difficult enough for some families,” said Brice. “Imagine the extra hardship of extended school and business closures on our

neighbors in need. When school is out, hunger begins.”

During a normal school year, Care and Share distributes over 465,000 pounds of food through school programs like its weekend food bag program, called Send Hunger Packing, and other meal support efforts aimed at children.

But with schools being closed, students don’t have access to that food. Suzan Perryman, a Pueblo School District 60 Nutrition Services Coordinator helped Pueblo distribute food boxes during the emergency closures. “It’s very important,” she says. “It helps families and it feeds hungry children.”

With the help of volunteers and donors, Care and Share delivered emergency COVID-19 food boxes to school districts across Southern Colorado in El Paso, Pueblo, Fremont, Las Animas, and Huerfano counties. **We thank everyone who contributed to this unprecedented response effort!**

Volunteers organize emergency food boxes for Southeast Colorado Springs schools.



SCHOOLS ARE MORE THAN JUST SCHOOLS



Alyssa is a student in Colorado Springs.

Unexpected shifts in routine remind us that schools are much more than students, teachers, classes, and support staff. As communities of learning, schools also offer nutritional, health, and emotional support systems for kids and families. Take Alyssa, for example.

Alyssa is a fifth grader in Colorado Springs who loves learning about science. She lives with diabetes, and both she and her mother have food allergies. These combined factors make it challenging to afford healthy food that everyone in the family can eat.

With help from Care and Share, Alyssa is able to bring home healthy foods that she, her mother, and brothers can all enjoy. Alyssa especially likes cereal and mandarin oranges.

Getting help through her school “makes me feel special,” says Alyssa. She smiles when she thinks about how the food help meets her family’s unique needs, and it reminds her that **“people are thinking of me and that I want to be like other kids.”**

RECIPE FOR HOPE SPONSORS SUPPORT ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Thanks to the generosity and powerful partnership of our 2020 Recipe for Hope sponsors, we were able to pivot immediately into emergency response efforts for Southern Colorado. Though we’ve cancelled, virtualized, or postponed our events to comply with public safety guidelines, we continued to operate in support of hunger relief programs throughout the region.

Our deepest thanks and gratitude to these sponsors for their support of our essential services.

Penrose-St. Francis
Health Services



MAKE YOUR GIFT COUNT IMMEDIATELY!

Give online at careandshare.org/donate.



DONATE



COVID-19 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

It is because of you — our tremendously supportive community — that in times of crisis, Care and Share is able to mobilize and respond swiftly. To all of you who stand beside us in our efforts to increase access to healthy food, you make possible incredible feats, and we owe you each a debt of gratitude. **Thank you for rallying behind us throughout the year and in times of distress. You are all hunger-fighting heroes!**

As of the time of printing, we recognize these contributors:

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THANKS TO OUR MEAL MAKERS

We'd like to thank this quarter's Meal Makers — Foundations, Corporations, and Organizations that rally around our work — for their essential role in helping us provide thousands of meals to our neighbors in need.

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For more information about donating to Care and Share Food Bank, please contact Becky Treece, Philanthropy Director at 719-434-5729 or email her at BeckyT@careandshare.org.

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