



Johanna and Ricardo **STARTING A NEW LIFE**

Three years ago, Johanna and Ricardo made the brave and difficult decision to leave their home in Mexico and start a new life in the United States – a safer place with better opportunities for their children.

When the family arrived in Boulder County, they doubled up in a home with Ricardo's sister. While it provided a solution for the time being, it was stressful to share a small space with another family and kids. Johanna went out every day searching for affordable rental properties, but there was simply nothing available within budget. On top of that, the parents had trouble finding work and enrolling the kids in school.

While their early days in Colorado were not easy, Johanna and Ricardo persevered to create the life they wanted for their children.

Ricardo's sister told them about EFAA, an organization that helped her family avert homelessness and save for a mobile home of their own. "That's when things really changed," said Johanna, "Coming to EFAA was a total 360."

Johanna and Ricardo joined EFAA's two-year-long housing program in which participants work on self-identified goals while paying a subsidized rent rate. While living in EFAA's Longmont housing site, Johanna and Ricardo were able to make ends meet and start working toward their ambitious savings and budgeting goals.

Meanwhile, Ricardo was working for a landscaping company, and he realized that he might be able to bring in more income as an independent contractor. With a small bit of support from EFAA, he bought his own landscaping tools, enabling him to start his own landscaping business. In combination with Johanna's job at a fast-food restaurant, the couple put in an extraordinary amount of work to provide for their family – and their efforts are paying off.

Today, Johanna and Ricardo have saved enough money to buy a mobile home of their own.



"Our hope for the future is to have greater stability for the kids, and having a place of our own is an important step," Ricardo explained. "We would also love to be able to spend more time together as a family. Sometimes I come home very late after a long day of work, just as my wife is leaving for her job, and I don't get to see her very often. We have sacrificed so much, but I know it's worth it."

Their kids, currently age 10, 6, and 5, have also made some exciting breakthroughs working with EFAA's Children's Program. When they first came to EFAA, they were extremely shy and had difficulty adjusting to life in a new country. Our after-school Kid's Club volunteers worked closely with the children to develop skills like socialization and English pronunciation. Today, the kids are much more outgoing, confident, and happy. "As long as our kids are happy, then we're happy," Ricardo smiled.

Uprooting one's life and moving to an unfamiliar place is no small feat. **And yet, in just three years, this family has started a small business, saved enough money for a home, learned a new language, and became confident navigating community resources.** Johanna and Ricardo set out to create a better future for their children, and it appears as though this future is becoming a reality.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



EFAA'S MISSION

EFAA provides stabilizing services, innovative programs, and transformative advocacy to strengthen families and create a thriving community.

Emergency Family Assistance Association

Meeting our community's basic needs since 1918.

Fall 2021

This newsletter is published three 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.

Recovery from crisis is often referred to as a marathon, not a sprint. The metaphor seems fitting as we round the corner on 20 months since COVID arrived in our community, with a new variant causing headwinds to our recovery. Unemployment in Boulder County peaked at 10 percent at the height of initial business closures in spring 2020, falling to between 5 and 6 percent, where it has hovered over the past year. While schools have reopened, parents continue to struggle accessing adequate and affordable childcare and juggling work and childcare during quarantine and temporary closures. The lifting of eviction moratoria requires renters to settle arrears or find other housing.

Throughout, EFAA has and will continue to address immediate needs. We have recently reopened our food bank to in-person shopping. EFAA has restarted our afterschool Kids Club, albeit outdoors. And we have restarted the multi-month homelessness prevention program, Keep Families Housed, which allows for rental assistance combined with deeper work and more frequent support from our case managers for families with children facing housing insecurity. We have also launched a Financial Health Course designed by EFAA's Participant Advisory Council, allowing participants to identify their financial needs, including savings strategies, credit management and other financial necessities, to build economic resilience — particularly appropriate given the economic depletions caused by COVID.

And while our community is not out of crisis yet, EFAA is simultaneously starting to plan for longer-term recovery needs. EFAA is currently engaged not only internally but with external partners, including Boulder County, the City of Boulder, and non-profit partners, to chart a collective course for recovery. New programs and partnerships to address specific recovery needs are on the horizon.

