



FOOD BANK

OF THE ROCKIES™

Wherever
hunger rises,
so can we.



As an EverGreen Box™ delivery driver, Peggy Nelson helps distribute nutritious food to more than 6,900 income-qualifying Colorado and Wyoming residents aged 60+.

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Continuing to Serve with Strength, Tenacity, and Innovation

Following another year of unpredictability and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it feels necessary to pause and reflect on the many highs and lows experienced by Food Bank of the Rockies and the communities we serve.

The sustained high need for food assistance in 2021 can be seen acutely in the numbers in this report, particularly in the food-insecurity rates amongst children, which are even higher than the general population. In fiscal year 2021, we distributed over 110 million pounds of food. That's 28 million pounds more than the previous year—a 34.5% increase. There were several factors contributing to this rise in need, including the high unemployment rate, especially in Black and Latino communities, and the increase in price for basic goods like gas, diapers, and groceries.

Assisting us in meeting this increased need, in addition to the generosity of our incredible donors, was the USDA Farmers to Families Food Box Program. Over nearly a year, Food Bank of the Rockies received upwards of 28 million pounds of food from this program—equal to more than 23 million meals. To make up for the loss of this program, we are now purchasing more food than ever—spending nearly \$1 million every month, triple our food purchasing budget from just two years ago. At the core of our food purchasing is FRESH: our signature program dedicated to providing fresh produce to our 800+ Hunger Relief Partners.

Continuing to increase the amount of fresh produce we distribute supports our goal of equitably providing clients with nutritious food. FRESH is one way we are doing this; another is our Culturally Responsive Food Initiative. After completing its pilot phase this spring, we expanded this program to include our entire 53-county service area with a goal of providing culturally responsive foods such as pinto beans; teff, masa, and Blue Bird flour; tomatoes; and mung beans to the clients we serve.

This year we also increased the reach of our Mobile Pantry program, home deliveries of EverGreen Boxes™ to adults aged 60 and older, and support to Hunger Relief Partners to serve more communities located in food deserts. Additionally, we joined other hunger-relief organizations in advocating for better access to federal nutrition programs and providing education so that critical food assistance can reach people in need with fewer barriers during this challenging time. We also worked closely with our partners across the Feeding America network to advocate for additional funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)—the cornerstone of the charitable food assistance system.

All of these initiatives align with Food Bank of the Rockies' recent rebranding. More than just a new look, our rebranding embodies our mission to ignite the power of community to nourish people facing hunger. We do this through our programs, Hunger Relief Partners, incredible volunteers, dedicated and passionate team, and generous donors throughout Colorado and Wyoming. We believe that for a community to thrive, every member must have the resources they need to flourish. We work daily to provide equitable access to proper nourishment for all: no matter where they live, who they are, or what circumstances life has thrown their way.

As the past year-plus has shown us, hardship can strike any of us at any time. And it is through the power of community—all of us, together—that we can help each other thrive.



Nick Benham

Nick Benham
Board Chair



Patricia Person

Patricia Person
Immediate Past Board Chair



Erin Pulling

Erin Pulling
President & CEO

Our **FY2021 Numbers** Illustrate the Sustained High Need for Food and Innovative Support



— INDIVIDUALS PROJECTED TO BE FOOD INSECURE IN 2021 —

Colorado



Wyoming



Service Area Covered

147,412
SQUARE MILES

Pounds of Fresh Vegetables and Fruit Distributed

31,010,424

Volunteer Hours Logged

85,646
HOURS
=
9+ YEARS





Monique Moore, better known to the Hunger Relief Partners she works with as Mo, is one of Food Bank of the Rockies' mobile pantry drivers. "The best part of my job is the people," said Mo. "I love directly helping people by delivering produce, protein, and other necessities to the communities we serve."

FOOD  **BANK**
OF THE ROCKIES

How We Help

70+ MOBILE PANTRY SITES bring food and necessities where they're needed

Direct Programs

include Mobile Pantries, Food for Kids, deliveries to homebound adults 60+, emergency relief, and more.

Funding

fuels operations through donations and ongoing philanthropic support.

96¢ of every dollar goes directly to our food distribution work

Food

comes from donations, grocery rescue, agricultural partners, and manufacturers. We also buy in bulk to help funds go further.

\$1 helps us distribute enough food for 4 meals

Together, we can.

800+ Hunger Relief Partners operate in communities throughout Colorado and Wyoming

Hunger Relief Partners

(like food pantries) receive our food and distribute directly to people in need.

Staff & Volunteers

work every day to organize and distribute food to our partners and programs.

