



**Community  
Food Bank**



**COMMUNITY FOOD BANK  
OF GRAND JUNCTION**

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2020**

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Community Coming Together



# A YEAR OF UNPRECEDENTED NEED & GROWTH

## Letter from the Executive Director

What a time to step into a leadership role here at the Community Food Bank of Grand Junction! With only 60 days on the job before the pandemic hit, it was certainly a challenge to navigate the new position and essentially redesign our entire operations overnight as we experienced double our service volume, transitioned to an outdoor drive-thru pantry model, navigated food supply chain disruptions, and worked hard to keep our staff, volunteers, and clients safe. All of this while moving hundreds of thousands of pounds in and out of a 2,800 sq ft. space, renting a refrigerated truck for cold storage, and simultaneously completing our 3yr strategic plan, capital campaign, new building renovation and move. Phew, what a year!!

While the challenges were intense, I have been incredibly humbled by all the amazing silver linings that emerged along this journey. As someone who was born and raised in the Grand Valley, I have never felt more proud to call a place home. With all of your support, our team didn't even miss a beat -- we launched a new home delivery program, secured a beautiful permanent facility, and continue to innovate creative ways to best serve those in need. I am eternally grateful to everyone who is a part of the CFB family for stepping up to the challenges at hand, and helping our organization emerge from this storm stronger than ever! As we begin to see light at the end of this long tunnel, I am so excited about the current momentum of the Community Food Bank and all the wonderful services we will be able to provide moving forward. On behalf of our clients in need, we cannot thank you enough.

In gratitude,  
Alisha Wenger



## BOARD PRESIDENT MESSAGE



In June of 2019 I made it a goal during my tenure as Board President to do two things; find an Executive Director replacement and help secure a permanent home for the Community Food Bank. Fortunately, we were able to hire Alisha Wenger for the Executive Director position in time to guide us through the global pandemic. As COVID-19 took hold on our country, stressing resources to the limit, we also saw amazing support from our community. Not only were we able to keep our doors open and meet unprecedented demand, we found and secured financing for our permanent home! The support from our private donors, businesses, and community partners was absolutely jaw dropping. There is no way to express our gratitude and pride for this community.

After months of hard work from our contractor and construction partners, we moved into the new building on 476 28 1/2 Rd in November, just in time for our holiday season. The new space allows us to expand our services to meet community needs in an efficient manner. We look forward to inviting the public to come gather and see the new facility as it becomes appropriate. In January 2021, Karen McLean-Wilson took over leadership as our new Board President ready to lead us as we keep moving forward. The Community Food Bank is in the best position it has ever been to meet its mission for years! Hope to see you all soon.

*-Peter Kunisch, 2020 Board President*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karen McLean-Wilson **President**  
Cole Sjöholm **Vice President**  
Travis Mullenix **Treasurer**  
Mara Hardy **Secretary**

Biff Messinger  
Peter Kunisch  
Barb Firth  
Christopher Piquette

Dirk Hogue  
Shaheen Sheikh  
Sara Warzecka

## CFB STAFF

Alisha Wenger **Executive Director**  
Renee Jones **Volunteer Coordinator**  
Chelsea Craine **Program Assistant**

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Community Food Bank (CFB) is to provide a short-term supply of nutritious food and access to available hunger-relief resources to any Mesa County community member experiencing need.



### EQUITY

CFB strives to remove barriers to healthy food access for those in our community who are in need, regardless of their background or economic standing, in a manner that best addresses their individual situation.



### SERVICE

CFB is here to serve our community through rescuing good food from the waste stream, and providing food access programs to community members in need of a helping hand.



### INTEGRITY

CFB has been serving Mesa County since 1978. For over 42 years people have been able to count on us in their time of need.

## VISION STATEMENT

CFB's vision is that every person in need has access to the nutritious foods and resources they need for their families to thrive while preventing any unnecessary food waste in the Grand Valley.



### ACCEPTANCE

CFB staff, board, and volunteers accept any clients requesting need without questioning their situation, meeting the client where they are at and adjusting our approach as necessary.



### ABUNDANCE

There is more than enough to go around! SO much food goes to waste in our society, but not on our watch. The Grand Valley community is a place of abundance and generosity through and through.



### COLLABORATION

Stronger together! CFB works hard to pool resources and knowledge across agencies and sectors.

## CURRENT PROGRAMS



Food Pantry



Home Delivery



Food Rescue



Holiday Program



2020

# BY THE NUMBERS



**33,000**

INDIVIDUALS  
SERVED



**483,000**

POUNDS OF  
FOOD DISTRIBUTED  
(OVER 240 TONS!)



