Mondays are Chris Current’s favorite day at the Nederland Food Pantry. After her weekly pick-up at Community Food Share, the week begins with picture-perfect, overflowing shelves. But by Saturday, they’re empty, because the pantry is serving nearly three times the number of households it supported before the virus. Though Chris, Executive Director, has spent over three decades working with the pantry, this is unlike anything she’s ever seen.

The pandemic has imposed unique challenges on Boulder and Broomfield Counties’ mountain communities, and food insecurity is rising as a result. Eldora Mountain, Nederland’s ski resort, was forced to end its season early. “When you take away the skiers, a lot of people suffer; many staff were furloughed, and tourism-related businesses plummeted,” Chris told us. As seasonal employees, Eldora’s lift operators and restaurant staff were initially ineligible for unemployment benefits, so they were among the influx of first-time visitors to the Nederland Food Pantry.

Disruptions in transportation are compounding the issue of increased need. The pantry is a hub for surrounding mountain communities, serving an enormous 600-square-mile region — the largest in our pantry network — including Ward, Jamestown, Gold Hill, and Left Hand Canyon. Because pantry visitors travel vast distances, many rely on carpooling or hitchhiking. The virus has put a halt on both options, creating a new barrier for those in need.

Recognizing this hurdle, residents of Gold Hill came together to ensure their neighbors remain well nourished. They opened a weekly pop-up pantry at the small town’s general store. Food comes from Community Food Share and the Nederland Food Pantry, and delivering it is another highlight in Chris’s week: “They applaud when the pantry van arrives. They are so happy to see us that they cheer.”

Today’s health and economic crisis is hitting all of us in powerful ways. It continues to bring new challenges to how we feed our neighbors, but it also highlights the resilience of our hunger relief network. Thanks to your support, we’re able to provide more food to the Nederland Food Pantry and assist the great work they’re doing to sustain our mountain communities.
Volunteer Spotlight

Jonathan Wiemer

Jonathan’s tenure as a Community Food Share volunteer began in March, right when the pandemic escalated. Often enlisting for double shifts on the daily, he clocked more than 140 hours of service in just two months! “Once you start volunteering, you get all the good feelings…I know I did something fulfilling that day; I can be content,” he tells us. When he’s not building orders for our Partner Agencies or loading fresh foods into our pantry visitors’ trunks, Jonathan works nights as a 911 Operator. “Happy to be here!” is his tagline, and the feeling is certainly mutual.

A NOTE FROM KIM

Hello!

I seldom have the opportunity to open mail that’s sent to our food bank. When I do, I look forward to it, because we often receive handwritten notes from you, our supporters. A recent letter from Judy solved a mystery that had been building for weeks: I was consistently opening a small collection of plain envelopes, addressed to Community Food Share in the same handwriting, each containing cash donations…no explanation, no return address.

Judy’s gift came in a matching envelope, but her enclosed note revealed that there’s a local hero among King Soopers’ employees. When curbside pickup customers try to tip, the employee explains that they’re not allowed to accept them, hands out pre-addressed envelopes, and requests that they instead donate the tip to our food bank. He has since inspired other King Soopers employees to do the same!

This is just one of the many creative ways our community is helping us feed our neighbors impacted by COVID-19. It’s my hope that as we all navigate this challenging time together, you too take time to celebrate the good moments. Along with this anecdote and the feel-good stories throughout this newsletter, we will continue to share ours on our new blog: communityfoodshare.org/blog.

Take care,

Kim Ruotsala
Executive Director

Hello there —

The man that put our groceries in the car at King Soopers said they were not allowed to accept tips. He gave me this envelope (stamped) for me to fill it out, hand it to him, and let you know. It’s just to know there are such good people in the world.

Judy
A New Partnership to Meet Our Community’s Changing Needs

At Community Food Share, new partnerships have blossomed to create innovative, efficient solutions that get food to neighbors who are particularly vulnerable during this challenging time: older adults, people with disabilities, and families with children or adults who are immunocompromised.

More than 200 households now access our food with free delivery provided by Via. The Boulder-based non-profit has expanded its typical transportation services to fill gaps that have emerged as a result of the virus. In addition to delivering to the doorsteps of individuals who need our food, Via delivers our boxes of fresh and shelf-stable items to five affordable, senior housing communities, managed by Boulder Housing Partners. When the food arrives, Boulder Food Rescue’s Grocery Program Coordinators and other Boulder Housing Partners residents ensure the groceries are safely dispersed.

We applaud Via for how quickly they adapted to meet our community’s changing needs, and we are honored to partner with this group of remarkable organizations. Though the pandemic has amplified many of the needs in our community, it has also illuminated the collaborative spirit of our local charity network.

GARDEN SHARE

Has time at home inspired you to join a community garden or plant some backyard vegetables? Whether you’re a longtime gardener or first-time grower, your green thumb can help feed our neighbors in need!

GROW A ROW
Dedicate a portion of your garden or community plot to our food bank, and donate the harvest.

VOLUNTEER TO GLEAN
Help harvest excess produce on farms throughout Boulder and Broomfield Counties.

CONNECT A FARMER
Spread the word that farmers can donate their produce, and we can help glean their fields.

For more information about Grow a Row donation drop-off, gleaning, and farmer partnerships, visit communityfoodshare.org/garden-share.
Stimulus Recipients Pay It Forward

On a national level, more Americans lost their jobs this spring than during the entirety of the Great Recession. Over 43% of households reported that they lost some or all of their income, leaving many local families struggling to cover basic expenses like groceries, rent, and utilities.¹

While our team has worked around the clock to meet the increase in need, our supporters have been equally invested in keeping food on the tables of local families: people like you have stepped up to help, choosing to “pay it forward” by donating their stimulus checks and tax refunds. The empathy and compassion ingrained in these gifts are truly astounding.

If you would like to discuss how to donate your stimulus check or tax refund, or how to make a donation of any kind to Community Food Share, please contact Dina Coates Koebl at dcoateskoebler@communityfoodshare.org.

¹Pew Research Center

In light of COVID-19, several of our events have been cancelled, postponed, or moved online. Visit communityfoodshare.org/events for more details.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Win $10,000 of Green Chef Home-Delivered Meals
Are you feeling lucky? Enter today, and you could win a year’s worth of dinner for your family, compliments of Green Chef.

Tee Up! Against Hunger Golf Tournament
Join us for a scramble format tournament at Coal Creek Golf Course in Louisville. Register to play or become a sponsor.

Hunger Action Month
Join us in this nationwide movement to raise awareness about hunger in America. Check our website for events throughout the month.

Let’s Bag Hunger Fund & Food Drive
Give funds, food, and time during this hallmark event, founded by the Daily Camera. We’ll be stationed at King Soopers stores throughout the community.

Naturally Boulder’s Networking Night
This is a monthly event to connect with pioneering leaders and companies in Colorado’s natural products community. We’re hosting for November’s theme: Community Collaboration, Conscious Business.

GOOD NEWS FOR BOTH DONORS AND CHARITIES:

The federal coronavirus relief bill includes a provision allowing non-itemizers to claim a $300 above-the-line charitable income tax deduction for cash donations made in 2020 ($600 for a married couple).