18,000 VOLUNTEERS help sort and distribute food and necessities in a typical year

Our fiscal year 2021 audited financial reports will be available online in January 2022. To access financial reports from recent years and our upcoming FY21 report, please visit foodbankrockies.org/about/financials



Five years ago, Adam Burnison left his insurance career and became a grocery rescue driver with Food Bank of the Rockies. He begins his rounds before sunrise, picking up food from retailers like King Soopers, Sam's Club, and Walmart and delivering it back to the 45th Avenue Distribution Center in Denver.

"There is a ton of fresh produce and bakery items, and the food has an immediate impact on the people who come pick it up," Adam said. "Grocery rescue keeps all of this food out of the trash and puts it in the hands of people who can use it."

In fiscal year 2021, the Grocery Rescue program gathered and distributed more than 37 million pounds of food, reducing waste and increasing clients' access to the nutritious food they need and deserve.

Innovating & Adapting



It's been a long road since March 2020, when life as we knew it was upended by the COVID-19 crisis. While circumstances remain uncertain and the need for food across our service areas remains higher than it has been in decades, Food Bank of the Rockies has adapted and persevered in order to continue serving our partners and clients with tenacity and strength.



Programmatic and Operational Updates

We've implemented new programs, expanded existing programs, and listened to our Hunger Relief Partners and the individuals they serve to create an infrastructure of innovation and culturally responsive approaches to provide more equitable, familiar, and nutritious food to everyone who needs it.

Because of COVID-19, over the past 20-plus months the need for food in our 53-county service area increased by upwards of 50%, with some months climbing as high as 80%. We have been able to meet that demand head-on thanks to the generosity of donors, foundations, corporate supporters, government programs, and the time and effort of our incredible volunteers and staff members.

It would be easy to think that the burden of food insecurity would have been lifted off the shoulders of our clients by now, almost two years into the pandemic. While this might be the case for some, it is not the case for many.

The average national unemployment rate is currently hovering around 4.6%, a marked increase of the pre-pandemic rate of 3.5%. The rate is far worse within BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities: 7.9% for the Black population and 5.9% for the Latino population. Adding to that, in early September 2021, more than 8 million people lost their unemployment benefits when two federal programs, one designed to help gig workers and the other aimed at helping individuals who had been unemployed for over six months, expired. In Wyoming, these benefits ended even sooner, on June 19, 2021.

Another hurdle caused by the pandemic is the soaring price of groceries. In October 2021, inflation at the wholesale level was 8.6% higher than in October 2020, the biggest annual gain since the U.S.

Department of Labor started calculating the number in 2010. For consumers, that means meat, poultry, fish, and egg prices are up 10.5% year-over-year, and up 15% since the start of 2020.



A volunteer helps pack boxes with culturally responsive food items like blue corn, pictured above, which was requested by and delivered to clients on Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming.

For these reasons and many, many others, over 42 million people, including 13 million children, are currently projected to experience food insecurity this year in the U.S. That is seven million more than in 2019, when the national food insecurity rate was the lowest it had been in over 20 years. In Colorado and Wyoming, that means one in eight people will likely face hunger this year—nearly three-quarters of a million individuals.

“We are depending on community support now more than ever to alleviate food insecurity levels, which remain high,” said Erin Pulling, president and CEO of Food Bank of the Rockies.

“Since 2019, we’ve more than tripled the amount of food we’re purchasing, including upwards of 800,000 pounds of produce each month for our new FRESH program, with the goal of eventually purchasing 1.2 million pounds of produce per month. When COVID hit, we decided to be bold in our response. The need hasn’t gone away, and neither has our commitment to our community. We’re here for the long haul thanks to our donors and volunteers.”

The truth is, it will likely take years for food insecurity levels to recover once COVID-19 is finally a thing of the past; after the Great Recession, it took nearly a decade for food insecurity to return to pre-Recession levels, and even then, 37 million people in the U.S. were still at risk of hunger.

Food Bank of the Rockies has stepped up to the challenges presented by COVID-19 to best serve our partners and clients



Purchasing nearly **\$1 million in food every month**, triple the amount we were spending in 2019, with a focus on fresh, local produce and culturally responsive foods.



Bringing **Mobile Pantries** to more communities to ensure we equitably reach every neighbor in need of food assistance, regardless of location.



Expanding the **Culturally Responsive Food Initiative** at a cost of \$1 million a year to serve our entire 53-county service area. This means sourcing and distributing foods desired by clients of diverse cultural backgrounds in order to make every person we serve feel more supported, comfortable, and nourished.



