



# FOOD BANK

OF THE ROCKIES™

Igniting the  
power of  
community  
to end hunger



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**FOOD BANK**  
OF THE ROCKIES™

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# Facing Today's Challenges for a Brighter Future

It felt unimaginable two years ago, in the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic, that we would still be dealing with its effects today. But whereas the challenges first posed by the once-in-a-lifetime event — closed businesses, a surge in unemployment, the shuttering of schools — were painfully obvious, the present-day effects are less visible. They are not, however, less disruptive to Food Bank of the Rockies' commitment to providing anyone who needs it with the familiar, nutrient-rich food they need to thrive.

Inflation is currently at a 40-year high. This has caused the cost of basic necessities such as housing, transportation, groceries, and more to skyrocket, forcing more community members to seek food assistance to stretch their budgets. Food inflation is hitting Food Bank of the Rockies' budget, too, with some staples costing as much as 70% more compared to last year. Indeed, for the first time in many years, \$1 now is only able to distribute enough food for three meals, not four — an enormous shift and the result of increased need, a rise in food and fuel costs, and a reduction in donated and government commodity food supplies.

To meet the needs of our neighbors experiencing hunger, we are spending an additional \$1.3 million or more on food every month — more than triple what we were spending pre-COVID. There are multiple factors causing this increase, including:

- A decrease in donated food from retailers, manufacturers, and agricultural partners due to a global supply-chain shift, limited innovations, and inflation.
- A decrease in food donated or funded through government programs.
- A year-over-year increase in freight costs — some months as high as 60% — adding to the overall cost for receiving donated and purchased food, and trucking food to our distribution centers and partners.
- A year-over-year increase in the cost of food and amount of food we are purchasing. Currently, Food Bank of the Rockies purchases 10 truckloads of food every week — nearly 25% of our food supply.
- An increase in need for food. Compared to one year ago, families on average are spending \$460 more per month on food, housing, and other essentials.

Food Bank of the Rockies is adapting to these times by working with food banks across the country to leverage overstocked items, purchasing high-quality food to continue providing an array of nourishing options to our clients, and proactively buying larger quantities to account for shortages or delays. We are purchasing truckloads of fresh produce every week with a focus on local sourcing and cultural responsiveness. Above all, we are remaining diligent in our efforts to do whatever we can to remove the burden of hunger from our neighbors.

Amidst these challenges that would have been seemingly insurmountable a few years ago, we have been able to respond with more boldness, audacity, and perseverance than we could have dreamed. And that is because of our community of supporters — volunteers and donors who have recognized this critical moment and heeded the call with generous outpourings of support. Each of you has stepped up alongside our team of engaged and passionate employees at Food Bank of the Rockies with your time and funds and validated that the unprecedented moves we've had to make to adapt were the right response for what our community has needed.

Thank you again for partnering with us. We are so thankful for you.



