



Fall 2023 • Meeting our community's basic needs since 1918.

efaa news

AFTER A SERIES OF CHALLENGING EVENTS, LIFE IS GETTING BACK ON TRACK

Rachel's Story



Just before COVID, Rachel, a single mom, was promoted at work. Her promotion required a move to California to work out of the home office. She loved her job writing content and doing website development, and was excited about this new opportunity. Unfortunately, it was short-lived. A year after COVID hit, the company where she had worked for the past 4 years, collapsed. Rachel tried doing freelance work so that she and her daughter could stay in California, but the cost of living was “astronomical,” so they decided to leave.

Now in the throes of the pandemic, with no home and no job, Rachel and her daughter moved in with a friend in Ohio. This arrangement worked out for a while, but then, just twenty miles south of where they were staying, the East Palestine train derailment happened. “At first it wasn’t obvious, and it wasn’t really in the news, but we started noticing things among ourselves like constant headaches, throat issues, and the dog stopped drinking the water.” They had the water tested and learned that the well showed evidence of poison. Without a safe living situation, Rachel and her daughter were moving again.

Rachel had friends in Boulder who said they would help her out. So, she and her daughter returned to Boulder last March. She was happy to get her daughter enrolled in a good school, but then it felt like one thing happened after another. Rachel couldn’t find a job and the housing arrangement that had been promised to her

ended abruptly when her friends announced that they had family coming to town. Then her daughter’s father passed away, and even though they had separated and had a difficult past, it was a shock and hard to grasp.

Not knowing where to turn, Rachel came to EFAA and got an appointment with Jasmin, EFAA’s family homelessness resource navigator. Jasmin was able to provide emergency housing with a week of hotel stays, and she added Rachel and her 8-year-old daughter to the waitlist for transitional housing. “Every step of the way, Jasmin was there for me. Throughout each step of the process no matter how small or large it was, I felt really supported, that she genuinely cared.”

Shortly after, Rachel got a job as an event coordinator with a restaurant in Louisville. She was moving forward and feeling hopeful. But it was hard. She was living in a hotel, maxing her paychecks, and borrowing money from friends to cover additional nights as she waited for transitional housing with EFAA.

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Within a few weeks, one of EFAA’s units opened up and Rachel and her daughter were able to move in. Now in a home with a kitchen, and visits to the EFAA food bank, Rachel can prepare meals again and start saving money. With her daughter back in school, and bookings for holiday events coming in at the restaurant, Rachel’s work is going well and her employers have been really supportive. Rachel’s goal while staying in transitional housing, is to focus on her work routine to start earning a consistent, predictable income, so that she and her daughter can look forward to finding a more permanent place to call home.

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 2023

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DOUBLE YOUR DONATION!

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

EFAA continues to see striking levels of need in this post-pandemic period. About 6,000 people received support from EFAA during each of the peak pandemic years. While this was significantly more than before the pandemic, it was nothing like what we have seen over the past year where over 7,500 community members came to EFAA.

What is driving this increased need? Frontline workers and lower-income households emerged from COVID economically depleted. Pandemic supports, like rental assistance through the Federal Government, increased levels of SNAP (food) benefits, and expanded access to Medicaid, have all now expired. But the real shock has been the effects of inflation on households that were just getting by. The combined impact of increased costs of housing, childcare, and food have tipped many local residents into needing safety net support.

The safety net alone cannot fully address the growing community need. A job is no longer protection against hunger and homelessness, as lower-income wages have not kept pace with inflation. As a result, more working families are losing their housing or having to choose between paying rent or buying food. This past year, the Boulder Valley School District reported over 800 children registered as homeless in BVSD, compared to under 400 in the years pre-COVID.

If EFAA is the canary in the coal mine, then we have been chirping loudly about this crisis. The Colorado Center on Law and Policy's 2022 report found that 1 in 4 Boulder County residents do not earn enough to make ends meet. In 2018, a family of four in Boulder County (two adults, one preschooler and one school-aged child) needed 2 full-time minimum wage jobs to make ends meet. By 2022, this same family would *need 4 minimum wage jobs to make ends meet in Boulder*. Because of what we are seeing, EFAA supports increasing the minimum wage in our community.

Until then, as Boulder's community safety net, our ability to meet the growing need relies significantly on you, our community. Nearly 70% of our work is fueled by contributions from individual donors, private foundations, and local businesses. You can make a difference by engaging on Colorado Gives Day or other year-end giving, or by sponsoring a holiday food drive through one of your community connections (schools, religious organizations, clubs, etc.).

EFAA and our whole community will need to find ways to meet this moment. We thank you for your support!

Julie Van Domelen
Executive Director



EFAA LAUNCHES CIRCLE OF PARENTS® PROGRAM TO PROVIDE SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

This August, EFAA began hosting Circle of Parents support groups for EFAA participants. The groups are intended to provide a safe, confidential, and non-judgmental space for parents/caregivers to support one another as they share the challenges and triumphs of raising children. Parents are encouraged to share their experiences, ideas, and resources among their peers, to build knowledge, skills, and confidence. Discussion topics are driven by the needs of the parents, and may include bullying, improving communication within the family, healthy sexual development for teens, and challenges in school.

