



CAFE Food Rescue is one of 115+ Hunger Relief Partners on the Western Slope we work with to nourish our neighbors, reduce food waste, and empower the community. / Photo by Adrienne Anghelone

## Partnering Across our Community to Nourish Neighbors

**WITHOUT OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS, FOOD BANK OF THE ROCKIES COULDN'T ACCOMPLISH EVEN A FRACTION OF OUR HUNGER-RELIEF WORK. THEIR INNOVATION, DEDICATION, AND CREATIVITY NEVER CEASE TO AMAZE US, AND WE'RE EXCITED TO SHARE MORE ABOUT TWO OF OUR 115+ HUNGER RELIEF PARTNERS.**

Nestled in the heart of Gypsum, Little Bird Creative Community's mission is to address the pressing concern of food security in Eagle County and its nearby areas. Through their culinary education programs, they foster positive change and nurture growth among their community's most vulnerable members.

To accomplish their goals, Little Bird crafts comprehensive initiatives and programs that empower community members with the skills and knowledge needed to make wholesome, nourishing meals. A few of their key offerings include subsidized cooking classes and workshops in food preparation, cooking, and baking; ready-to-eat, chef-prepared meals donated to The Community Market Food Bank to simultaneously reduce food waste and food insecurity; and

cost-effective access to a commercial kitchen for small businesses to encourage entrepreneurship, support businesses in their initial stages, and contribute to the local economy.

In Summit County, CAFE Food Rescue transforms what could be waste into nourishment and connection. Driven by a mission to serve, partner, and engage the community in making the best use of surplus food, CAFE Food Rescue works to improve food equity, support the health of people and the planet, and show just how powerful local collaboration can be.

CAFE Food Rescue began when its founder and executive director, Diane Calvin, saw surplus food going to waste while neighbors in her community faced growing food insecurity. What began as a one-woman effort during the early days of COVID has grown into a dynamic organization that rescues nutritious, chef-prepared meals and high-quality grocery items, connecting them with people who need them most.

We are so honored to partner with organizations like Little Bird Creative Community and CAFE Food Rescue as they continue to reduce environmental impact and nourish our neighbors.



One in eight people across the Western Slope lives with food insecurity, and recent SNAP changes at the federal level could raise hunger rates even more. Food Bank of the Rockies will continue showing up for our neighbors with the nourishing food they need to thrive.

## From the Director's Desk

# Navigating the Impact of SNAP Reductions

Early in July, Congress passed a budget reconciliation package that included the largest reductions to SNAP in history — nearly \$200 billion, or roughly 6 billion meals per year. Across Colorado, more than 600,000 people rely on support from SNAP to put food on their tables. In the Western Slope counties Food Bank of the Rockies serves, 59% of residents qualify for SNAP. That's 283,029 people, most of whom are in households with children or older adults.

These reductions to SNAP are significant for many reasons, one of which is that for every meal a food bank like Food Bank of the Rockies can provide, SNAP provides nine. Research shows that some 45% of food pantry users are on SNAP, which means that for many households, SNAP is just one piece of the puzzle to get sufficient nourishing food. To cut SNAP is to take away a crucial element households need to be food secure.

At Food Bank of the Rockies, we will continue to show up for our Western Slope neighbors facing food insecurity. We also recognize that the SNAP changes will equate to more people turning to the us and our Hunger Relief Partners for support. We are facing this increased need at a time when we have already absorbed notable reductions in USDA commodities.

Higher costs of living paired with reductions to key hunger-relief programs like SNAP create intensely difficult situations for our neighbors, forcing them to choose between buying the food they need and paying for life's other necessities. When faced with that impossible choice, many people turn to us for help. It's times like these that we need our community's support the most: through financial donations, volunteer hours, and sharing with others the work we do and how they can get involved. Thank you for being there for us and for our community.



**Sue Ellen Rodwick**  
Western Slope Director

## Distribution Center

### Western Slope

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# Takeaways from our Regional Partner Workshops

This spring, we gathered with our incredible Western Slope Hunger Relief Partners Regional Western Slope Partner Workshops — a time to connect, learn, and celebrate the important work we do together with community members like you.

From the moment the doors opened, the room filled with the buzz of conversation and the shared purpose of helping nourish our neighbors facing hunger. During the Food Safety Basics Review conducted by our executive chef, Jonathan Knight, we explored important food rescue considerations and partner insights on food safety hurdles and wins. The more we're able to safely store food, the more food we're able to distribute!

A session guided by Jennie Kim, Food Bank of the Rockies Nutrition Manager and certified dietitian, we learned about the Supporting Wellness at Pantries (SWAP) program. SWAP puts food into three categories based on levels of saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars: green = choose often; yellow = choose sometimes; and red = choose rarely. SWAP can be used in multiple levels of the charitable food system to promote food justice and health equity, and we're excited to offer it to help our neighbors select items that are best suited for their needs.

We also touched on Food Rescue Program recognition, honoring the many challenges we navigate with donated items. The responsibility of identifying issues and ensuring the safe handling of rescued food is no small task, and we're grateful for our partners' dedicated commitment and care in this critical work.

These workshops remind us how powerful our collective effort is: as Food Bank of the Rockies and Hunger Relief Partners, as well as supporters and volunteers like you. Whether you're packing boxes, coordinating volunteers, or sorting produce, your dedication fuels hope across the Western Slope. Thank you for showing up for our neighbors facing hunger.



## All About Food for Health

This past year, we expanded the Food for Health Program to the Western Slope, building on the solid foundation laid by our Denver team. Food for Health addresses the vital connection between food insecurity and chronic health conditions like diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease by providing participants with nutritious food.

Through partnerships with Family Health West, St. Mary's Hospital, and Marillac Health, participants are screened for food insecurity, voluntarily enrolled in the program, and provided with weekly nutrient-dense, medically tailored food boxes delivered to their homes for the first six months. These boxes contain fiber-rich, low-sodium items and fresh produce, along with recipes to support nutrition education. From months 7-12, participants receive a \$35 monthly produce prescription card to select their own fresh fruits and vegetables, continuing their path to better health.

By providing ongoing nourishment and support to our Western Slope neighbors as they navigate their health journeys, Food Bank of the Rockies and our healthcare partners can ensure every participant gets the nourishment and care they need to live fully.



**115+** Western Slope Hunger Relief Partners **11.8** million pounds of food distributed in fiscal year 2025

## Nourish Neighbors Every Day of the Year with FEED365™

Join our monthly giving program, FEED365™, to make your dollars to further and help nourish our Western Slope neighbors every day of the year. As a monthly donor, you'll ensure Food Bank of the Rockies can consistently meet the needs of our neighbors and get them the food they need to thrive. **If you're interested in learning more about why and how to join FEED365™, please contact Lindsey Wiltse, Individual Giving Specialist, at [lwiltse@foodbankrockies.org](mailto:lwiltse@foodbankrockies.org) or 970-438-4228.**

Inspired to support programs like Food for Health? Donate today at [foodbankrockies.org/GiveToday](https://foodbankrockies.org/GiveToday).



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Mailing Address  
City, State Zip

# FOOD BANK OF THE ROCKIES™

Hunger challenges our neighbors every day. With support from individuals like you, we are able to provide help to anyone who finds themselves in need. Discover inspiring stories of how together we are nourishing communities in our newsletter.

We ignite the power of community to nourish people facing hunger.

