Food For Thought

You Helped Bring Light to a Dark Journey

Agency Spotlight: There With Care

Cancer. Few words carry as much weight as this one. For Laura, it’s a word that currently qualifies one of her cherished titles: no longer is she simply a “mom,” she’s now a “cancer mom.” At age three, Laura’s daughter, Claire, was diagnosed with an extremely rare and aggressive brain cancer. Her son was born just three months prior.

Laura and her husband watched as chemo took its toll on their toddler: Claire was in immense pain, she couldn’t walk, talk, or eat, and she lost more than 10% of her body weight. Laura didn’t leave the hospital for up to eleven days at a time, comforting Claire, while still nursing her newborn. It was a juggling act that left little time for life’s typical demands.

“When a family has a child that’s diagnosed with a critical illness, everything becomes overwhelming for them,” says Paula DuPré Pesmen, Executive Director of There With Care, one of Community Food Share’s 40 Partner Agencies. The non-profit provides holistic support to families with critically ill children like Claire: grocery and meal delivery; housecleaning and laundry service; accounting and legal guidance; babysitting and mentoring for siblings; and transportation to and from appointments and treatments.

With more than a year of intensive chemotherapy and radiation, and each infusion lasting six hours, Laura went from working mom to home nurse. Growing from a family of three to four had already been an adjustment; suddenly she and her husband were also transitioning to a single income. Time and energy became limited — so did their budget.

Laura shared, “I didn’t even know what I needed. But There With Care knew.” Using food provided by Community Food Share, their volunteers delivered supplemental groceries and Crock-Pot meals weekly. In Laura’s words, “Any sense of normalcy...is so meaningful to us. If I can just put a Crock-Pot meal in and then spend time with my family instead of cooking, instead of grocery shopping, it means the world to me.”

Laura told There With Care that their grocery and meal delivery “shined some light on [their] dark journey.” If we could remove the word “cancer” from every family’s vocabulary, we would. Thanks to supporters like you, we at least have the honor of providing comfort through the incredible work of our partner, There With Care.

A There With Care family (courtesy of There With Care)
Hello!

I started my food banking career in the late ‘90s at the ripe age of twenty-two. Back then, to food banks and food pantries, a calorie was a calorie; the focus was on quantity more so than quality. Today, as I reflect on the past, I know that it made sense at the time: as a new charitable model, sourcing and distributing such a vast volume of food was a feat in and of itself. It’s reasonable that it took a few decades to perfect the foundation of our work, but like any good business, we’re re-examining that foundation with space for new and powerful innovations.

We food bankers are turning to the people we serve, leaning on their experiences and insights to craft the solution to ending hunger. We’re digging into difficult questions like “What are the stigmas around accessing food assistance?” and “Do we offer the foods necessary to meet your family’s economic, cultural, and nutritional needs?” It’s about continuing to provide the food that’s needed right now but also examining — and tackling — the root causes of hunger.

Community Food Share is committed to this participant-focused approach, so much so that we put it into writing. Our strategic plan, launched in 2018, outlines priorities like understanding our participants’ needs and preferences; supporting programs that match those needs; and using data to guide our decisions.

In fact, this commitment is one of the reasons I wanted to join Community Food Share’s team. The landscape ahead is exciting, and I hope you agree. Stay tuned as we continue this great work.

With gratitude,

Kim Ruotsala
Executive Director

Volunteer Spotlight

Scaled Agile

Scaled Agile is one of Community Food Share’s newest corporate partners. Their team leaders explained that supporting community needs is integral to their company culture: “We’re trying to make sure our staff knows how fortunate we are...it’s important to give back.” After learning about food insecurity’s prevalence in Boulder and Broomfield Counties, their team got right to work, sorting thousands of pounds of donated food in just a couple of hours. “Not only did we volunteer, but we got a team-building opportunity too.” Thank you, Scaled Agile!
As resident caretaker, Dave regularly takes time to sit with the wolf-dogs at Song of the Wolf Healing Center. One morning, the alpha female wouldn’t stop licking his ear. Surprised to find that it wasn’t covered in jelly from his breakfast toast, he shrugged it off. Two days later, he contracted an ear infection in the same ear — an affliction the wolf-dog sensed before it hit.