Increasing support to our 800+ **Hunger Relief Partners** to reach and serve communities located within food deserts.



Preparing more meals and snacks for children and unhoused community members in our commercial kitchen, which currently makes and distributes upwards of 1,700 to-go meals and snacks daily during our highest-need times.



Expanding the home delivery service of **EverGreen Boxes™** to low-income, older adults.



Developing new programs and staffing new positions to ensure Food Bank of the Rockies remains responsive, sustainable, and effective to all people in all of our service areas.



Continuing to increase **nutritious food options** throughout all of our programs while managing increases in item costs and freight expenses.



At age 101, Alpha still picks up her monthly EverGreen Box™ from a Hunger Relief Partner site near her home in Denver. She said the food helps her with her bills.

Regardless of how quickly economic conditions improve, Food Bank of the Rockies and our millions of clients continue to need the same level of support received in the early months of the pandemic to achieve our mission of providing equitable, culturally relevant, nutritious food to everyone who needs it. It is through new programs like FRESH and the Culturally Responsive Food Initiative, and by expanding programs like EverGreen Boxes™ and Mobile Pantries that we will be able to accomplish this goal. And it is thanks to dedicated donors, partners, and volunteers that each of these programs is able to exist. No matter what comes our way, Food Bank of the Rockies remains committed to providing food to our neighbors in need. Always. 🌱



Volunteers at Colorado State University's Western Colorado Research Center in Grand Junction help harvest culturally responsive vegetables to distribute to Hunger Relief Partners on the Western Slope.

/ Photo by Jeremy Poland



Nourishing Bodies and Hearts with Familiar Foods

To truly nourish someone entails more than providing them with nutritionally rich food. Nourishment involves being filled not only on a physical level, but on an emotional one as well.

With that mission in mind—to fulfill our clients' wants as well as their needs—Food Bank of the Rockies launched the Culturally Responsive Food Initiative (CRFI) in August 2020, designed to tailor food options to the cultural food preferences of our clients.

“Food security should include providing foods that people are comfortable with and that mean something to them,” said Avalon Guarino, then-Food Bank of the Rockies' programs outreach representative on the Western Slope. “For a long time, food security has just been putting more calories on plates. It's important to provide food that people would choose to eat.”

To find out which foods are most desired by the diverse cultural groups served by Food Bank of the Rockies, we surveyed hundreds of clients, local organizations, and agencies about demographics, food recommendations, and preferred communication channels. Using that data, customized food lists were developed and requested items were made available for distribution through our Hunger Relief Partners. The initial pilot program lasted nine months and served eight counties. Now in its second phase, CRFI serves our entire 53-county region throughout Colorado and Wyoming.

“Food pantry users from different cultural backgrounds may have different food preferences, language access barriers, or feel uncomfortable coming to a pantry that might not understand their cultural background,” said Amanda McGimpsey, then-manager of the Culturally Responsive Food Initiative. “We want to make sure as an organization we are serving all of our community in an equitable way.”



Culturally responsive foods began to be distributed during the 2020 holiday season and immediately garnered an enthusiastic response. At a mobile pantry distribution in Fort Morgan, the masa flour, tortillas, beans, and rice included in the boxes were especially appreciated. “This area is dominantly Latino, so it is always such a huge blessing to have [ingredients to make] tamales,” said one staff member. “To tailor these boxes to the community provides clients with a sense of home.”

On Wind River Indian Reservation, Jacqueline White, Tribal Relations Specialist with Food Bank of Wyoming, the Casper-based distribution center of Food Bank of the Rockies, and her team conducted surveys among members of the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone tribes so that culturally responsive foods could be included in distributions there. A critical first step toward doing this involved establishing monthly, drive-through pantries dedicated to the separate tribes. Through these pantries, more than 2,000 people are served every month.

Response about CRFI products from Wind River clients has been positive. “I love that the Food Bank understands the importance of Blue Bird Flour and blue corn to our people,” said Teresa His Chase. “Also, distributing the food at the school shows how committed everyone is to making it accessible to our community, including our students, families, and elders. The specialty items are appreciated and are a direct connection to our way of life and culture.”

The program has also helped establish a relationship between Food Bank of Wyoming and Tribal Leaders on Wind River Indian Reservation. With their guidance and help, the initiative is creating culturally respectful solutions for addressing food insecurity within their communities.

“
We believe that culturally responsive food supports communities in sustaining their cultural integrity while accessing nutrition.