**402,000**

MEALS

**+80%**

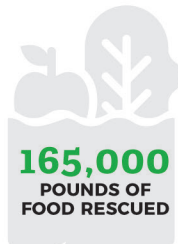
INCREASE IN  
PROGRAM SERVICE  
DEMAND OVER 2019

**4,200**

HOME DELIVERIES

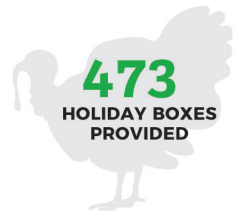


**165,000**  
POUNDS OF  
FOOD RESCUED



**473**

HOLIDAY BOXES  
PROVIDED





# WHY THIS WORK?

**We believe no one should go hungry in the Grand Valley.**

## HUNGER IN MESA COUNTY

Since COVID-19, 1 in 3 Coloradans are struggling with hunger, not always having enough money for food. Mesa County School District 51 has over 50% Free & Reduced Lunch rates, and Mesa County Accountable Health Communities surveys have found that food is the highest health-related social need among Medicaid/Medicare clients.

## WHY NUTRITIOUS FOODS?

Many people struggling with food insecurity are also coping with diet-related illnesses like diabetes, hypertension, and chronic heart disease. Because fresh, whole foods are often expensive, people with limited means often do not have access to nutritious foods that can prevent these illnesses. It benefits everyone, and reduces societal healthcare costs, to work on making these foods more available to everyone!

## WHAT DOES HUNGER LOOK LIKE?

Seniors on a fixed income, a single mother making \$12/hr, school teachers with full-time jobs, disabled veterans who can't make ends meet. It looks like stretching food budgets and scraping by on cheap processed food. It looks like having to choose between paying your bills and providing good food for you and your family.



## KEEPING FOOD FROM WASTE

**40%** of the annual US food supply goes to waste and ends up in the landfills.

This comes from many areas - farm production waste, grocery/food service surplus, and at-home kitchen waste. With all this food heading to the landfill, there is plenty to go around for those in need!

As a part of the Feeding America program to reduce food waste, CFB runs 17 routes every week to rescue perfectly good foods from local grocery stores and restaurants and get it right back out to those in need!

## Where Our Food Came From in 2020



*\*\*We purchase our food from the Food Bank of the Rockies (FBR) and a variety of wholesalers. This number also includes free/donated food rescued and donated free of cost from FBR.*

# IT TAKES A VALLEY TO FEED OUR NEIGHBORS



## HUNGER ALLIANCE

CFB is an integral member of the The Mesa County Hunger Alliance. Together as a community of twenty organizations meeting quarterly -- we are all dedicated to reducing hunger in our valley and working together to share resources and collaborate on solutions. Learn more about the Mesa County Blueprint to End Hunger implementation plan and strategies at: [endhungermesaco.org](http://endhungermesaco.org)

## CSU COMMUNITY ALLIANCE FOR EDUCATION & HUNGER RELIEF

Every season this amazing group grows thousands of pounds of fresh produce for hunger relief in the Grand Valley. In 2020 they donated nearly 10,000lbs of tomatoes, peppers, squash, watermelons and more! We are continuing to work closely together on new nutrition education opportunities at CFB this year.



## LOCAL BUSINESS



While we rely heavily on donations and reduced food prices from partners like Food Bank of the Rockies, we try our best to support local Grand Valley businesses and farmers where we can. In 2020 we started working with La Milpa Tortilla Factory to offer locally made, delicious whole wheat tortillas for our clients.

## PARTNER AGENCY COLLABORATIONS

Our most notable 2020 collaborations were with Mesa County Meals on Wheels and Riverside Education Center to deliver food boxes directly to the doorsteps of our most vulnerable community members. We also collaborate closely with Mesa County Public Health, Marillac Health, Hilltop Resource Center, and many more!



CFB made a daunting task (feeding up to 100 REC families every week) possible. Those families were able to keep up on other financial obligations, such as utility payments and gas for their vehicles, because of the food assistance you provided to them. The CFB team was a welcoming and positive boost for my delivery staff during a chaotic and stressful time. Thank you!

Riverside Education Center Administration

# GROWING TO BETTER FEED OUR COMMUNITY

**The challenges of COVID-19 meant CFB had to quickly adapt operations and move faster than anticipated to secure a larger facility. Thanks to the generosity of the Grand Valley we were able to expand our capacity and purchase a permanent home to better serve more of our community with the fresh and healthy food they need!"**

Shaheen Sheikh, Board Member



## SPACE & SAFETY

Our newly purchased and renovated 10,000 sq ft facility is triple the size of our previous location - saving us over \$700 per month in rent costs, and adding an important asset to our organization. We now have enough space to store adequate supplies of dry and fresh goods and operate in a much safer manner!