Dave describes this clairvoyance as the “you-it-for-yourself” power of wolf-dogs: “You know, you really can’t quantify it empirically, but if you watch it, it’s undeniable that there’s some sort of mystical or metaphysical process that occurs.”

Song of the Wolf is a lifelong home to surrendered wolf-dogs roaming acre-wide enclosures. Located in Bailey, Colorado, it’s currently home to eight wolf-dogs, all of which were born into captivity. Because they did not learn the strategies needed to survive in the wild — like how to hunt — they can never be released.

The center offers healing to both the animals who call it home, as well as the humans who have the privilege of visiting. Co-Founder Mary Ann McCain’s mission is to connect the meditative, healing component of wolf-dogs with men and women struggling with substance abuse.

When treatment centers from the greater Denver area bring groups to Song of the Wolf, clients complete a service project, followed by one-on-one encounters with the wolf-dogs. Their visits conclude with a group therapy session, facilitated by Mary Ann, a licensed therapist for more than 30 years.

What does Community Food Share have to do with all of this? Song of the Wolf feeds the wolf-dogs with what we call our “isolated” meat. When we receive meat that is no longer fit for human consumption, rather than throwing it away, we save it for the wolf-dogs. We rescue 11 tons of food a day, and while the vast majority of it goes on to nourish local families and individuals, this partnership represents another way we prevent food from going to waste.

This partnership is made possible by supporters like you. The next time you donate food, volunteer in our sorting area, or provide a monetary gift, know that your support not only fights local hunger; the impact ripples to other meaningful causes like refuge for abandoned animals and healing for the human spirit.
Sign Your Team Up for the 25th Annual Corporate Challenge

**Family Volunteer Days**
Sign up with your kids (ages 5+) for these family-oriented volunteer shifts offered during spring break. First-time volunteers welcome; orientation is included.

**Corporate Challenge Kicks Off!**
A friendly (yet fierce) competition among local companies to raise dollars and collect funds for Community Food Share.

**Fly Away Gala**
Join us at Spartan College’s airplane hangar, where you can bid on trips to fly far away as you raise money to fight local hunger. Enjoy an evening filled with global cuisines, live music, and auctions at this travel-themed event.

**Hunger Hurts the Whole Community Fund & Food Drive**
Give a financial gift, donate non-perishable foods, or sign up to volunteer at this hallmark event.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

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<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Volunteer Days</td>
<td>March 23-27</td>
<td>Sign up with your kids (ages 5+) for these family-oriented volunteer shifts offered during spring break. First-time volunteers welcome; orientation is included.</td>
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<td>Corporate Challenge Kicks Off!</td>
<td>April 6</td>
<td>A friendly (yet fierce) competition among local companies to raise dollars and collect funds for Community Food Share.</td>
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<td>Fly Away Gala</td>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>Join us at Spartan College’s airplane hangar, where you can bid on trips to fly far away as you raise money to fight local hunger. Enjoy an evening filled with global cuisines, live music, and auctions at this travel-themed event.</td>
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<td>Hunger Hurts the Whole Community Fund &amp; Food Drive</td>
<td>May 1-3</td>
<td>Give a financial gift, donate non-perishable foods, or sign up to volunteer at this hallmark event.</td>
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Visit communityfoodshare.org/events for more details.

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**APRIL 6-MAY 29, 2020**

Temperatures may be low, but we’re already thinking of summer. Did you know that more than 14,000 children in Boulder and Broomfield Counties are enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program? Many of these students receive up to two of their daily meals through the program. When school ends for the summer, oftentimes, so do these meals.

Our annual competition between corporate partners provides the perfect opportunity to engage your team in the fight against summer hunger. Teams earn points by raising funds and food — and competing in our Field Day and trivia events!

A commitment to the community is no longer optional. More so now than ever, individuals want to work for companies that are committed to their community, and consumers are loyal to companies whose values mirror their own. Showcase your commitment by joining Corporate Challenge this year!

To sign up your team, contact Katriñe Arnedo at karnedo@communityfoodshare.org or (303) 652-3663 ext. 209