“It’s what we do to nourish our neighbors; food is a major component of cultural identity, and specific foods carry specific cultural meanings that resonate,” said Tony Woodell, director at Food Bank of Wyoming. “We are committed to this initiative because we believe that culturally responsive food supports communities in sustaining their cultural integrity while accessing nutrition.”

Above: CSU Western Colorado Research Center staff members Tori Johnson (L) and Taylor Mayeda (R). / **Photo by** Jeremy Poland; **Right:** Volunteers at Community College of Aurora’s Lowry Campus in Denver pack boxes with culturally responsive food items for distribution.



On the Western Slope, one of the several local growers Food Bank of the Rockies partners with is the Colorado State University (CSU) Western Colorado Research Center. One of their farms in Grand Junction grows a variety of culturally responsive produce—including jalapeños, Anaheim peppers, and tomatillos—in response to the expressed desires of area clients.

Clifton Christian Church is one of the Hunger Relief Partners that sources and distributes this produce. “Clients are just ecstatic when they see fruits and

vegetables they recognize,” said Jackie Wharton-Feaster, director at Clifton Christian Church Food and Clothing Ministry. “We don’t give out anything that we wouldn’t eat ourselves; that’s the rule here. We are giving people the nutritious, familiar food they want and enjoy. The more we can do that—boy, that’s a world changer.”

This year, Jackie said clients—many of them seasonal workers on orchards and farms—especially liked the green chiles and peppers from the CSU Western Colorado Research Center.

Produce like those chiles and peppers is just a sliver of the local bounty donated to Food Bank of the Rockies. Over 10 days this summer, we received some 210,000 pounds of local produce—enough to help provide more than 23,000 meals.

Despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, the Culturally Responsive Food Initiative has created a sustainable operation that helps Food Bank of the Rockies be more culturally respectful in all of our operations, helping us ignite the power of community to nourish every person facing hunger. 



FACES OF OUR COMMUNITY

Volunteers

We were humbled and honored this year to see our community of dedicated volunteers continue to show up during the ongoing pandemic for our neighbors struggling with hunger.

“We always take the health and safety of our volunteers very seriously, and have especially done so over the past year and a half,” said Lead Volunteer Coordinator Cortney Paddock. “We appreciate when volunteers wear fun masks, including my favorite: a golden retriever nose and mouth! Our volunteer community is full of giving, fun, and dedicated people, and we are incredibly grateful to and for them.”

Among the thousands of volunteers in 2021 that helped advance Food Bank of the Rockies’ mission of providing equitable, nutritious food to anyone who needs it were two stand-out individuals and one remarkable group. The tireless work ethic, compassion, and dedication of James Thomas, Martha King, and United Airlines helped us pack and distribute more than 110 million pounds of food in fiscal year 2021—the equivalent of more than 89.5 million meals.

Each year, Food Bank of the Rockies honors a volunteer with the Betty Van Hook Memorial Award. Recipients emulate the spirit of Betty, a long-time volunteer who gave her time tirelessly, even while battling cancer. In 2021, we were delighted to present the award to James Thomas, whose years of dedication and service to Food Bank of the Rockies provide immeasurable morale and support to everyone in the organization, especially during the past year.

After retiring, James was looking for ways to stay busy when he saw an ad for Food Bank of the Rockies. He’d volunteered with us before as part of a work event, and decided it would be a good way to spend his time. That was in 2016, and he’s been an integral part of our organization ever since.

“I was raised in a way that if you are blessed, you should do something to help others. Practice what you preach,” James said.

He does just that on the loading dock, where he assists with everything from sweeping to organizing pallets to loading food into the trucks of Hunger Relief Partners. “I’ve gotten to know a lot of the community food providers over the years. They are real heroes,” James said.

An avid volunteer her whole life, Martha King began serving at Food Bank of the Rockies soon after COVID-19 struck Colorado. “Volunteering here became my safe way to get out of the house and to see people,” said Martha.





United Airlines Team

“Food Bank of the Rockies has long been one of my favorite charities because it plays such a vital role in supporting people who experience food insecurity and the hundreds of agencies that serve them.”

Martha is a constant presence at our 45th Avenue Distribution Center, typically volunteering five mornings a week for a total of over 1,000 hours since March 2020. Her tireless service and constant smile bring us one step closer to our goal of ending hunger and are two reasons she was named Rising Volunteer of the Year for 2021.

Rather than decreasing their volunteer efforts with Food Bank of the Rockies when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, United Airlines ramped them up.