*Nick K Benham*

**Nick Benham**  
Board Chair



*Erin Pulling*

**Erin Pulling**  
President & CEO

# Our Fiscal Year 2022 Numbers

## Illustrate the Sustained High Need for Food and Innovative Support



IN FISCAL YEAR 2022

### CLIENTS SERVED



### VOLUNTEER HOURS LOGGED

**100,629**  
HOURS  
=  
**4,193**  
DAYS



Service Area Covered  
**147,412**  
SQUARE MILES

*Largest food bank distribution area in the contiguous U.S.*



Number of Hunger Relief Partners  
**800+**

Fresh fruits and vegetables as percentage of total pounds distributed  
**30%**





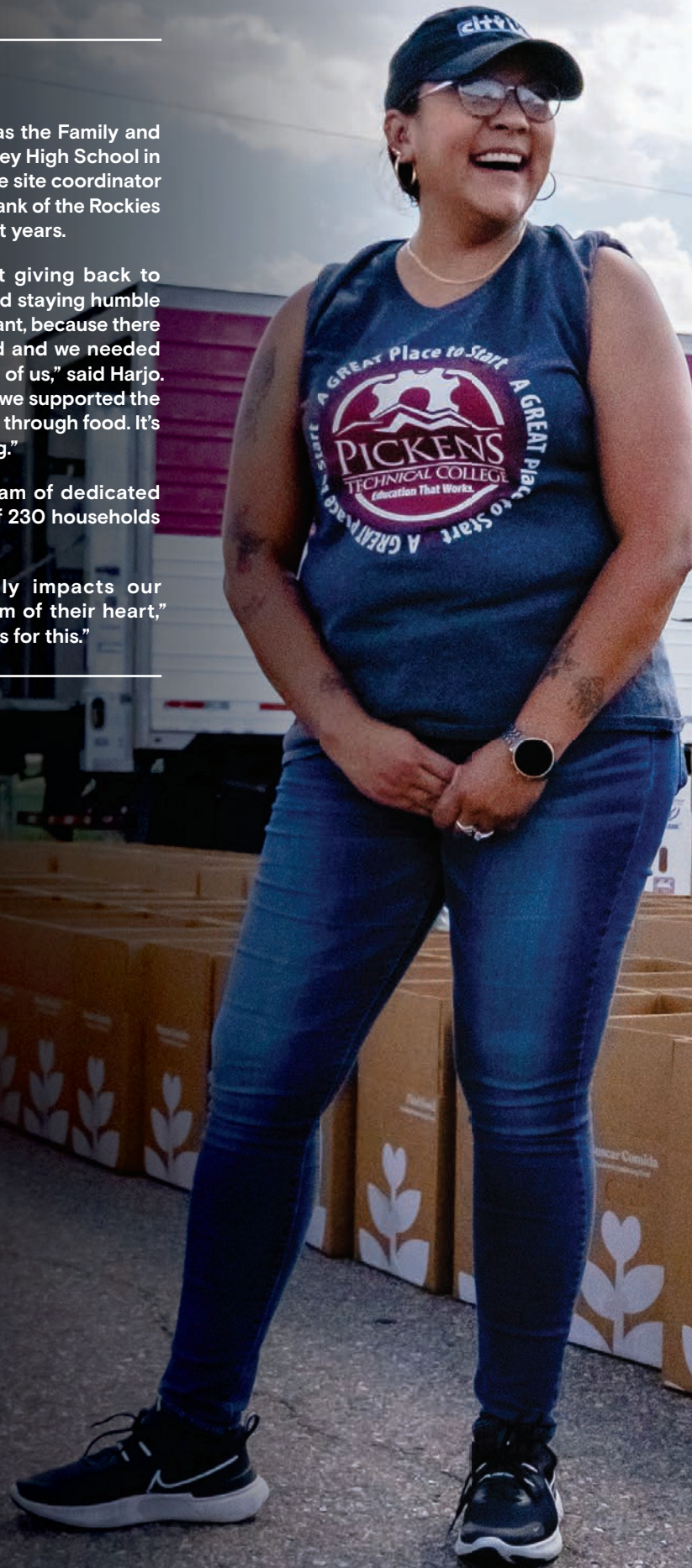
## Tvhokne Harjo

Tvhokne Harjo has worked as the Family and Community Liaison for Hinkley High School in Aurora for 17 years and as the site coordinator of the twice-monthly Food Bank of the Rockies mobile pantry there for eight years.

“My parents taught us that giving back to people in the community and staying humble within your circle was important, because there were times we needed food and we needed things and people took care of us,” said Harjo. “As I grew up, they made sure we supported the Native American community through food. It’s kind of always been my thing.”

Typically, Harjo and her team of dedicated volunteers serve upwards of 230 households per distribution.

“I see how this food truly impacts our community from the bottom of their heart,” said Harjo. “People rely on us for this.”



# 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 3 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 2022 audited financial reports will be available online in early 2023. To access financial reports from recent years and our upcoming FY22 report, please visit [foodbankrockies.org/about/financials](https://foodbankrockies.org/about/financials)



To be uprooted from home and move to a new country with an unfamiliar language, culture, and food is unimaginable, yet that was the situation in which thousands of Afghan citizens found themselves in late summer 2021.

To support them in their transition, Food Bank of the Rockies put together food boxes tailored to traditional Afghan cuisine through our Culturally Responsive Food Initiative (CRFI). From September 2021 to July 2022, more than 3,400 boxes were distributed.

In addition to the food boxes, our kitchen staff crafted culturally respectful halal lunches for Afghan children taking part in the 2022 City of Thornton portable playground program. The meal included halal chicken kabobs, seasoned rice and vegetables, fresh fruit, juice, and milk.

“One girl told me it was the best day of her whole summer,” said Jenny Dowdell, recreation supervisor for the City of Thornton.



# Nourishing More People

through  
Innovative  
Programming

In fiscal year 2022, Hunger Relief Partners like The Action Center helped distribute over 38.5 million pounds of food sourced from Food Bank of the Rockies' Grocery Rescue Program.





**It's a little after 9:45 a.m. on a hot Friday in July and The Action Center is buzzing with volunteers sorting food and packing boxes, semi-trucks dropping off donations, and clients pulling their cars into the distribution area to get whatever nourishing food is available that day.**

“Sometimes the line of cars goes all the way past the 7-Eleven,” said Product Operations Manager Jenn Stone, referring to the convenience store located almost a half-mile down the street from The Action Center’s Lakewood location. “We serve an average of 275 households a day,” a 267% increase over pre-COVID-19 averages. “In June, we served 4,200 households – 1,000 more than each of the last eight months.”

“It works out great for the community we’re serving, helping provide them with more fresh produce, as well as for us financially, because it helps alleviate our budget,” said Stone. “If we don’t have to buy it, then we can shift that funding to source other items.”

In fiscal year 2022, Food Bank of the Rockies obtained and distributed over 38.5 million pounds of quality food items – 49% of the total pounds of food distributed – through the Grocery Rescue Program, ranking third among Feeding America food banks in terms of pounds of food rescued. These were items from major retailers with damaged packaging or other similar types of defects not affecting the products’ integrity – a bruise, perhaps, or a missing yogurt in a six-pack – that were then repackaged and delivered to partners like The Action Center to distribute to our neighbors facing hunger.



**It works out great for the community we’re serving, helping provide them with more fresh produce, as well as for us financially, because it helps alleviate our budget. If we don’t have to buy it, then we can shift that funding to source other items.**

The Action Center was founded in 1968 to help community members experiencing hardship with such services as free clothing; rent, mortgage, and utilities assistance; job resources; and more. As a Food Bank of the Rockies Hunger Relief Partner, The Action Center also assists people through a four-times-a-week food distribution. Some of that food, including much of the fresh produce, comes from Food Bank of the Rockies’ Grocery Rescue Program.

