



efaa news

THE *Light* AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL



Alma always had a backup plan. It was something she learned after living through an abusive relationship. If things went badly, she knew exactly what she had to do to make sure her three children were safe and cared for. But after Alma remarried, she let her guard down — and learned the hard way that things don't always go the way you hope they will.

After her second divorce, Alma had trouble making ends meet despite having a steady, full-time job in healthcare. She was still living in a mobile home with her ex-husband and their children when the sewage malfunctioned. The water became unsafe to drink or shower in, yet they had no emergency savings for the repairs. She knew they needed to get out, but she didn't have the money for a deposit and worried about how she would pay for housing for her family on her own.

When Alma learned she had been accepted into EFAA's housing program, the only word she could use to describe how she felt was *relief*. Relief to finally have a home where she could live independently, her children could be comfortable in

their own home, and they could begin to heal and move forward. The support she received from her case managers while at EFAA only made her

time here even more beneficial, "Everyone's really friendly and welcoming ... you don't feel judged, I felt like family," said Alma.

During her stay in EFAA's Louisville housing, Alma was connected to a plethora of local resources to strengthen her personal safety-net. She received food and gas assistance, and support with financial management so that she could focus on building her savings. Her kids were given summer passes to the YMCA so that she could continue working while her kids were out of school, and EFAA paid the fees for her youngest son to play football. EFAA even helped her teenage son get his car repaired — the same car he would take with him to start college at Colorado State University last fall.

This isn't an unfamiliar story. Many families coming to EFAA are already struggling to make ends meet on insufficient wages. A divorce or an unforeseen emergency — or both in Alma's case — can be all it takes for a family to lose their economic stability. For Alma to support her family without any kind of assistance, she would have needed to earn about \$70,000 a year, or \$33 per hour. Anything less than that wouldn't be enough to cover basic necessities, let alone save for emergencies. Luckily, in these scenarios, EFAA can step up to help.

"(EFAA) gave me hope that there's a light at the end of the tunnel, because it was really looking dark," said Alma. "It's crazy how being a single parent, you feel like there is no hope. But if you just reach out, there are a lot of people who can help."



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As we start a new decade and after just having finished the first year of EFAA's second century, it's a great time to take a broader look at EFAA's trajectory and impact in the community.

EFAA's roots in the community are deep. We are neighbors helping neighbors. We have built a community-based safety net that is an essential part of building resilience in our families and in our community.

The broad support for EFAA shone through this holiday season. Nearly 900 people donated through Colorado Gives Day, a record year. We were able to triple the holiday food baskets delivered to seniors and people with disabilities. And, after putting out a call to the community to help stock our Holiday Gift Room, over 10,000 toys were donated, helping hundreds of kids have a brighter holiday. We are so grateful to everyone that lent a hand!

Over the years we have built a strong support system for folks challenged to make ends meet. In this newsletter, you will read about our programs in the mountain communities. Over the last four years we have built a greater presence in our rural service area through the creation of our Mountain Resource Liaison, based in Nederland. This means EFAA's supportive services are locally accessible and based on the needs of those community members — both of which are critical for success.

As we look to the future, we are currently in the process of preparing a new five year strategic plan. While EFAA will always be there as a safety net, we will examine where there might be holes in that net, as well as continuing to invest in innovative programs that strengthen families for the long-term. **Over the last five years we have seen the results of expanding programming to help people access better paying jobs and permanently affordable housing through partnerships with other agencies in the community.** We have invested in getting the word out to raise awareness of child poverty within our community as well as investing directly in children's needs. Continually rising costs of housing and childcare call on us all to do even more.

And, thanks to your generous support in 2019, we are well positioned to move into this new decade. Thank you for continuing on this journey with us.

Julie Van Domelen
Executive Director



EFAA'S MISSION

EFAA helps those in our community whose immediate needs for food, shelter and other basic necessities cannot adequately be met by other means, and supports their efforts toward financial stability or self-sufficiency.

Emergency Family Assistance Association

Meeting our community's basic needs since 1918.

WINTER 2020

This newsletter is published four times annually by Emergency Family Assistance Association
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DOUBLE YOUR DONATION!

Ask your employer if they have a matching gift program and double the impact of your gift.



MAKE 2020 THE YEAR FAMILIES THRIVE!

DID YOU KNOW?

Over 135 people already give monthly sustaining gifts to EFAA that help families thrive all year long. You can join them by setting up your sustaining gift today!

WHY GIVE MONTHLY?

