



efaa news

WHEN LIFE UNEXPECTEDLY CHANGES COURSE, EFAA OFFERS A LIFELINE: *Nat's Journey of Resilience*

In January 2022, Nat, a long-time Boulder resident and 25-year employee of a local software company, found his life turned upside down. He received a diagnosis that an ongoing medical condition was more severe than he imagined, causing permanent damage to his spinal cord. Nat was now facing the prospect of life in a wheelchair. This unexpected outcome not only impacted his health but also his ability to work and maintain financial stability.

"I was in a really sticky situation," Nat recalls. In the year leading up to his diagnosis, symptoms of his condition made it impossible to continue full-time work, so he transitioned into a part-time, contract position. This changed his health insurance benefits, leaving Nat without coverage for medical long-term disability. With mounting debt and an expensive apartment rental, he was falling behind on rent and soon faced eviction.

Nat did research to find programs that were available to him, but there were delays at every turn. He applied for Social Security disability and was told it would take nine months to process his claim and determine if he qualified. He applied to Medicaid for a disability waiver which would subsidize his move into an assisted living facility. But it would take three months to work through the Medicaid approval process with the state.

It was at this critical point that Nat reached out to EFAA and was connected with Erica, a resource navigator. Within a week of his initial interview, Erica was able to provide support with a special multi-month rental assistance program that covered the three-months of rent Nat needed to stay in his apartment until Medicaid came through. "Erica was fantastic," he says, praising the efficiency of EFAA's process.

The assistance from EFAA proved to be a turning point. It provided a bridge between his immediate housing crisis and the longer-term support he needed. After EFAA's help, he spent nine months in an assisted living facility, which was crucial for his physical and psychological adjustment to his new circumstances.

Nat's situation continued to improve. In January 2024, he was approved for Social Security disability benefits,



“The program was fantastic. I only have good things to say about it.”

providing him with steady income. He also obtained a Housing Choice Voucher that allowed him to rent an apartment that supported his needs, with the help of a federal subsidy. Nat moved into his apartment on July 1, 2024.

Today, he lives independently in his own apartment, a situation he describes as “so good for my brain and my psychological health,” marking a significant milestone as he navigates his new way of life.

Reflecting on his experience, Nat expresses deep gratitude for EFAA's support. “The program was fantastic. I only have good things to say about it.” While he will continue to face challenges ahead, with a little help from EFAA, Nat was able to navigate a life-altering transition while maintaining his independence.

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 2024

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.

Life is certainly unpredictable. Unexpected changes and shocks can alter our day-to-day experience or life trajectory. Being a Lyons resident, in July we went through a forest fire evacuation of half the town within 5 hours of the fire starting. While the valiant firefighters kept the fire from sweeping into our town, the reminder of the ever-present risks stays in the bones.

As we approach the season of giving, we're reminded of the countless lives touched by unexpected crises. From a sudden health diagnosis, as we hear about in this issue, to job losses, and even natural disasters, our community faces challenges that can upend lives in an instant. That's where EFAA steps in, providing a crucial safety net when it's needed most.

We couldn't do what we do without the dedication and commitment of our staff. We're delighted to introduce you to Kristi, who was recently promoted to Director of Programs. Her experience will be invaluable as we continue to stand at the forefront, assisting those navigating life's unpredictable turns.

EFAA's strength lies in our adaptability and comprehensive approach. We don't just offer temporary relief; we provide a robust safety net that expands and contracts to meet changing community needs. Our goal is to prevent a single crisis from spiraling into a cascade of problems – ensuring that a job loss doesn't lead to homelessness, for instance. Through the tireless work of our staff, we offer more than just immediate aid. We provide strategic support, helping households navigate crises, boost employment opportunities, and improve financial literacy.

As EFAA continues to respond to ever-changing community needs with fluctuating resources, we remain reliant on community support to keep our safety net healthy and responsive. This holiday season, your support can make a real difference in strengthening this vital community resource – through your contributions of time and money, or telling your friends and neighbors about EFAA and the good work we do.

Our sincere gratitude to you all.

Julie Van Domelen
Executive Director



MEET KRISTI, EFAA'S NEW DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

When you meet Kristi, it's clear her dedication to serving the community runs deep. From volunteering at her mother's nonprofit supporting people experiencing homelessness, to earning a master's in social work and community organizing, Kristi has devoted her career to making a difference.