“We like to provide fruits and vegetables as much as we can, and grocery rescue through the Food Bank allows us to do that, which is great,” said Stone.

The program also benefits the more than 750 businesses across Colorado and Wyoming that donate product to the Grocery Rescue Program. Jayne Bethoney oversees this side of the operation at the Trader Joe’s in Denver’s Capitol Hill neighborhood.



Trader Joe's in Denver's Capitol Hill neighborhood is one of more than 750 businesses that donate product to Food Bank of the Rockies' Grocery Rescue Program.

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**Food is such a basic need for all of us, but it's not as accessible to some as to others. We try to reach our neighborhoods and serve our community however we can.**

“We train our crew to look out for anything that's not fit for sale but is 100% fit for consumption,” said Bethoney while walking through the store. “Especially with produce, which I know is one of the larger needs. That's one of the things we try to stay really diligent about.”

In 2021, this particular Trader Joe's donated over 249,000 pounds of grocery rescue product to Food Bank of the Rockies — the equivalent of more than

200,000 meals. A plaque behind the store's customer service desk recognizes this achievement and is a subtle nod to the company's dedication to keeping as much food as possible out of the landfill.

“Food insecurity is a very real thing for people that you would never think would be affected by it,” said Bethoney. “Food is such a basic need for all of us, but it's not as accessible to some as to others. We try to reach our neighborhoods and

serve our community however we can. The fact that we can help a little bit, to me, is important; we have to do everything we can as humans to give back.”

In order to fulfill our mission of meeting people wherever and however they need us, Food Bank of the Rockies this past year partnered with Ekar Farm in Denver to source seeds to distribute to 11 partners across Colorado and Wyoming. Overseeing this effort was Emma Alanis, program and outreach manager at Ekar Farm, and Steve Kullberg, chief operations officer at Food Bank of the Rockies.

Ekar Farm started in 2006 as a school project aimed at teaching students at Denver Academy of Torah about farming's role in Jewish culture. Up until recently, the farm donated the 22,000 pounds of produce grown on its two-acre plot to partners around metro Denver and that was that: Grow the food, donate the food. But then the pandemic hit.

“We switched models in 2020 and decided we wanted to do more programming and community work,” said Alanis. “We realized we could be a stronger force for good than just being a distributor or producer; we could be more integrated into the community and provide more resources.”

Thus, Ekar Farm became the Rocky Mountain seed hub of the Cooperative Gardens Commission, an organization dedicated to getting seeds into peoples' hands and teaching them how to grow them.

In its first year, Ekar Farm distributed 3,000 seed packets to partners. In 2021, that number grew to 7,000. This year, they supplied partners with 10,000 packets.

“Being a seed hub really connected us to a lot of our partners, which was a great benefit because it enabled us to offer more resources and support,” said Alanis. “We always have to work with what



**Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming was one of the 11 Food Bank of the Rockies partners that received seeds from Ekar Farm last year. The program is designed to give clients the tools they need to grow their own produce.**

we're given, so if we can find more tools, resources, and ways to get the community involved — that's what we need."

Another way Food Bank of the Rockies strives to provide our neighbors with the nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables they need to thrive is through the FRESH Program, which in fiscal year 2022 supplied Hunger Relief Partners with

an average of over 790,800 pounds of produce at no cost every month. In total last year, the Food Bank provided over 9.5 million pounds of produce through FRESH — the equivalent of more than 260 trailers, each 53 feet long. Of that 9.5 million, 20% was grown in Colorado.

By partnering with a diverse array of community organizations, programs,

and thought leaders, Food Bank of the Rockies is able to strengthen innovative initiatives and programming like FRESH, Grocery Rescue, and the Ekar Farm seed pilot. It is through these partnerships that together we can truly meet the needs of the hundreds of thousands of people in our service area experiencing hunger — and get one step closer to ending food insecurity for good. 🌱

The new Western Slope Etkin Family Distribution Center, set to open in late 2022, will greatly increase Food Bank of the Rockies' capacity to distribute nourishing food to anyone who needs it living on the Western Slope and in our mountain communities.



# GROWING, ADJUSTING, AND INNOVATING

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## to Meet the Needs of Our Neighbors

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There's no question that COVID-19 exacerbated the challenge of hunger facing so many of our neighbors in Colorado and Wyoming. However, while the pandemic was the leading cause in the increase in food insecurity in our region most recently, there are several additional events exacerbating the crisis of hunger. Job losses due to a shift in the energy sector, a decrease in tourism, wildfires, drought, the highest inflation rates in 40 years, worldwide supply chain disruptions: there is no shortage of things making it increasingly difficult for people to get the nutritious food they need to thrive.



By partnering with Food Bank of the Rockies and leasing office and kitchen space at the new distribution center, St. Mary's Medical Center Meals on Wheels Mesa County will be able to prepare and provide even more fresh meals to more older adults.