“Employees were looking for ways to give back to the community and we were looking at ways to keep our employees busy,” said Ann Clemenson, manager and Community Engagement Team member at United Airlines. “I reached out to Hamza Syed, volunteer coordinator at Food Bank of the Rockies, and he said, ‘Any help

that you can give us, we’ll take.’ So, we stepped up our volunteer events to once a month. Some months, we had groups volunteering once a week.”

In addition to their more than 1,990 hours of volunteer service, United Airlines has generously donated enough funds to help provide hundreds of thousands of meals over the years.

“Personally, it makes me feel very proud to work for a company that allows us to volunteer. As a company, I think it’s important that we give back to the community, especially when there are families that may not know when their next meal is coming,” said Ann.

“You never know when you or a loved one may need a hand up, and it makes you feel so much better knowing that you have helped give somebody the essentials of a meal.”

In 2021, volunteers donated 85,646 hours to Food Bank of the Rockies. That’s the equivalent of 9.7 years—an incredible gift without which we could not have accomplished our mission. 



James Thomas



Martha King

FACES OF OUR COMMUNITY

Donors

When it came time for Evan to choose the focus of his bar mitzvah project, the 13-year-old didn't hesitate: He wanted to help feed others. "I love food, and I wanted to help put food on the table for everyone in our community," Evan said. "It's important for everybody to have a warm meal. I wanted to give that to others."

Evan isn't the only young person driven to help nourish members of his community. Countless individuals under age 18 generously choose to raise money to donate to Food Bank of the Rockies each year. Some, like the 8th Grade Culture Council of Platte River Academy, sell T-shirts and donate the proceeds. Others, like Evan, organize food and fund drives to support Food Bank of the Rockies.

To generate attention for his mitzvah project, Evan posted fliers around his neighborhood and emailed family members. He also recruited friends to help him unload cars full of food, posted a video on Facebook, and created a raffle

through which donors received a ticket for each item donated and were entered to win a \$20 Amazon gift card.

Russell, age 13, also chose Food Bank of the Rockies for his bar mitzvah project. Together with his mom, he made a website explaining his mission and included the URL on his mitzvah invitations.

"I chose Food Bank of the Rockies because of all the hungry people on the planet, which makes me very sad," Russell explained. "Food is important in celebrating Jewish holidays and cultural events [and] I want others to be able to eat like I can."

Bryn, age 13, took a different approach for her bat mitzvah project. In one weekend, she and her mom baked 350 hamantaschen pastries to sell. Packed in boxes of 12, Bryn quickly found buyers for all of the treats, and even ended up baking more to fill additional orders.

"I chose the Food Bank as my mitzvah project because I wanted to help make sure everyone in my community can eat," Bryn said. "It's only fair that people have food. Everyone needs to eat."

Contributions from individuals like Evan, Russell, and Bryn, and from groups like the eighth graders at Platte River Academy, prove that while age is often perceived as a barrier to giving back to one's community, it is not. In total, the three mitzvah projects and T-shirt sales earned \$5,334—enough to help provide 22,378 meals.

At Food Bank of the Rockies, we often emphasize how every donation of any amount counts as much as the next. That's because every single dollar—given by individuals, corporations, families, and anyone else—helps support our mission of ending hunger.

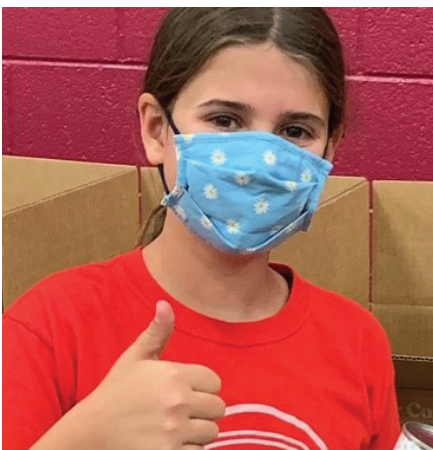
Take the sustained donations of Tina Richardson and volunteer efforts of Texas Roadhouse, for instance. Tina has worked for Denver Human Services for 31 years and first became familiar with Food Bank of the Rockies through her church's food pantry. Years later, when she and her husband sat down to decide how and to whom they wanted to donate, Tina remembered that experience. She was also encouraged to become a donor after hearing from her clients about their experiences with Food Bank of the Rockies.

"They were so appreciative of the food they received from the Food Bank," Tina recalled. "They were talking about how fresh everything was and how much they enjoyed it."