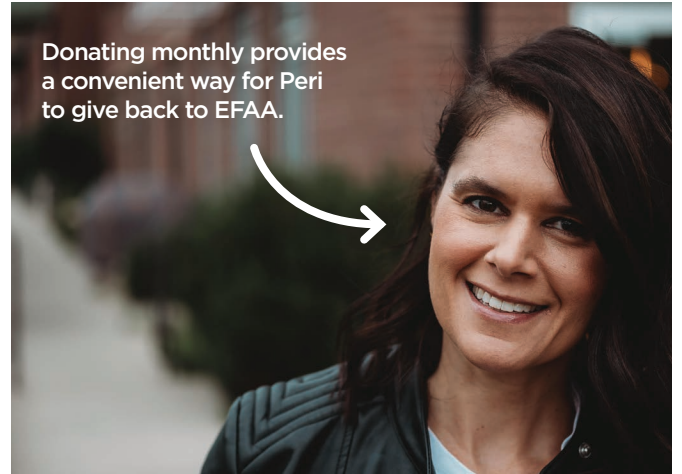
It's easy — just set it and forget it! You can make a recurring donation with your credit card online at efaa.org/donate or by setting up an automatic payment through your bank.

It's sustainable. Setting up a recurring donation provides stable funding to nonprofits like EFAA who otherwise receive the majority of donations in the last two months of the year.

"My monthly donation to EFAA allows me to give back in a way that fits with my monthly budget. Seeing the donation pop up on my credit card statement is also a monthly reminder to sign up for volunteer opportunities in the [food pantry] and gift room."

- Peri Shaplow, monthly donor and volunteer

Donating monthly provides a convenient way for Peri to give back to EFAA.



Visit efaa.org/donate to set up a recurring donation today, or check "I want to be a monthly donor to EFAA" on the reply slip provided in this newsletter.

ENHANCING EFAA'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Did you know?

Last year...

720
Volunteers Contributed

23,556
hours, equivalent to

11.3
full-time employees!

Visit efaa.org/volunteer to learn more about volunteering with EFAA.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES THROUGH SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS

This December, EFAA welcomed its first ever AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteer in Service to America), Brittany Newswanger, to the EFAA family. The AmeriCorps VISTA program connects passionate AmeriCorps members to local nonprofits focused on eradicating poverty across the United States. As EFAA's AmeriCorps VISTA, Brittany will focus on modernizing and automating the onboarding and training processes for volunteers, ultimately increasing efficiencies and building capacity in our volunteer program. Volunteers are a critical component of EFAA's work — not only do they embody the spirit of "neighbors helping neighbors," but they also help EFAA reduce costs, ensuring even more of your donations go directly to supporting local families.



This December, Brittany joined the team as EFAA's first ever AmeriCorps VISTA



EFAA EXPANDS SERVICES IN THE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES

Visit the Nederland Community Center on Highway 72 and you might run into an unexpected neighbor: EFAA! **Over 10% of people living in the Peak to Peak region live below the federal poverty level, and 16% live in households earning under \$25,000 per year.** Low incomes are further exacerbated by fewer resources and additional barriers to accessing services that are unique to rural communities. In 2016, EFAA expanded its service area to better meet the needs of Boulder County’s mountain residents, and in 2019 extended the Mountain Resource Liaison to a full-time position to meet the high demand for services.

Kristi Venditti, a mountain resident for nearly 20 years, has served as EFAA’s Mountain Resource Liaison since the beginning, and feels grateful to be able to help people directly in her own community. Kristi helps mountain residents access the same basic needs services EFAA provides in Boulder, but sometimes these services need to be adapted to meet the unique

needs of the community. “Someone might need firewood or propane to heat their home,” said Kristi, which looks different than a traditional utility bill. With less transportation options available for those who are elderly, disabled, or without a car, Kristi makes home visits on request to minimize the barriers and get people the help they need. “We have to think outside of the box all of the time,” said Kristi. These are just a few ways EFAA is adapting to ensure quality services are available to all under-resourced and economically disadvantaged Boulder County residents.

In order to amplify impact, EFAA partners with local agencies and government serving the Peak to Peak region such as the Area Agency on Aging, Boulder County Housing and Human Services, Canyon Cares, Center for People with Disabilities, Nederland Community Presbyterian Church, Nederland Food Pantry, Teens, Inc. and more. EFAA is part of the Peak to Peak Housing and Human Services Alliance



EFAA’s Mountain Resource Liaison, Kristi, enjoys being able to help people in her own community.

in addition to other community groups and coalitions.

Since 2016, EFAA has helped over 400 mountain residents meet their basic needs. In May of 2018, EFAA expanded its Keep Families Housed multi-month rental assistance program to the mountain communities which has since helped nearly 50 mountain families avoid homelessness, an expansion made possible thanks to support from The Colorado Health Foundation. For EFAA, this is just the beginning of making sure all people in our community have the resources they need to thrive.

Thank you for making the season brighter for local families!

Your support this winter made a big difference!

456

Volunteers

gave their time to help their neighbors in need

2,500

Donors

provided direct support to local families through financial contributions

52,595

Meals

donated to EFAA’s food pantry

10,688

Toys and Gifts

given to EFAA’s holiday gift room