Over the last five years, the counties served by our Western Slope Distribution Center have experienced the largest increase in need of any Food Bank of the Rockies service area. In response, we have increased food distribution across the Western Slope by 66% — from 7.1 million pounds in 2017 to 11.8 million pounds in 2021. That's the most food we've distributed to this region in one year in our history. While we are proud to have served the Western Slope and mountain communities in such a dynamic way, this milestone brought into sharp focus a reality we have long faced: the need for a larger distribution center.

There are many reasons why a new, larger Western Slope distribution center is critical to our mission of meeting the needs of our community. The bigger storage space — 400% more refrigeration,

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**Our team is looking forward to having adequate space to store fresh foods and be more efficient in all our work so that we can better serve our Hunger Relief Partners across the counties that we serve.**

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39% more dry storage, 59% more frozen capacity — will enable us to partner with more local agricultural partners to source and distribute more fruits and vegetables to clients. Additionally, it will help us better serve our 145+ Western Slope Hunger Relief Partners by providing more room to store and therefore offer a wider selection of foods. It will also provide the space we need to join forces with more community partners like St. Mary's Meals on Wheels Mesa County, who will be leasing office

space and using the commercial kitchen to increase the amount of fresh meals they provide to older adults from 600 to 1,000 every weekday.

With 84% more space, the new Western Slope Etkin Family Distribution Center, which is set to open in Grand Junction later this year, will allow us to receive, process, and distribute substantially more food, all at an operating cost similar to our current building. This is thanks to



**Because food insecurity is associated with lower diet quality and increased risk for chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and malnutrition, our mission extends beyond ending hunger to improving community health.**



**The additional space at the new distribution center will allow us to restart our dehydrator program, transforming thousands of pounds of local produce into nutritious, portable snacks like fruit chips.**

the new facility's many energy-saving features, including LED lighting, solar energy, special refrigeration controls, and additional insulation. There will also be a cardboard recycling system that will reduce waste costs and generate revenue.

"As the building takes shape, we are seeing increased excitement from our local community and staff," said Western Slope Director Sue Ellen Rodwick. "Our team is looking forward to having adequate space to store fresh foods and be more efficient in all our work so that we can better serve our Hunger Relief Partners across the counties that we serve."

Primarily, we will use the Western Slope Etkin Family Distribution Center to provide more of the foods people living across the Western Slope and in our mountain communities want to eat. We will do this by expanding our Culturally Responsive Food Initiative (CRFI) and FRESH Program, both of which involve large amounts of fresh, local fruits and vegetables and necessitate more cold-storage capacity. We will restart our dehydrator program. And we will meet more people where they are by expanding programs like EverGreen Boxes™, a program of Everyday Eats, for adults 60+ and Totes of Hope™ for kids.

All of these initiatives reflect our overall mission at Food Bank of the Rockies, which is to provide nourishing food to our clients — food that they enjoy and recognize, and that helps them live well.

"In the face of rising food prices and healthcare costs, Food Bank of the Rockies recognizes the importance of connecting our neighbors with quality, nutritious foods," said Jonelle Addabbo, community nutrition and wellness coordinator and Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. "Because food insecurity is associated with lower diet quality and increased risk for chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and malnutrition, our mission extends beyond ending hunger to improving community health. Through feedback surveys, focus groups, and strategic partnerships, we aim to source foods and tailor programs that support the diversity of cultural identities, food preferences, and lifestyle choices among the people we serve."

In fiscal year 2022, we distributed over 9.5 million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables at no cost to our Hunger Relief Partners through the FRESH Program. Of that, more than 2.2 million pounds was purchased from or donated by local growers. Eventually, our goal is to provide partners with 1.2 million pounds of produce every month through FRESH.

It is through continued innovation, growth, communication with partners and clients, and a focus on providing the best food available that Food Bank of the Rockies strives to end hunger in our community. We look forward to a day when we are no longer needed; when every person in our service area and beyond no longer worries about whether or not they'll be able to eat that day or the next. But until then, we will keep pioneering more impactful, fulfilling ways to meet the needs of our community members. 🌱



Over the last five years, the counties served by our Western Slope Distribution Center have experienced the largest increase in need of any Food Bank of the Rockies' service area.



  
**FOOD  
BANK**  
OF THE ROCKIES™

Donde sea que se encuentre el hambre,  
allí estaremos para combatirla.

FACES OF OUR **COMMUNITY**

# Volunteers

**Dedicating their time, energy, and compassion to helping their neighbors facing hunger, our tireless volunteers play an integral role in fulfilling Food Bank of the Rockies' mission.**

When we say we can't do what we do without our dedicated, hard-working volunteers, we couldn't be more serious. In fiscal year 2022, volunteers donated an incredible 100,629 hours across our distribution centers. That's the equivalent of more than 4,190 days and \$3 million in in-kind support — a truly incredible gift of time, energy, and compassion.

We are so grateful to all of our volunteers who choose to spend their valuable time furthering our cause of igniting the power of community to end hunger.

"It's invigorating to witness caring individuals, families, community organizations, school groups, and corporate groups come together as a community of volunteers," said Cortney Paddock, lead volunteer coordinator. "Every day, our volunteers continue to show their deep commitment to feeding their neighbors."