Top to Bottom: Evan, Russell, and Bryn all chose Food Bank of the Rockies for their mitzvah projects. Together, the three 13-year-olds raised enough money to help provide upwards of 19,980 meals. / Photos of Evan and Bryn provided by subjects



While volunteering with Food Bank of the Rockies, Tina had a chance to see that quality firsthand. “The food you all give out is tremendous. It is wonderful, very fresh. I really believe in what you do and I appreciate it,” she said.

Jerry Morgan, president and CEO of Texas Roadhouse, attributed his company’s decision to support Food Bank of the Rockies to paying forward the generosity they’ve received over the years.

“People have been so good to us—our customers, our vendor partners, just the people that we come across,” he said. “So we always want to give back, too. We’re very thrilled to have Food Bank of the Rockies allow us to help do that.”

Jerry spoke with us while he and about a hundred of his employees helped fill

10,000 backpacks with food for kids at an event sponsored by Texas Roadhouse.

“Being a father of three and a grandfather to two, I know that if any of my kids ever needed something, I would hope somebody would have it in their heart to help them,” Jerry said. “You always hope that if you do something good, it will continue on; that maybe the next generations will understand that we are all in this together.”

It’s thanks to donors like Evan, Russell, Bryn, Tina, Texas Roadhouse, and the thousands of other dedicated Food Bank of the Rockies volunteers and supporters that we were able to distribute over 110 million pounds of food in 2021—more than 89 million meals. Every dollar counts. Every hour counts. Together, we can end hunger for good. 🌱



Tina Richardson and her husband donate to Food Bank of the Rockies because of the quality of the food distributed and the impact of their dollars.

FACES OF OUR COMMUNITY

Clients



Maggie
Rifle, CO

Aleen
Denver, CO

“

It’s crazy how your life can change overnight. It’s been really hard.

Every Saturday, Maggie attends the mobile pantry distribution in Rifle, Colorado, with her neighbor, Irene. A lifelong Rifle resident, Maggie worked for Garfield County as a property tax assessor for 16 years before being laid off in July 2020 due to COVID-19 cutbacks. Losing her job meant also losing her health insurance, as well as a steady paycheck to help support her family. Adding to her difficult circumstances, in April 2021, Maggie was diagnosed with a severe illness that put her in the hospital for a month.

“It’s been impossible, especially with how high grocery and gas prices have been,” Maggie said. “We’re pinching pennies. Sometimes all we have is peanut butter and jelly. It’s crazy how your life can change overnight. It’s been really hard.”

Days after Aleen’s family moved to Colorado from Sudan four years ago, her father passed away unexpectedly. Aleen’s mother, Maryam, had a baby at the time, spoke no English, and didn’t know who to turn to for help feeding her family.

Upon enrolling her older children at a Denver Public School, which is also one of Food Bank of the Rockies’ Hunger Relief Partners, Maryam met staff who informed her about the Food Bank’s Totes of Hope™ program, which provides kids with nutritious food over the weekend.

“I have three siblings and the food helps us make meals together at home,” said 8-year-old Aleen. “My sister goes to school here, too, and we both get a tote so we can make enough for all of us. We love the food!”

“

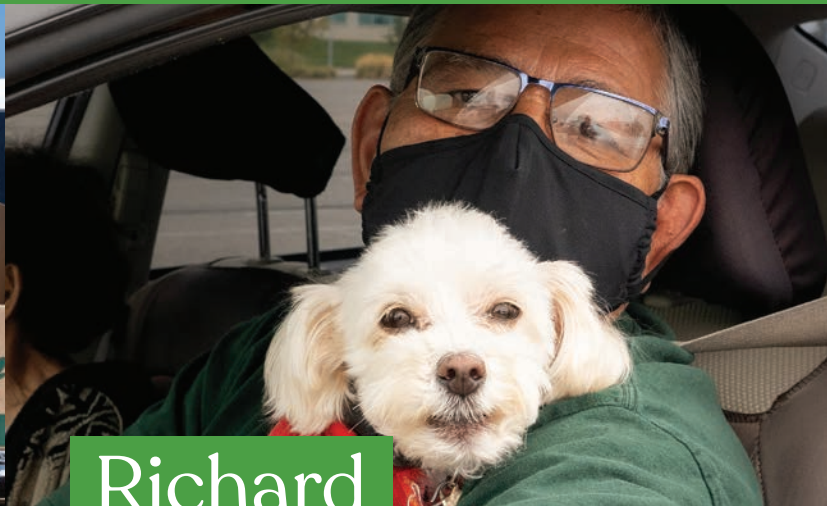
I have three siblings and the food helps us make meals together at home.