## COLD STORAGE

As our food rescue efforts continue to grow, and as we look to offer more fresh, nutritious food items to those in need, we are thrilled to have ample cold storage space in our new home. In addition to our 13 reach-in and deep freezer units, we are now proud owners of a 10' x 20' walk-in freezer, and converted an old storage room into a large walk-in cooler!



## CLIENT EXPERIENCE

Conveniently located in the center of our four highest served zip codes and accessible to main transportation routes, the new CFB facility is a beautiful new space with a large front intake lobby and private offices. This space will greatly enhance our client experience - offering more privacy for on-site service and space for new program offerings.

## Thank You to Our Capital Campaign Donors

- Western Colorado Community Foundation
  - Lynn Wegener and Karen Combs
  - Family of Dave and Mary Wood
  - City of Grand Junction Community Development Block Grant Funds
  - The Gates Family Foundation
  - Bank of the San Juans
  - GJ Lions Club
  - Bank of Colorado
  - Abstract & Title Co.
  - The Kunisch Family
- And many more!



# LOOKING AHEAD

Thanks to all of our wonderful supporters we are able to use our larger facility space to offer additional programs and resources to our clients.

## ON-SITE RESOURCES

With support from the Mesa County Hunger Alliance and funding from the Colorado Health Foundation and Western Colorado Community Foundation, CFB will be able to offer on-site SNAP enrollment and additional information and referral resources for our clients.

## CLIENT CHOICE

With more warehouse floor space, and increased cold storage capacity, CFB is able to offer an expanded choice model for our food pantry clients. This means allowing clients to shop through our pantry with allotted quantities based on household size and macronutrients based on the USDA My Plate Guidelines (grains, proteins, fruits, veggies, dairy etc.) This will emphasize the dignity of our clients and encourage smart meal planning!

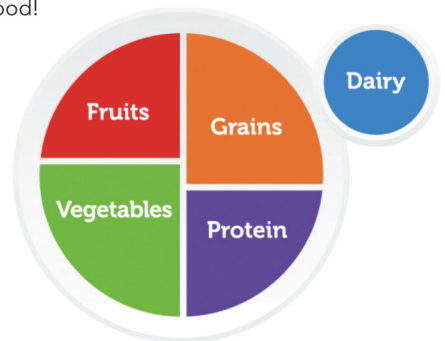
## NUTRITION EDUCATION

Working closely with the CSU Community Alliance program, and sharing an AmeriCorps service member, we look forward to offering more nutrition education programming during our food pantry hours this year. Once we resume indoor client services this summer, we plan to offer tastings, food prep demonstrations, and workshops to help clients choose and best use nutritious foods offered at CFB. These will be fun and engaging opportunities to interact with our community and create positive experiences around healthy food!



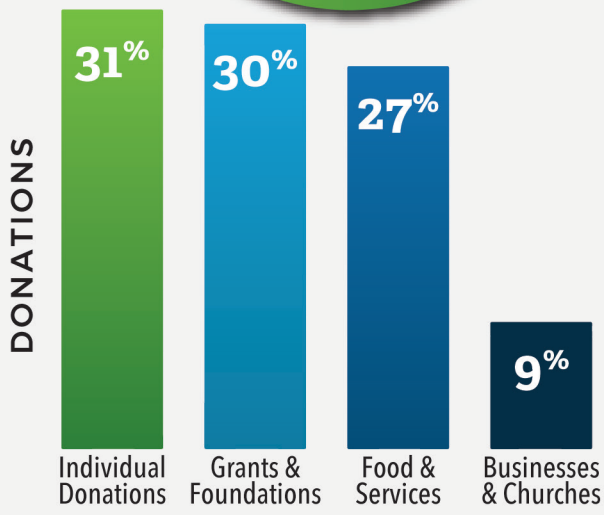
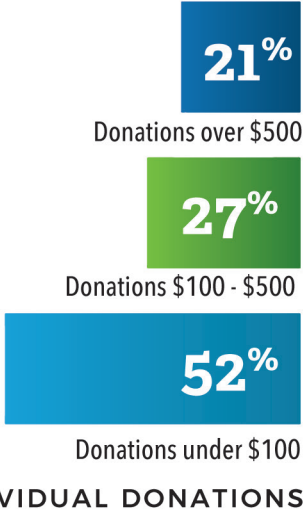
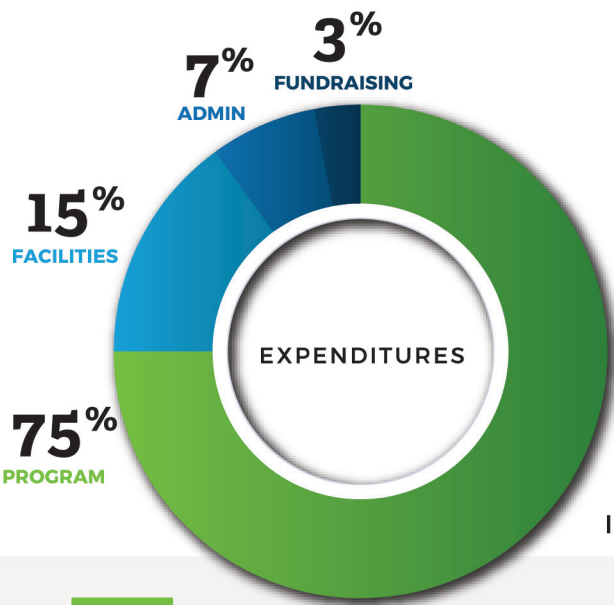
Normalization already happens here. I see the volunteers and staff treating people with the dignity and respect that they deserve - embodying kindness and denying shame. I see a program that acts as more than "just" a food bank."