“

**I've been very blessed in life, and there's a tremendous amount of need. If I can do a little bit to alleviate that need, I'm happy to do it.**

-Ethan Shepley

As a way to show our gratitude for the people who consistently show up for their neighbors experiencing food insecurity, each year we select a few individuals and one group to highlight as our volunteers of the year. Sorting food, packing boxes, loading pallets, distributing food at mobile pantries, and doing countless other tasks that ensure Food Bank of the Rockies is able to get nutritious food onto the tables of anyone who needs it, these are the people who ask for no recognition, but deserve all the accolades in the world.

“

**The more we did, the more we realized how important it is. If we can do anything to help others, we're all about it.**

-Kim Willet

Normally, Food Bank of the Rockies awards the Betty Van Hook Memorial award to a single individual who emulates the spirit of Betty, a long-time volunteer who gave her time to helping feed her neighbors even while battling cancer. This year, however, the most fitting way to honor Betty was to give the award to wife and husband Kim and Phil Willett. Since they started volunteering with Food Bank of the Rockies in February 2017 to the time of receiving the award, the Willetts had each volunteered for over 1,450 hours.

After retiring, the Willetts quickly realized that one day a week of volunteering at their church's soup kitchen wasn't going to be enough for them. Used to staying busy, they added a weekly volunteer shift at Food Bank of the Rockies' Denver Distribution Center, then another. Today, they volunteer almost every weekday: in the distribution center, at the soup kitchen, and at a mobile pantry.

"The more we did, the more we realized how important it is," said Kim. "If we can do anything to help others, we're all about it."

Added Phil: "It gives me shivers sometimes because you see some people who are really in need."

The recipient of our 2022 Rising Volunteer of the Year award, Ethan Shepley, was new to Denver when COVID-19 hit. As 2020 progressed, he started noticing long lines of cars regularly forming





“

It’s a really good feeling when you know you’re giving something to somebody.

-Western Midstream

around the city. After some digging, he found out they were for various Food Bank of the Rockies Mobile Pantry distributions. That realization, along with a local news story about the rise in food insecurity, prompted him to start volunteering with the Food Bank. He now spends the majority of his three weekly shifts helping in the kitchen. Since December 2020 to the time of receiving the award, he had volunteered over 500 hours.

“There seems to be the greatest need in the kitchen; those meals have to get out every day regardless of how many volunteers we have. I’ve been very blessed in life, and there’s a tremendous amount of need. If I can do a little bit to alleviate that need, I’m happy to do it.”

Receiving the 2022 Volunteer Group of the Year was Western Midstream. Every couple of months, dozens of Western Midstream employees channel their teamwork and camaraderie into packing boxes of food for their neighbors in need. Splitting into morning and afternoon shifts, they compete to see who can pack the most boxes in one session. Their record is an impressive 1,135.

“We are all blessed: we’ve got work, we’ve got our health, we’ve got jobs. And we know there are a lot of people who are less fortunate than us. Our company’s management encourages us to do this, and why wouldn’t you? It’s easy to do and it’s a really good feeling when you know you’re giving something to somebody,” said Brandon Carter, Western Midstream’s group coordinator.

With every hour donated, every box packed, and every pallet of food distributed, there are fewer people experiencing hunger. Thanks to our tireless volunteers, Food Bank of the Rockies is able to get one step closer to ending hunger in our community. 🌱



## FACES OF OUR COMMUNITY

# Donors

## and Board Members with Lived Experience

### Channeling Personal Experience to Fuel Hunger-Relief Efforts

When Jesse Ogas was growing up, he knew his family was poor, but he didn't realize how poor until he was older. "My mother always made sure we had, at a minimum, beans, potatoes, chile (green or red), and homemade tortillas," Ogas recalled. "Every once in a while we got meat, which was like, wow, this is great! But I didn't know we were really poor because we never went hungry."

Ogas, a Food Bank of the Rockies board member, said his family's economic situation only truly dawned on him in middle school, when he first saw his mom use food stamps. "My siblings and I were getting meat and fresh milk and our favorite cereal and were like, this is great!" he said. "Then we got to the register and my mom pulled out the food stamps. I'll never forget that; I wanted to crawl under the shopping cart."

“

**For me, being on the board at Food Bank of the Rockies and focusing on food insecurity hits at the core of who I am.**

—Jesse Ogas

The shame he felt still haunts Ogas, and the lesson his mother taught him in the car afterward continues to inform his approach to life to this day. "Mom said, 'Don't ever, ever apologize for needing help. The day will come when we're able to do something for others, but right now we need help. If we don't ask for help, shame on us,'" he recalled. "For me, being on the board at Food Bank of the Rockies and focusing on food insecurity hits at the core of who I am."

“

**I wish there had been a Food Bank of the Rockies that existed and that we were aware of when I was a kid.**

—Deborah Joa

Using past experience with hunger to fuel current action is a common thread among several Food Bank of the Rockies board members — nearly 20% of current board members have experienced food insecurity at some point in their lives — and many donors.

"I think a lot of people assume that it's always very low-income people that are in need of food assistance, and sometimes that is the case. But that's not always the case," said former board member Katie O'Connor.

After O'Connor's parents separated, she and her mom moved into a women's shelter and lived there until her mom enrolled in Northern Michigan University and was given student housing. "I remember going to wherever we would pick up the [government commodity] food," said O'Connor. "At the time it was, like, processed cheese, powdered milk, bread, rice, and mac and cheese — I ate a lot of mac and cheese. I remember hating the powdered milk, but that was all we had."