EFAA's Circle of Parents groups are held once a month in both English and Spanish. Dinner and activities for children are provided to reduce barriers to participation. This expanded programming is part of EFAA's commitment to not just meet families' basic needs, but to provide tools, resources, and connections to help families thrive.



BOULDER CHAMBER LAUNCHES YEAR-LONG FOOD DRIVE PROGRAM TO BENEFIT EFAA AND HARVEST OF HOPE PANTRY

In order to address the severe food needs of many of our neighbors in Boulder County, the Boulder Chamber, in partnership with the Food Security Network (FSN), EFAA, and Harvest of Hope Pantry have joined forces to create a year-long food drive program. We are asking businesses and community members to work together to help us overcome food scarcity in our community.

The EFAA Food Bank and Harvest of Hope Pantry will receive food-drive donations on an alternating monthly schedule—with September, November, and January supporting EFAA. This rotation will continue through July 2024.

“In just the last year, demand at our food bank has increased 62%, and we are seeing 650 families and individuals using our food bank every week,” said EFAA Food Bank Manager, Walter O’Toole. “Food drives are a critical resource for us, stocking our shelves with a variety of high-quality foods, and creating long-lasting partnerships with Boulder businesses.”

This partnership provides a great opportunity for Boulder businesses to engage with their clients, partners, and employees, while demonstrating their commitment to supporting our community. It's a win-win for all.

Scan here to access the Boulder Chamber Food Drive Interest Form.



If your company or employer is interested in taking part, please sign up on the Boulder Chamber website, or use the QR code provided here.

FY 2023 IMPACT

Thank you for coming together to help our neighbors!



3,368 Households
representing 7,581 individuals
including 2,431 children



545 Volunteers
contributed 20,308
hours of service



4,741 Donors
759 were first-time donors



\$3,231,435*
in financial assistance
distributed for rent, utilities,
and minor medical costs



1,535,346 Lbs
of food distributed worth
\$3 million to keep families fed

**Government funding in response to the pandemic provided additional funds for distribution. This funding has ended.*



Volunteer SPOTLIGHT



FOR *Rhonda McLay*, SUPPORTING EFAA IS ALL ABOUT HEART

Rhonda is a former chair and 20+ year member of the EFAA Guild Team Committee (GTC). The GTC, formerly known as the Guild, is the committee responsible for planning and hosting EFAA's fundraising events. This year the group launched the inaugural Friend Fest event in April and held the second annual Farm-to-Table dinner in October. Rhonda enjoys playing an active role soliciting donations for EFAA's events and loves the social connections and fellowship of being part of the GTC.

While she has lots memorable moments from years of EFAA events, one that stands out is the EFAA Celebration in 2017. That was the year two Category 5 hurricanes struck the U.S. Virgin Islands. Rhonda and her husband have a home in St. John and over the past several years, have donated the use of that home as a live auction item at EFAA's Celebration events. Unfortunately the hurricanes caused considerable damage to their home, so they couldn't include it in that

year's auction. However, Rhonda's son came up with an alternate solution. His English Cream Retriever had recently given birth to a litter of puppies, so he decided to donate one of the puppies to the auction. The puppy turned out to be a very popular auction item, generating lots of bids and contributing to a successful fundraising event.

Rhonda treasures the friendships she's made from being part of the EFAA family and appreciates the many ways that people can get involved—whether volunteering at the foodbank, donating funds, or serving on a committee—there are just so many opportunities for people to make a difference. The most meaningful part for Rhonda is “the warmth that your heart gets from giving.” Thank you, Rhonda, for your many years of service to EFAA and the Boulder Community!

Email volunteer@efaa.org if you're interested in learning more about joining the GTC.



Make a Difference THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The Holiday Giving Season is upon us! Here are some meaningful ways you can help make the season brighter for families in our community.

Colorado Gives Day

Between November 1st and December 5th, your gift to EFAA through Colorado Gives will go even further thanks to the \$1.4 Million+ Incentive Fund.



Scan here for more information
on EFAA's Holiday Giving
opportunities.

www.efaa.org/holiday-giving



Food Bank

Help provide the fixings for a special holiday meal.

Holiday Table Wish List:

- Frozen Turkey
- Cranberry Sauce
- Dehydrated Potatoes
- Canned Pumpkin
- Stuffing Mix
- Masa
- Dried Chilis
- Corn Husks
- Cooking Oil
- Meat/Vegetable Broth

Gift Room

Donations accepted from
November 27–December 11.

Help spread holiday cheer for families struggling to make ends meet by donating new, unwrapped gifts for children and teens. Last year, the EFAA gift room made the holidays brighter for more than 800 children and teens!

Gift ideas include:

- Legos, stuffed animals, and other toys
- Sports equipment (skateboards, scooters, soccer balls, etc.)
- Cosmetics and beauty supplies