Hunger is a cruel companion, affecting individuals of all ages and backgrounds without discrimination. Anyone can find themselves in need of food assistance during their lifetime, and Food Bank of the Rockies will be there to answer the challenge of hunger and nourish our communities.



Marcus
Moorcroft, WY



Richard
Denver, CO



Today I'm picking up for 18 families, but sometimes I get food for as many as 25 or 30 families.

Since September 2020, Marcus, age 29, has been driving over an hour every month to pick up boxes of food at the monthly mobile pantry in Moorcroft, Wyoming, for his family and several other people in his community. What began as a way to get meals for his immediate family quickly grew into a town-wide endeavor.

"Today I'm picking up for 18 families, but sometimes I get food for as many as 25 or 30 families," Marcus said. "A lot of the people I pick up for are elderly, don't have a form of transportation, or have to work during the pantry hours. I'll either deliver the food directly to their houses or drop it off at the mercantile for them to come and pick up."

Colorado native Richard attended a mobile pantry distribution this past September with his mother, Genevieve, and his dog, Chewy. On average, the trio makes the trip to a distribution twice a month.

The former painter, tiler, and remodeling professional can no longer work due to two bad knees and a torn rotator cuff, and receives food from distributions.

"I'm very thankful for the Food Bank because a lot of the time, I don't have the money to get groceries," Richard said. "Food Bank of the Rockies helps me get through the month. I'm very fortunate they have programs like this to help someone."



Food Bank of the Rockies helps me get through the month. I'm very fortunate they have programs like this to help someone.



To make ends meet between jobs this past year, Frank visited the 45th Avenue Distribution Center in Denver once a month to get food. “I’m kind of a health nut and enjoy the fruits and vegetables,” he said. “What I can’t use I give to the family next door. They don’t have time to come here themselves but are really happy when I bring the food over to them.”



This fall nine Denver Broncos players, including kicker Brandon McManus, pictured here, volunteered for an afternoon at Food Bank of the Rockies' 45th Avenue Distribution Center in Denver.

"On our off days, we try to come out and volunteer," said McManus. "Our fans show up for us and support us on Sundays, so we try to give back to the community as much as we can. We've been longtime partners with Food Bank of the Rockies. My teammates and I came to box up food for the elderly community here in Colorado to help provide them meals during this tough time."

During their volunteer session, the players packed 353 EverGreen Boxes™—enough to help provide 8,225 meals to low-income adults 60+. / Photo by Ben Swanson, Denver Broncos





FACES OF OUR COMMUNITY

Partners

On a sunny afternoon in early autumn, Charlie, Jeremy, and Serenity circled around a cart filled with food, selecting items one by one and carefully placing them into sturdy canvas bags.

The children all attend a Denver Public School that is also a Hunger Relief Partner, where over 70% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunches. Each bag they packed with food—spaghetti noodles, tomato sauce, rice, cheese, beans, cereal, vegetables, crackers, applesauce, and more—was part of Food Bank of the Rockies’ signature Totes of Hope™ program, which provides food for kids to take home with them when school is out of session. On average, upwards of 20,000 totes are distributed monthly during the school year via Totes of Hope™ partners throughout Colorado and Wyoming.

“Before COVID-19, we had 120 kids signed up for the program,” said Sandy Stewart, the coordinator of the school’s Totes of Hope™ program and onsite food pantry. “Now, we have 168, plus upwards of 300 families a week coming on Saturdays to get fresh produce and food from our pantry. It’s our ethical obligation to make sure people have food, and we encourage everyone who needs it to use the Totes of Hope™ program and pantry. A lot of people need food now. We try to meet that need.”

Serenity, pictured far right, is both a Totes of Hope™ helper and recipient. She and her older brother signed up for the program last year after their mom, Katie, got laid off from her job.

“The food bags have been super helpful,” said Katie. “It all adds up. I recently went back to school full-time to study accounting and finance, and having staples like pasta, rice, beans, and tuna really helps. It means I can say yes to more things at the grocery store, like fresh produce; Serenity loves blueberries! It makes a big difference.”

In Moorcroft, Wyoming, Monte Reichenberg also strives to make sure every child who needs food has access to Totes of Hope™. “We try to make food available wherever we can,” said Monte, who leads Moorcroft Interfaith Community, a Hunger Relief Partner. “During the summer, we have totes at the West Texas Trail Museum, library, senior center, and police department so kids can go in during the day and pick it up.”

In addition to Totes of Hope™, Monte also oversees the mobile pantry in Moorcroft, pictured above. He helped found Moorcroft Interfaith Community in 2019 to address the high rates of food insecurity in the area, partnering with Food Bank of Wyoming, the Casper-based distribution center of Food Bank of the Rockies, to do so. Within two years, the nonprofit went from serving 12 families once a month to serving 352 families on their highest-need day. On average, the organization provides food to upwards of 2,000 families every month.