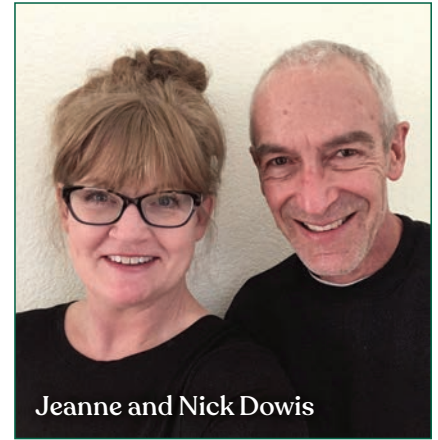
O'Connor's mom eventually graduated with her degree in healthcare management and went on to get her master's degree — all accomplishments O'Connor feels were aided by the assistance they received. "She's been a big role model for me," she said.



Jesse Ogas



Deborah Joa



Jeanne and Nick Dowis

For O'Connor, removing the stigma around food pantries and increasing the nutritional value of the food provided to clients were driving factors for her work with Food Bank of the Rockies. For board member Deborah Joa, making the Food Bank's services more accessible and growing the amount of fresh and culturally diverse food offered through the Culturally Responsive Food Initiative (CRFI) are key motivators.

"My mother and father immigrated to the U.S. before I was born, my father from Cuba and my mother from Hong Kong. Both are ethnically Chinese, and I grew up speaking Chinese and Spanish," recalled Joa. "My father left when I was young and my mother didn't understand what assistance she was eligible for because of the language barrier. She always made sure we had food, but she worked nonstop and as kids we ate a lot of frozen TV meals, pot pies — really unhealthy, processed foods, because we had to be able to make it ourselves."



**Food Bank of the Rockies is at the root of helping solve hunger by providing the food for the pantries and the programs who get it to the people who need it.**

-Jeanne and Nick Dowis

When Joa was in high school, with the help of others her mom figured out they were eligible for food stamps. "I wish there had been a Food Bank of the Rockies that existed and that we were aware of when I was a kid," she said.

Although, Joa added, "If we had gotten a 'traditional' box, we wouldn't have known how to use many of the items; we probably would have only known what to do with the basic staples like rice. So I'm thrilled the Food Bank is building out the Culturally Responsive Food Initiative because if that had been an option, it

would have provided more of an incentive to my mom to seek food assistance, and that in turn would have allowed us to use precious money on other basic needs."

The same factors motivating Ogas, O'Connor, and Joa in their board work also fuel Jeanne and Nick Dowis in their support of Food Bank of the Rockies as donors. Both Jeanne and Nick experienced food insecurity when they were younger and, as the sole proprietors of the Abram and Ray Kaplan Foundation, founded by Nick's uncle, have focused the majority of their donations in recent years to organizations dedicated to ending hunger.

"We approach our giving from the end-client's point of view more than from the funder's point of view," explained Jeanne. "We have both experienced times in our lives where we didn't have enough money for enough food, so that shapes our mentality going into things. What if we were that client? How would that experience be for me?"

Added Nick: "We support organizations who look for needs and fulfill them. And Food Bank of the Rockies is at the root of helping solve hunger by providing the food for the pantries and the programs who get it to the people who need it." 🌱



# FACES OF OUR COMMUNITY Clients



**Sherree and Janice**  
Buffalo, WY



**Enrique**  
Denver, CO

Every month, neighbors Janice (L) and Sherree (R) attend the mobile pantry in Buffalo, Wyoming, together.

“It’s like Christmas every month — we get excited to see what’s in the box!” said Janice. Added Sherree: “We’re very, very grateful for this food. It gets tight with our budget; sometimes we have to choose between prescriptions and food. So this is a life-saving gift for us.”

Sherree is on disability and lives with her elderly mother. Janice is also on a fixed income. “I never thought I’d have to worry about getting in the food line or anything,” said Sherree. “But boy, when that virus hit, it just knocked everything out. And now, we don’t know day to day what’s going to be available in the stores.”

“There’s nothing that we can’t use,” added Janice. “Nothing goes to waste.”

“**This is a life-saving gift for us.**”

“**Grocery prices are just going up and up. This helps tremendously.**”

Air Force veteran Enrique has been attending his local EverGreen Box™ distribution, a program of Everyday Eats, for over six years.

“Everyone needs help,” Enrique explained while waiting in his car to receive his monthly box one hot September day. “It’s not embarrassing, it’s just that things are expensive.”

Along with his wife, Enrique takes care of his grandchildren, three of whom live with them, and said the extra food helps them make sure everyone has enough to eat each month.

“We use all the food in the box. My wife has a ton of cookbooks and is always able to use the ingredients to make something,” said Enrique. “Grocery prices are just astronomical nowadays; everything is just going up and up and up in price. This helps tremendously.”



**Anyone can experience food insecurity. Hunger cuts across demographics and borders, indifferent to the past or future chapters of a person’s life. Food Bank of the Rockies meets individuals in the present, ensuring that anyone who needs it gets the nourishing food they need to thrive.**



**Frank**  
Aurora, CO

Trying to stretch his Social Security checks to feed his family of four was never a simple undertaking, but given the current record-high inflation and supply shortages, the task has become impossible for Frank.