Sara Warzecka  
CFB Board Member





# 2019- 2020 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT



“  
In nine years of volunteering, I have never seen the extraordinary volume of clients the pandemic created. Fortunately, our generous community stepped up with astounding donations which allowed us to adapt and meet the need.”  
Biff Messenger,  
CFB Board Member

\*\*Fiscal Year 6/1/19 - 5/31/20

## THANK YOU TO OUR 2019-2020 MAJOR DONORS

- Western Colorado Community Foundation
  - Bacon Family Foundation
  - #GJStrong Funding
  - Dave & Mary Wood Fund
  - Sessions Family Foundation
- A.V. Hunter Trust
  - Wilson Family Foundation
  - Rocky Mountain Health Foundation
  - El Pomar Foundation
  - Help Colorado Now Fund
  - Blueprint to End Hunger Relief
- Mike & Kay Ferris Family Fund
  - Alpine Bank
  - Horizon Sunrise Rotary Club
  - The Christi Reece Group
  - United Way of Mesa County
  - And Many More!

# THANK YOU

# 2020 VOLUNTEERS



## GOING ABOVE & BEYOND

This past year volunteers from all walks of life and corners of our community showed up in force to help CFB weather the storms of 2020. From long-time volunteers persevering through rapid changes, to volunteers showing up during the shut-down to help keep our higher risk volunteers safe at home, we truly could not have made it through without them!

## ADAPTING TO SERVE

Like all of us, CFB volunteers had to adapt quickly to serving in a COVID safe environment. Wearing facemasks in a strenuous warehouse environment; client intake outside in the rain, snow, heat, wildfire smoke; learning home delivery routes; shifting hours and intake protocols throughout the year -- CFB volunteers did it all with a smile to serve our community.



**180**

ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS



**9,000+**

VOLUNTEERS HOURS



**4.3**

EMPLOYEE EQUIVALENT



**\$229,000**

SAVINGS VALUE



## RSVP VOLUNTEERS

Many of our most dedicated and long-time volunteers come to us from RSVP Grand Junction. They were instrumental in recruiting volunteers quickly during the initial COVID19 shut-down to launch our home delivery program. Thank you RSVP volunteers!!



It has been such a pleasure to work with CFB staff and all of our volunteers through this time of growth and coming to the new building. I am grateful that we have such dedicated people to help others in these trying times." - CFB Volunteer





# Community Food Bank

Until COVID hit, we were doing alright. As the year went on, there was less work and it seemed groceries got more expensive... getting food from here has helped a LOT! Thanks to everyone at the Community Food Bank!"

-CFB Client



## HOW TO DONATE

If you would like to support our work in Mesa County, donations can be made easily on our website:

[www.foodbankgj.org](http://www.foodbankgj.org)

You may also mail a check to:

Community Food Bank, P.O. Box 3614  
Grand Junction, CO 81502




## FOOD DRIVE


If you or your organization would like to host a food drive, please visit our website for more information or contact:

[info@foodbankgj.org](mailto:info@foodbankgj.org)

## CONTACT INFO

 (970) 640-0336

 [www.foodbankgj.org](http://www.foodbankgj.org)

 P.O. Box 3614  
Grand Junction, CO 81502

 476 28 1/2 Road  
Grand Junction, CO 81501

 @foodbankgj  CFBGJ

## NO ONE SHOULD GO HUNGRY

### Public Food Pantry

Mon, Tue, Thu: 12:30 - 5:30pm\*

### Home Deliveries

Thu, Fri: By Appointment

[Delivery@foodbankgj.org](mailto:Delivery@foodbankgj.org)

(970) 640 - 0336 ext. 2

\*Closed on federal holidays, check our website for updates.

PROUD PARTNER