And recovery will be the last stretch of this marathon. We appreciate the support from you all, as volunteers, donors, and ambassadors of EFAA. Thank you for staying the course with us.

Here's to the last lap!

Julie Van Domelen
Executive Director



MEET Ana!



EFAA's Strategic Education efforts raise awareness and advocate for systemic change on issues facing our community's most vulnerable. To advance this work, EFAA is pleased to have brought on Ana Fernandez Frank as our full-time Public Policy and Outreach Coordinator.

Q. What brought you to work for EFAA?

A. Ever since I moved to Colorado five years ago, I have volunteered with EFAA in many different capacities. I started volunteering in the food bank, moved into intake, and then helped start the Participant Advisory Council (PAC). I am very passionate about EFAA's mission, so when I learned about this new position, I jumped at the opportunity!

Q. What do EFAA's Strategic Education efforts aim to achieve?

A. It is all about raising awareness and educating people, so that they feel moved to take action to address the issues our participants are facing. We also want to elevate participant's voices in public policy discussions, so their lived experience informs local leaders.

Q. What excites you most about this new position?

A. I'm excited to bring volunteers and participants together to affect real change, since there are currently not many spaces for these individuals to come together. I'm also excited to intentionally connect with other community groups in Boulder to leverage resources.

Q. Tell us something about yourself that people may not know about you.

A. I'm from Argentina, I love horses, and my maternal grandparents were German Jews who met in Buenos Aires after they escaped the Holocaust.

Thank you TO EFAA'S GUILD CELEBRATION COMMITTEE!



For nearly 30 years, EFAA's annual Celebration Gala has drawn friends, family, and supporters together for a special evening to raise critical funds for EFAA. Complete with live entertainment, a silent and live auction, and a shared interest in helping all our neighbors thrive, this annual fundraising event gathers 350-400 people and typically raises over \$350,000.

Behind the scenes of Boulder's premier fundraising event is a group of fun, hardworking, and passionate volunteers known as the Guild Team Committee (GTC) working to make the magic happen.

"It's a really caring bunch of women from all walks of life, each with our own reason for being on the committee," says GTC Co-Chair, Christine. "I really appreciate the comradery and connection shared with others who hold EFAA's mission so close to their heart. We put on a well-run event – and we have fun while doing it!"

Right now, the GTC is busy planning EFAA's "Midnight in Paris" Celebration Gala, which will take place on April 9, 2022. Interested in joining this exceptional team?

Visit efaa.org/volunteer to learn more.



Thank you to the GTC for all of your hard work and dedication!

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EFAA Volunteer Steps Up DURING THE PANDEMIC



Ryan was just 11 years old when he began volunteering at EFAA. It started as a family affair, with him and his older brother hosting a Mother's Day food drive. At 13, he joined his mother, who serves on EFAA's Development and Communications committee, by volunteering as photographer for the annual Celebration Gala.

Today, the high school junior has ramped up his volunteer efforts in EFAA's food bank, clocking some serious hours since the start of COVID and stepping into the role of Food Bank Shift Lead. With virtual learning in place and

extracurricular activities on pause, he wanted a way to keep himself busy and help others. "I realized that I'm young, healthy, and the least at-risk group and volunteering would be a great way to prevent more at-risk people from getting sick."

Even with a busy schedule, Ryan carves out the time to volunteer with EFAA because of the enriching experience it gives him. He loves getting to know folks who come for food, and he appreciates the community of volunteer "regulars" that has formed on the Friday afternoon shift. "I started volunteering more in this past year to keep myself busy while making a difference, but forming those connections is what keeps me coming back. Shout-out to Alyssa, Jill, and the Friday afternoon crew!"

OUR IMPACT IN 2021

Thanks to your support, EFAA helped 5,923 people in Boulder County access food, housing, and essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic.



\$3.7M in financial assistance for rent, utilities, and minor medical costs



3X THE AMOUNT of financial assistance distributed before the pandemic



NEARLY 1M POUNDS of food distributed, worth over **\$1.6M**

Thank you, MISSION PARTNERS!

Thank you to our 2021 Mission Partners who continue to invest in EFAA's work to strengthen families and create a more resilient community.

Interested in learning more? Please contact Teresa@efaa.org.

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