“The food here helps greatly. Food is expensive nowadays,” he explained at the mobile pantry at Colorado Community Church one Wednesday afternoon. “If it wasn’t for Food Bank of the Rockies, I can’t say what would actually happen — probably missing meals. Rent takes a large portion [of our monthly income], as well as utilities — it doesn’t leave a whole lot of money for food, so Food Bank of the Rockies is a blessing. It really is. It helps so many people, not just us. Look in the parking lot, at all of these families. They’re all in the same boat. It’s hard to say what would happen without it.”

“**The food here helps greatly. It’s hard to say what would happen without it.**”



**Jamie, Haven, and Caroline**  
Denver, CO

“**This helps get us through the weekend.**”

Over a third of students at Leawood Elementary School qualify for the National School Lunch Program. To ensure the kids who need food have access to it during the summer, the school hosts a mobile pantry most Fridays in June and July.

The pantry is coordinated by Integrated Family Community Services, a Food Bank of the Rockies Hunger Relief Partner, and volunteers from Kiwanis Club of Columbine. It provides upwards of 40 families, like Jamie and her daughters, Haven (left) and Caroline (right), several pounds of nourishing food to have over the weekend. This often includes items like eggs, string cheese, cereal, ground beef, carrots, corn, grapefruit, tortillas, black beans, and more.

“It helps a lot, especially in the summer when we’re busy during the week or missing a meal for a day,” said Jamie. “This helps us get through the weekend.”



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## Michelo Mokolo

Motivated by his passion for personal growth and learning, Michelo Mokolo has lived several lives since growing up in Congo. In the mid-1990s, he played basketball in Sudan, Egypt, Angola, and Ethiopia. After moving to the United States in 2000, he began driving an 18-wheeler cross-country. Two years ago, he started working as a temporary driver for Food Bank of the Rockies. When his contract was about to end, he was asked to stay on full-time and has been with the organization ever since, primarily delivering EverGreen Boxes™, a program of Everyday Eats, to older adults around the metro Denver area.

“I feel like this is my family: my coworkers here in the distribution center as well as the site coordinators and the clients,” said Michelo. “I know everyone I deliver food to and who comes to get food at the monthly Saturday distributions here at the distribution center. I feel blessed, secure, and welcome here. This is where I belong.”

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## Joe and Debbie Sakic

Former Colorado Avalanche player and current President of Hockey Operations Joe Sakic, along with his wife, Debbie, have sponsored the Food Bank of the Rockies Golf Classic at Sanctuary for the entirety of its 25-year existence, often headlining the charity tournament in order to help draw attention to the issue of food insecurity among children in Colorado.

“No child should have to go without food no matter the circumstances,” said Sakic. “Together with Food Bank of the Rockies, Debbie and I are dedicated to finding ways to make sure every child has access to sufficient, nourishing food, and to taking more steps toward ending hunger.”

The Sakics first became involved with Food Bank of the Rockies when they moved to Denver from Quebec in 1995 for Joe’s career with the Colorado Avalanche. Their neighbor, Robb Caseria, was a board member at the Food Bank at the time and introduced the Sakics to the organization. Three years later, the first golf tournament took place.

Over the years, thanks to the Sakics’ dedication to promoting the event and, with it, the cause of ending hunger, the golf tournament has raised enough money to provide the equivalent of 12 million meals.

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## FACES OF OUR COMMUNITY

# Partners

**Neal Neumiller's chickens aren't picky about sell-by dates, but they draw the line at celery of any age. Strawberries that are past their prime? Those are fine. But celery is a different story.**

Neumiller lives in Casper, Wyoming, and takes expired produce from Food Bank of Wyoming (the Casper-based distribution center of Food Bank of the Rockies) to use as feed. It's a win-win partnership, said Richard Plumlee, director of operations at Food Bank of Wyoming: The inedible produce stays out of the landfill and helps the Food Bank operate more sustainably, and Neumiller's chickens happily fill up on their own private salad bar.

"Our partnership with Neal is vital to our ongoing sustainability efforts and achieving our goals of reducing waste as an organization," Plumlee said. "From July 2020 to the end of June 2022, Neal has prevented nearly 37,000 pounds of expired produce from going to the landfill."


For Neumiller, not only does the partnership help keep his chickens fed, but it also aligns with his dedication to serving his community. "I want to see the community that says, instead of having a manicured lawn, you need to provide for food security," he said.

Similar mindsets drive the efforts of Talbott Farm and Spring Born on the Western Slope. Each year, the two agricultural

partners of Food Bank of the Rockies donate thousands of pounds of fresh produce to help nourish their neighbors experiencing hunger.

Since 2016, Talbott Farms, located in Palisade and known for its peaches, apples, and other fruit, has donated more than 70,000 pounds of fresh fruit and sold the Food Bank another 200,000 pounds at discounted prices.

Charlie Talbott, a grandson of founder Harry A. Talbott and co-owner of the business, explained why he was eager to support Food Bank of the Rockies. "What I appreciate most about the Food Bank is the spirit of cooperation, compassion, and volunteerism," he said, adding that



Talbott Farms in Palisade is one of dozens of agricultural partners that donate fresh produce to Food Bank of the Rockies every year. / Photo by Ken Redding





he is impressed by the organization’s “sensitivity to make resources available in a way that doesn’t assault the dignity of their customers.”