Kristi arrived in Boulder from Canada when her van broke down on her way to Mexico. She never made it to Mexico. Instead, Kristi stayed in Boulder to attend CU and eventually settled in Nederland – raising her children and getting involved in the local community. She worked for Nederland Elementary as a community liaison and then developed and ran EFAA's Mountain Resource program. Kristi transitioned to the role of Basic Needs Program Manager for EFAA, where she oversaw a team of 10 resource navigators responsible for distributing over \$3 million in financial assistance during her tenure.

Now, as EFAA's new Director of Programs, Kristi is bringing her passion for service and her holistic, family-centered approach to the organization. "It just feels like my calling," she says. "I can't imagine myself doing anything else but service work."

In this role, Kristi is focused on taking a 360-degree view of EFAA's programs and services. Rather than concentrating on day-to-day operations, she's looking at how to most effectively support the families EFAA serves.

"The exciting thing is putting all the pieces together – our family development work, financial assistance, housing program, and food bank – and figuring out how to implement that family-centered approach across everything we do," Kristi explains.

Kristi's collaborative, relational leadership style is key to her vision. She wants her team to feel united in working towards EFAA's mission, and is committed to open communication, coaching, and creative problem-solving.

As Kristi steps into her new position, she faces significant challenges – from right-sizing programs with shifting resources, to supporting staff who managed the intense demand of recent years. But she is still optimistic, especially about new initiatives like EFAA's commitment to working more intensively with families to help springboard them out of poverty.

With Kristi's visionary leadership and unwavering commitment, EFAA is poised to make an even greater impact.

96%

of respondents agree that "EFAA staff & volunteers respect my identity, are welcoming, and treat me with respect."

(EFAA FY '24 Participant Survey)

FY 24 IMPACT

Thank you for coming together to help our neighbors!



6%



3,577 Households
representing 8,571 individuals
including 2,957 children



2%



\$3,295,559
in financial assistance
distributed for rent, utilities,
and minor medical costs



4%



1,595,374 Lbs
of food distributed worth
\$3 million to keep families fed



14%



4,067 Donors
415 were first-time donors



14%



620 Volunteers
contributed 23,656
hours of service



Double Your Gift WITH EMPLOYEE MATCHING

As the holiday season approaches, many of us are looking for ways to make a bigger difference with our charitable donations. Employee Match Programs are a simple strategy that can double the impact of your gifts.

Employee matching is when a company agrees to match donations made by their employees, often on a dollar-for-dollar basis. This means that a \$100 gift to a nonprofit like EFAA can become a \$200 donation when your employer adds a matching contribution.

Employee match donations account for a significant portion of EFAA's corporate revenue - 41% or nearly \$100,000 last fiscal year. "The largest businesses are doing away with top-down corporate giving and tend to be investing more in employee giving," explains Jake, EFAA's Institutional Giving Officer.

Most companies have a December 31st deadline for matching gifts, so be sure to take advantage before the end of the year. It's an easy way to maximize your charitable impact this holiday season and support the vital work EFAA does in our community.



Scan here for our [Donate/Funds page](#).
Scroll down to "Ways to Give" and select "Employer Matching."

TOP LOCAL COMPANIES WITH EMPLOYEE MATCHES:

- Ball Corporation
- Bayer Corporation
- Chevron Corporation
- Google
- HP, Inc.
- IBM
- ICF International, Inc.
- Medtronic
- Microsoft Corp.
- NetApp, Inc.
- Oracle
- PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.
- Qualcomm Technologies, Inc.



Make a Difference THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Colorado Gives Day is Tuesday, December 10



Your gift to EFAA through Colorado Gives will go even further thanks to a \$1.4 Million Incentive Fund.

For more information on how to get involved this holiday season, visit www.efaa.org/holiday-giving.



Or scan here for more information on the EFAA's Holiday Giving opportunities.

Food Bank

Help provide the fixings for a special holiday meal.

HERE'S OUR HOLIDAY TABLE WISH LIST:

HOLIDAY DINNER

- Frozen Turkey
- Ham
- Dehydrated Mashed Potatoes
- Stuffing Mix
- Gravy Mix
- Cranberry Sauce

HOLIDAY TAMALES

- Masa Harina
- Corn Husks
- Dried Chiles
- Lard
- Beef Broth
- Frozen Pork Loin

HOLIDAY DESSERTS

- Frozen Pie Crusts
- Canned Apple Pie Filling
- Canned Pumpkin
- Evaporated Milk
- Pumpkin Spice Mix
- Mexican Hot Chocolate

