



Summer 2022 • Meeting our community's basic needs since 1918.

efaa news

FROM HARDSHIP TO THE HIGHEST GRADE IN CLASS: *Lizzie's Story*

Lizzie was struggling in school — especially math class. Life hasn't been easy for the 9th grader and her family over the past few years, ever since her father passed away unexpectedly. As the breadwinner of the family, when they lost him, they lost everything. Having previously led a financially comfortable life, they were suddenly forced to give up their home and family pets. Lizzie's mother lives with a disability and a very small income, and it was not enough to make ends meet for the family.

On top of their family trauma, COVID-19 was swiftly shutting down classrooms around the world, forcing school-aged children into a virtual learning setting. Amidst the isolation and lost learning, Lizzie began to slip in school.

Through first working with OUR Center in Longmont and then getting connected to a case manager at EFAA, Lizzie and her mother moved into EFAA's transitional housing in Longmont while they worked to get back on their feet. At that time, they learned about EFAA's Children Youth and Family Program, which provides enriching activities and support for children living in EFAA's housing sites.

After some convincing from her mother, Lizzie agreed to weekly Zoom math tutoring with Dave, a retired computer software engineer who has been volunteering with EFAA's Children Youth and Family program for four years. EFAA started offering virtual tutoring during the pandemic when learning went online.

That's when things began to change.

Over the past year and a half of working together, Dave became a mentor and trusted role model to Lizzie. The two have never actually seen each other or met in person — in their weekly tutoring sessions monitored by the Children's Program Coordinator, they turned off cameras and used screen sharing to go over math homework. She began to open up to him about her struggles in school, her difficulty working with her teacher, and her self-doubts. Dave worked with her to build not only her math skills, but also her self-confidence.

These efforts paid off. In April of this year, after a midterm math test, Lizzie learned that she earned the highest grade in the whole class!

Lizzie already had the determination and smarts needed to succeed in school — all it took was one person to help her realize it. Lizzie shared with Dave that maybe she wasn't



as “bad” at math as she thought she was, and, in fact, she is pretty good at it. Today, Lizzie is thinking about taking these skills a step further by going to college to become an engineer, like Dave.

“She's such an intelligent girl, and when life throws you a curveball like that it's just so hard to get motivated in school,” said Lizzie's mom. “Having EFAA and Dave there was so helpful for her, and it's just nice to know that someone is there.”

While Lizzie and her mother are moving out of EFAA's transitional housing (after having saved enough to move into a place of their own), Lizzie will continue to work with Dave on math homework and job applications for summer work. Lizzie's story demonstrates the power of EFAA's philosophy of strengthening the whole family: ensuring children have the tools they need to be successful in life and break the cycle of poverty, while ensuring household stability today. We congratulate Lizzie on her hard-earned accomplishments in school!

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.

Summer 2022

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DOUBLE YOUR DONATION!

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

Even as our pre-COVID life returns, challenges to recover for the most vulnerable in our community remain at the forefront. We are currently seeing the intense impacts of rising housing and food costs in our community. Weekly household visits to EFAA's food bank are higher than they have been at any time since the pandemic started.

With the community response like the stories in this newsletter about food donations and food drives, as well as some grants to be able to buy additional food products, EFAA's food bank has been working hard to keep up with this increased need. The average food visit to EFAA saves a household an estimated \$116. If households come weekly, this would result in over \$6,000 in annual food cost savings.

Even when it was difficult to imagine that housing costs could rise any higher in our community, they have hit record prices. This has put a squeeze on local renters. Despite the significant amount of rental assistance available from public and non-profit agencies, we are seeing a record number of families being priced out of their housing, driving up family homelessness. For families accessing temporary housing in EFAA's Housing program, finding successful exits to safe, adequate, and affordable housing is more challenging than ever.

EFAA's staff of trained case managers work with parents and their children to stabilize, save money, set goals, and develop strategies to become more economically resilient and find permanent housing. Stories like Lizzie's in this newsletter show the positive impact that providing this kind of support can have on a family.

We are so grateful to EFAA's donors, funders, staff, and volunteers that we can sustain the level of effort needed to help our community move towards immediate recovery and longer-term equity and well-being.

Julie Van Domelen
Executive Director



EFAA Promotes CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH VOTER REGISTRATION

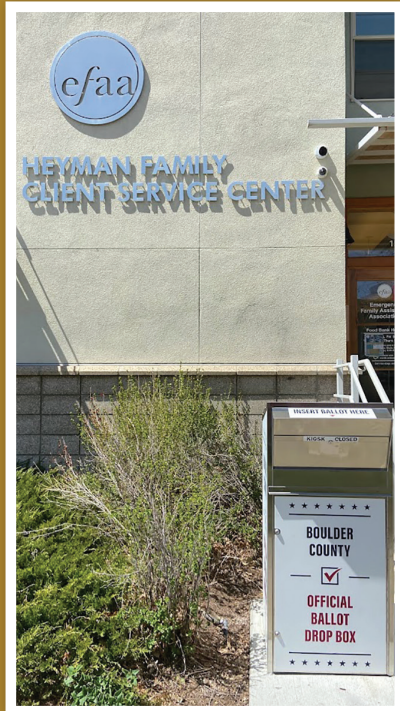
Did you know that in addition to providing food, financial assistance, housing, and family support, EFAA also lends our voice and support for public policy and legislative issues that would positively benefit our participants' lives?