Getting food to people who need it most, regardless of obstacles, is also the focus of Food Bank of the Rockies’




EverGreen Boxes™ program. Also known as the USDA Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), EverGreen Boxes™ serve low-income adults aged 60-plus and, wherever possible, are delivered directly to homebound clients. Each month, around 6,900 boxes are distributed to eligible individuals across Colorado and Wyoming.

“Everyone needs help; everything is expensive,” said Enrique, an EverGreen Box™ client and Airforce veteran who, along with his wife, is raising three of his grandchildren. “We use all the food in the box. It really helps a lot.”

In addition to our Hunger Relief Partners who directly interact with clients are those that operate behind the scenes. On average every month, Food Bank of the Rockies’ more than 800 Grocery Rescue partners donate upwards of 3 million pounds of food to the Food Bank—helping provide some 83,000 meals every day.

“The Grocery Rescue program has remained a consistent source of food throughout these turbulent times as we have not seen a decrease in donations year over year,” said Shaina Knight, food sourcing manager at Food Bank of the Rockies. “Because of this program, we can offer greater food access to our partners, either through direct pick-up at our distribution centers, direct delivery, or partners picking up food from retail stores. Currently, we are fourth in the nation among Feeding America food banks for rescued food distribution.”

Thanks to the combined efforts and tireless work of our 800+ Hunger Relief Partners, Food Bank of the Rockies was able to help provide more than 89 million meals to people across Colorado and Wyoming experiencing hunger in 2021. Every meal means one less child, caregiver, older adult, and neighbor has to worry about whether or not they or their loved ones will be able to eat. Every meal brings us one step closer to putting an end to food insecurity. 



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Above: Serenity helps pack Totes of Hope™ at her school in Denver. The eight-year-old is also a recipient, and said she loves the snacks included in the bags. **Left:** Monte Reichenberg helped found Moorcroft Interfaith Community in 2019 to address the high rates of food insecurity in his community. Through its monthly mobile pantry, the nonprofit serves upwards of 2,000 families every month.



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Sue Ellen Rodwick, Western Slope Director

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Tony Woodell, Wyoming Director



Pictured from left to right: Cindy Mitchell, VP of Programs; Aditi Desai, VP of Marketing & Communications; Steve Kullberg, Chief Operating Officer; Erin Pulling, President & CEO; Jennifer Lackey, Chief Development Officer; Lorena Toland, VP of People & Culture; Heather MacKendrick Costa, Chief Financial Officer



Taking Action Against Hunger, Together

The trials of 2021 were many, but so, too, were the opportunities to meet those challenges head-on. It is with this momentum and determination that we look ahead to 2022 with one mission in mind: To ignite the power of community to nourish people facing hunger.

We are hopeful for a world where Food Bank of the Rockies and other hunger-relief organizations will no longer be needed. Where food insecurity is a term of the past. Where every person from every walk of life does not have to worry about whether there will be food to eat that day, or any day.

To do that, we will continue to serve people in need and advocate to end hunger. This will only happen if all of us, together, work to provide more resources to the people who need them most. No child should have to experience hunger. No parent should have to choose between buying groceries or paying the bills. Access to nutritious food should be a universal right, and we will continue to fight for that right until every person in our community has equitable, stable access to nourishing food.

We will do this through programs like Mobile Pantries, Food for Kids, EverGreen Boxes™, and our Culturally Responsive Food Initiative. We will do this by championing more accessible food benefits and free meals for kids experiencing hunger. But most importantly, we will do this with your help and support.

As we enter 2022, your continued support is critical in the fight against hunger. Together, we can help provide nutritious food to everyone experiencing hunger. Together, we can take the next step toward ending food insecurity in Colorado and Wyoming. Together, we can. 🌱

FOOD BANK OF THE ROCKIES™

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As Tribal Relations Specialist with Food Bank of Wyoming, the Casper-based distribution center of Food Bank of the Rockies, Jacqueline White heads the Culturally Responsive Food Initiative project on Wind River Indian Reservation. There, she works with Tribal Leaders from the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone tribes to set up mobile pantries, determine which food items are desired by residents, and ensure everyone who needs food on the reservation has access to it. Jacqueline has already seen the impact of the program. “There is always someone stopping and thanking me,” she said. “Food access is a need, not a want, and through this project we’re able to actively meet that need.”