Spring Born began growing organic leafy greens in its 3.5-acre indoor greenhouse near Silt in August 2021, and right away began donating a portion of their harvest to Food Bank of the Rockies. As of mid-September 2022, Spring Born has donated over 53,000 pounds of fresh greens, including lettuce, kale, and arugula.

“Everyone deserves fresh, nourishing food. I’m proud to be a long-term partner to our communities’ food banks,” said Charles Barr, president of Spring Born. “It’s Spring Born’s responsibility to support our neighbors.”

Getting that nutritious food onto the plates of our neighbors experiencing hunger is a big task, and Food Bank of the Rockies’ 800+ Hunger Relief Partners tackle the job with energy, dedication, and passion. For the past 28 summers, City of Thornton Recreation Director Jenny Dowdell has overseen the city’s portable playground program, which every week brings crafts, activities, and, as of 2017, nutritious food to kids living in 10 high-density housing areas during the summer.

“Bringing food and recreation out into the community is providing a basic essential need,” said Dowdell. “Kids get bored during these long, hot days of summer. We try to keep them out of trouble and off electronics and get them to socialize with their peers.”

Dowdell partnered with Food Bank of the Rockies for the first time in 2022




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**Our partnership with Neal is vital to our ongoing sustainability efforts and achieving our goals of reducing waste as an organization. From July 2020 to the end of June 2022, Neal has prevented nearly 37,000 pounds of expired produce from going to the landfill.**

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to provide food for the program. For at least one site, Food Bank of the Rockies Executive Chef Paul Fisher was able to curate the menu to meet the cultural needs and desires of the kids in attendance. At this apartment complex, most of the children had recently moved to Colorado from Afghanistan and were unfamiliar with lunch items like turkey sandwiches. To solve this problem, Fisher came up with a halal menu the kids would be able to recognize and enjoy: halal chicken kabobs, seasoned rice and vegetables, fruit, juice, and milk.

“A girl told me that it was the best day of her

whole summer,” shared Dowdell. “Being able to break down language and cultural barriers with food, toys, games, and smiles is such a great opportunity.”

In fiscal year 2022, Food Bank of the Rockies was able to distribute over 80.5 million pounds of food to the members of our community who needed it most thanks to our Hunger Relief Partners. From the growers and retail stores who donate product, to the site coordinators and volunteers who distribute it to our neighbors, it is only together that we can address the challenge of hunger in our community. 🌱



## Board Members

Serving on the board as of September 2022

### Officers

**Nick Benham**  
Chair

**Christina Bowen**  
Vice Chair

**Jack Pargeon**  
Treasurer

**Gordon Banks**  
Secretary

### Members

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Garry Beaulieu  
Errol Brown  
Sean Choi  
Reid Galbraith  
Kayla Garcia  
Deborah Joa  
Nick Morris  
Ethan Nkana  
Jesse Ogas

Melissa Osse  
Jack Pargeon  
Andrea Passman  
Raju Patel  
Patricia Person  
Bart Pugh  
Tiffany Todd  
Michael Tousignant  
Douglas Wilhelm

## Leadership Team

**Rachel Bailey**, Wyoming Executive Director

**Heather MacKendrick Costa**, Chief Financial Officer

**Aditi Desai**, VP of Marketing & Communications

**Steve Kullberg**, Chief Operations Officer

**Jennifer Lackey**, Chief Development Officer

**Cindy Mitchell**, VP of Programs

**Erin Pulling**, President & CEO

**Sue Ellen Rodwick**, Western Slope Director

**Lorena Toland**, VP of People & Culture



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




# Continuing to Expand Efforts to End Hunger, Together

Every day of the year, thousands of people across Colorado and Wyoming seek out Food Bank of the Rockies' services.

Children get the nourishment they need to grow and learn through Totes of Hope™ weekend food bags. Older adults on a fixed income are able to eat well thanks to monthly EverGreen Boxes™, a program of Everyday Eats. College students unable to afford a meal plan or groceries can find stability and sustenance at mobile pantries. People of all ages, backgrounds, identities, walks of life: These are our clients. Our coworkers. Our neighbors. And it could be any of us if life took a sudden turn.

There is no single description of a Food Bank of the Rockies client, but there is a common throughline: They are people in need of food, and they know they can come to us to get the nourishment required to thrive.

In order to meet people where and how they need us most, Food Bank of the Rockies channels resources and energy into a diverse array of programming. Mobile pantries, Food for Kids programs, and EverGreen Boxes™ fill the gap in areas where nourishing food is hard to access or beyond peoples' budgets. The Culturally Responsive Food Initiative provides neighbors with foods that are familiar and respectful of cultural preferences. Most recently, we launched an initiative with several hospitals and healthcare clinics to provide weekly heart healthy, diabetic friendly, and nutritious food boxes to patients who are experiencing food insecurity.

We are able to do all these things and more thanks to you, our dedicated and valued supporters. Thanks to you, we are able to look forward to 2023 with hopeful anticipation and optimism, knowing that wherever there is a need, together we will find an innovative, effective way to meet it. Together, we can. 



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BANK**  
OF THE ROCKIES™

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