



Margaret (left) and Debbie (right) met during their first volunteer shift in November 2020 and quickly became fast friends. The pair volunteers at Food Bank of the Rockies' Denver Distribution Center most Wednesday mornings. (Photo taken prior to the current mask mandate.)

Discovering Friendship While Volunteering

When Debbie and Margaret signed up to volunteer at Food Bank of the Rockies' Denver Distribution Center in November 2020, neither of them expected to get a good friend out of the experience. But from the moment they met, it was friendship at first sight.

“Volunteering here makes you stop and think about everything. No one should go hungry in this country.”

“I gravitate toward people who work like I do, at the same speed and with a sense of efficiency,” said Margaret. “When I met Debbie, I knew we’d work well together.”

The two quickly discovered they had much more in common than just their work styles, including a love for cycling.

Debbie recently retired after a 40-plus-year career with the U.S. Postal Service, and now spends her time volunteering in various capacities at the Denver Zoo, nonprofit bike shops, and Food Bank of the Rockies. Margaret is a semi-retired attorney, and in addition to the Food Bank, she volunteers as a financial fraud expert with AARP. The two frequently enjoy long bike rides together, followed by equally long lunches.

While people often decide to volunteer with Food Bank of the Rockies independently, many end up finding camaraderie in the process — an especially pertinent benefit given how the pandemic has caused many of us to feel lonely, anxious, and depressed. Volunteering at the Food Bank offers a reprieve from the isolation of COVID, and by following CDC safety protocols, we

can also provide the peace of mind of a safe environment.

Debbie and Margaret spend their shifts picking and packing pallets to be distributed to Food Bank of the Rockies' 800+ Hunger Relief Partners. Both women enjoy seeing where the food will eventually be delivered and make a game out of packing the perfect pallets. Ultimately, though, they agree that it's all about the mission. “Volunteering here makes you stop and think about everything,” said Margaret. “No one should go hungry in this country.”

If you'd like to join Margaret and Debbie in volunteering at Food Bank of the Rockies, sign up at foodbankrockies.org/get-involved/volunteer. Every hour helps bring us one step closer to ending hunger throughout our community.



Providing nourishing food to everyone in our service areas who needs it is at the core of Food Bank of the Rockies' mission. To ensure we execute this mission ethically and fairly, we are actively working to strengthen our commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion throughout all of our operations at all levels.

Updates from Our Community

From all of us at Food Bank of the Rockies: Happy new year! May it be filled with good health, hope, and joy.

Amid the hardships brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic have been areas of growth and positivity at Food Bank of the Rockies. One of the things I'm most excited about is our strengthened commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

Last year, we completed an organizational equity assessment with the help of a DEI consultant. We also created an Equity Strategic Roadmap with specific goals and initiatives to move forward our equity work, which included establishing a formal DEI Committee and Board DEI Committee to help enhance the awareness and skills of staff members on equity issues as they relate to our mission.

We've made significant progress toward this goal through several initiatives, including:

- Evaluating and improving policies, procedures, and benefits to ensure we have an equitable foundation upon which to further build DEI initiatives
- Implementing a formal compensation philosophy and thoroughly evaluating our compensation structure to ensure we are aligned and providing equitable compensation as an organization
- Changing our approach to paid holidays, recognizing that not everyone celebrates the "traditionally prescribed" American holidays
- Changing our approach to recruiting and evaluating positions to truly define what education level or experience is needed in order to avoid inadvertently overlooking great candidates due to unrealistic or unnecessary requirements

As an organization, we have a long way to go to address these issues and do not have all of the answers. But we are here for the long haul and actively listening, learning, and taking action to foster a more just world where acceptance, respect, empathy, and love are woven into the fabric of our community. We will do better because we must do better. Thank you for your support in this critical work. Together, we can ignite the power of community to nourish people facing hunger.



Gratefully,

Lorena Toland
Vice President of People & Culture
Food Bank of the Rockies

Distribution Centers

Denver

10700 E. 45th Ave.
Denver, CO 80239
720-473-6323

Western Slope

120 N. River Road
Palisade, CO 81526
970-464-1138

Wyoming

5150 Reserve Drive, Ste. 2
Evansville, WY 82636
307-265-2172

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Visit us online:
foodbankrockies.org

This institution is an equal
opportunity provider.



Sandy Stewart helps teach her students with autism valuable life skills as they assist with packing nourishing food into 168 Totes of Hope™ every Friday for kids at their school.

Providing Food and Building Life Skills Through Totes of Hope™

On a sunny Friday afternoon, Charlie, Jeremy, and Serenity took turns selecting food items from a cart and carefully placing each one inside sturdy canvas bags.

The children attend a Denver Public School where over 70% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Each bag they packed with food — noodles, tomato sauce, cereal, vegetables, crackers, applesauce, and more — was part of Food Bank of the Rockies' Totes of Hope™ program, which provides food for kids to take home with them when school is out of session. During the school year, upwards of 20,000 totes are distributed monthly via Hunger Relief Partners.

"We have 168 kids signed up for the program, plus 300 families coming on Saturdays to get fresh produce and food from our pantry," said Sandy Stewart, who oversees the school's Totes of Hope™ program and food pantry. "It's our ethical obligation to make sure people have food, and we encourage everyone who needs it to use Totes of Hope™ and the pantry."

Serenity is both a helper and recipient. She and her brother signed up for Totes of Hope™ after their mom, Katie, got laid off from her job.

"The food makes a big difference," said Katie. "I recently went back to school full-time, and having staples like pasta, rice, beans, and tuna really helps. It means I can say yes to more things at the grocery store, like fresh produce."

Another benefit of the program is how it helps students build life skills — especially the kids Sandy works with, like Charlie and Jeremy, who have autism. "I feel like helping pack the totes teaches the kids key skills for whatever career they might have later in life," Sandy said. "We love having the program and really appreciate what Food Bank of the Rockies does."

20,000
Totes of Hope™
distributed monthly

Learn more about Food Bank of the Rockies' various programs at foodbankrockies.org/programs.

Discover EverGreen Boxes™, a Program of Everyday Eats

Eliminating barriers to access is key to being as equitable as possible in providing nourishing food to anyone who needs it. That's why we offer EverGreen Boxes™, a program of Everyday Eats and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), for income-qualifying adults ages 60+.

EverGreen Boxes™ are available at no cost to eligible Coloradans and include upwards of 35 pounds of shelf-stable items such as whole grains, protein, fruits, vegetables, milk, and fresh cheese. Recipes incorporating box items are also included and, wherever possible, Food Bank of the Rockies offers home delivery.

With the current high prices of groceries, it is more important than ever to provide older adults with the nourishment they need to thrive. "I live with my dad, who is 94 years old," said Mary, who worked in catering before retiring to care for her father. "All of the food comes in handy, especially the milk. Everything is expensive now."

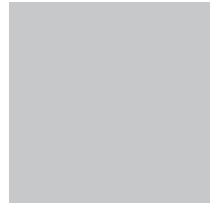
If you or someone you know could benefit from EverGreen Boxes™, please visit foodbankrockies.org/evergreensignup to learn more and sign up.



Volunteers help pack over 6,900 EverGreen Boxes™ every month to distribute across Food Bank of the Rockies' service area. Each box contains upwards of 35 pounds of nourishing food.



10700 E. 45th Ave.
Denver, CO 80239



Mailing Address
City, State Zip



Hunger challenges our neighbors every day. With support from individuals like you, we are able to provide help to anyone who finds themselves in need. Discover inspiring stories of how together we are nourishing communities in our newsletter.

We ignite the power of community to nourish people facing hunger.