This past fall, in collaboration with Community Resource Center (CRC), EFAA launched a nonpartisan voter engagement campaign to empower our participants to use their voices to inform public policy decisions. The goal of these efforts is not only to drive people to register to vote, but also to disseminate information about the election process and debunk misinformation.

The 2021 campaign was a huge success – we initially set out to register 75 people to vote, and we exceeded this goal by registering 118 voters! These efforts mean that historically underserved or under-engaged voters are making their vote count on ballot issues that could directly impact the quality of their lives, such as affordable housing and minimum wage.

In addition to this voter outreach initiative, EFAA also installed a 24-hour ballot box outside of our main office! This makes it easier for our participants and the neighboring community to cast their ballots in the Colorado elections.

This year we plan to build upon our early success, raising awareness and registering even more people. Follow us on social media to keep up with the latest news on our voter engagement efforts.



Spotlight on VAN THUYNE FARMS



Did you know that substituting legumes for meat can help reduce the risk of developing a chronic disease, and people who incorporate beans in their diets have lower body weights and lower blood pressure? Simply put, beans are a healthy and magical food.

In our own backyard of Boulder County, the cultivation of this superfood is alive and well at Jules Van Thuyne's family farm. On his 1,800 acres of private and County-owned land, last year Jules harvested a whopping 250,000 pounds of pinto beans which were thereafter sorted, cleaned, and dried. We are so grateful to Jules and Van Thuyne Family Farms for bringing these pinto beans to EFAA's food bank for our participants to enjoy, thanks to a partnership with Boulder County Public Health.

While beans are an excellent choice for everyone to incorporate into their diet, they are also a beloved staple of cooking for Latino cultures. At EFAA, Latinos comprise over 50% of our participants. In an effort to have a more welcoming and inclusive food bank, EFAA has been actively working on expanding the availability of culturally relevant foods, such as dried chiles, masa, and tamale husks.

Thank you to Jules, Van Thuyne Family Farms and Boulder County Public Health for your commitment to keeping our community fed, healthy, and thriving!



Jules dropping off a shipment of pinto beans at EFAA.



EFAA is pleased to welcome Kammi Siemens as our new Director of Programs. Kammi brings years of leadership and expertise in economic mobility, including with Goodwill Industries International and the Jewish Family Service in Boulder.

MEET Kammi!



Q. What brought you to work for EFAA?

A. I have been personally and professionally committed to working on economic resilience for my entire career. Working at EFAA is like “coming home” for me – I’m originally from Colorado, and I recently moved back after working at the policy level in DC for several years. I’m so grateful to make a difference here where my family is.

Q. What are you most excited about at EFAA?

A. The heart of what attracts me to EFAA is its whole-family approach to end the cycle of poverty. I have always believed that social issues are deeply entrenched, and issues like family homelessness and food insecurity contribute to child poverty, which has lifelong impacts. My motto is “every kid to bed, fed.”

Q. What is one thing you hope to improve?

A. I am excited to bring some of the policies and strategies to EFAA that I have seen be effective in moving the needle on economic resilience. It’s part of what I like to call a “3-legged stool”: work, housing, and money management. EFAA is one of the few agencies that recognizes the power of economic resilience, and it is uniquely poised to make a difference in that area.

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

A. I have been a glass artist for over 20 years! My specialty is kiln formed glass sculptures that evoke motion of the waves in the ocean, which inspires the name of my business, Fire Ocean Glass. Having a creative outlet helps me be creative in problem solving at work!

Local 12-Year-Old HOSTS MASSIVE FOOD DRIVE FOR EFAA

Meet Ryder – a local 12-year-old who facilitated one of the largest individual food drive donations to EFAA of all time.

For his Bar Mitzvah Service-Learning project, Ryder was inspired to run a food drive to help restock shelves after increased community need from COVID. We were amazed when he came to EFAA with an outstanding 1,430 pounds of food! This is enough to feed a family of four for three months.

“I really love our community, and my goal in running this food drive was to help as many people as possible. I felt really proud when I learned that my efforts could help feed a family of four.”

A born organizer with an entrepreneurial spirit, Ryder went above and beyond to solicit food drive donations for EFAA by coordinating with local organizations. At Ryder’s urging, Superior County and the Louisville Library placed food drive bins outside of their buildings. Ryder’s business-savvy efforts for good extend beyond EFAA – this young person also runs his own small business of snack vending machines and donates 20% of profits to local charities. Ryder’s efforts remind us all that it’s never too early to start making a difference.

Thank you, Ryder, for your commitment to helping EFAA and the community at large!

