



**METRO CARING**

ENDING HUNGER AT ITS ROOT  
TERMINAR LAS CAUSAS PROFUNDAS DEL HAMBRE

EST.  1974

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2021



## Letter from CEO & Board Chair

When we hear the word 'resiliency', we think of Sara, who lost her adaptive yoga business during the pandemic. She got herself enrolled for SNAP, leaned on our drive-through food distribution to fill the gaps, and re-launched herself as a notary and legal doula. Now, she's coordinating with our community development team to offer her services to other members of our community free of charge.

We think of Alejandro, who started using our commercial kitchen after he faced discrimination in the kitchen he had been using, adapting his taco business to make it through the pandemic with corporate catering gigs, and whose spicy salsa makes us weep for joy.

We think of Maria\*, who is supporting her kids through virtual learning despite a lack of high-speed internet in her neighborhood, and who is making use of our technology library to lead cooking clubs and diabetes management classes in Spanish.

We think of John, who lost his retail job that had brought him pride and sense of purpose in addition to a paycheck.

It is each of these resilient humans who teach us the meaning of resiliency. Sara is more than just one of the nearly half of Black small business owners who lost their business last year: she's an amateur nutritionist and vegan. Alejandro is more than just a DACA recipient: he's a salsa dancer with a laugh and a smile that begs you to remain cranky. Maria is more than just one of the 400,000 workers in Colorado who lack the papers to live without constant fear of deportation: she's a mother to four children who fought her way back from a tough injury this past fall with a tamale recipe that could give anyone's abuela a run for their money. And John is more than just the one in five workers with disabilities who lost their job during the pandemic: he's employee of the month who's choosing tea over soda these days and who pitched in \$5 to our annual fundraising campaign. Each of them is a hustler and a dreamer and vital member of our community caring for their families and loved ones the best they can, while also finding the time and energy to contribute and give back to others in Metro Caring's community.

And these people, as inspirational as they are, are but four of the 83,000 people that make up Metro Caring's community. Watching all these human beings in all their grace and beauty, complexity and fullness, face down the challenges, struggle, grief, and rage that this last year bore upon them with strength and determination can teach us all far more about resilience than we could ever hope articulate in a few hundred words.

This thing—the pandemic and the economic fallout affected all of us, but it did not affect us all equally. It fell onto the backs of Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people who have borne the brunt of 400 years of persistent and grinding systemic racism. That racism, which we all bore witness to over the summer when George Floyd was murdered, is something that Black and Brown people have been bearing and resisting for hundreds

*\*Name changed for privacy.*



of years. It is that racism that led to the disproportionate infection and hospitalization rates from COVID-19, disproportionate loss of life, and disproportionate loss of income. Children, women, those that identify as LGBTQ, people with disabilities, and people of color were all more likely to face the specter of empty cupboards and no money to buy food.

Metro Caring's diverse community consists of over 75% people of color and people of all ages and abilities. Over the past year, we've witnessed each other's pain and strength in ways that would be hard for many people to imagine. We did our best to show up for one another. We grieved together when we lost a young and dynamic member of our community, Wilbur, who just two summers ago, skateboarded every day to our freight farm for a summer high school internship and built the biggest salad we've ever seen to feed his class with the greens he grew.

We came together to pivot our free fresh food market operations to a walk-up, drive-through, and delivery model literally overnight and cover the work of all the older volunteers who could no longer safely come in. We upped the number of allowable monthly visits for food assistance. In early summer, we began experimenting with ways to restore some the dignity of choice that shoppers had at our market, and released culturally responsive food bags and boxes, with options for Latinx, Middle Eastern, vegan, vegetarian, and heart-healthy diets.

We figured out ways to safely maintain our gardens and urban agriculture operations, community organizing and activation, health and nutrition classes and clubs, and community and economic development work. This included shifting many of our in-person programs and activities to a digital space. We fundraised for laptops, tablets, and hotspots to support staff and volunteers working from home, including community leaders leading cooking clubs, and temporary staff.

All of this we did together with our full community and with each person pitching in from what they had in abundance: laid off workers and students gave time, many gave money at levels ranging from one dollar to six figure gifts, others provided introductions or asked their friends and family to pitch in. Everyone—from all the races, religions, political affiliations, abilities, and socio-economic statuses that comprise the Metro Caring family—gave until it felt good. Through it all we continuously worked to improve.

We're still averaging 300% of pre-COVID levels of need for emergency food and expect the need to remain high for at least two more years. However, food insecurity in Colorado is not an issue unique to the pandemic. Colorado has struggled with hunger for far too long. Systemic racism has had its knee on people of color for centuries. Discrimination against people with disabilities is as old as humanity. Minimum wage workers haven't received a raise in decades. Meanwhile the costs for housing, health care, and education are soaring. The economic challenges presented by COVID-19 only amplify these challenges.

Resilience means more than getting through. It means more than surviving and getting "back to normal". It means reimagining a better way. It means putting in the hard work to rebuild back better together. And, it means finding joy in the work together along the way: the photo of John's \$5 check AND our biggest check shared among the team texted with a round of celebratory emojis, the fire of Alejandro's salsa as we enjoy his tacos during a staff meeting, the "Amen!" when Sara says something wise yet again, and the happy dance with the kids in the cooking club as they taste their first latke.

Our community, which includes our staff, board members, volunteers, community partners, donors, and our program participants—they are the personification of resiliency. There's no other team we'd rather work with to rebuild back better than the Metro Caring Family.



Teva Sienicki,  
CEO



Deborah Price,  
Board Chair

# Direct Food Access

## Walk-up, Drive-thru, and Delivery Options

The first day our building closed, our operations were completely turned upside down and reinvented. Our parking lot was redesigned into an efficient, no-contact food distribution capable of handling the increased demand on our direct food access. The entryway of our building transformed into an outdoor walk-up food distribution area as well as an area to connect community members with ID and birth certificate vouchers. Our volunteers took such fantastic ownership over these new processes and really helped us dial in not just the new operational aspects of our distribution model but how to continue to do this work in an equitable and dignified way.

Not all of our community members could safely access food via our new walk-up and drive-thru models, so we began partnering with a community run organization, Bondadosa, to deliver food to our community members four days per week. Deliveries have been a great way to safely deliver food to community members who might fall into some of the at-risk categories for COVID-19. Our delivery services are a new best practice that will be carried on after the covid-chapter of our operations come to a close. Transportation has always been named as a big barrier for many of our community members, and deliveries have been a great way to overcome that barrier.



Number of meals provided to families

3.3 MILLION



Number of unique families served during the year

30,799

## A Community Member Story of Resilience

During the pandemic, Metro Caring shifted how it partnered with other organizations in the community. We opened our parking lot each morning and offered culturally accessible food to partners working in refugee and immigrant communities. The food items were tailored for families with children, schools, and parents. We upped the number of boxes going to long-standing partners such as the Colorado Coalition to the Homeless.

Joe Peters, Colorado Coalition For The Homeless, Case Worker  
"As a formerly homeless individual, I know what it is like to live on the streets. People are scared. They already felt unsafe, but that is compounded by everything going on with this virus. People are afraid to be in close quarters in shelters, so they are staying outside – thankfully the weather has been nice. I am bringing boxes to people who were formerly homeless; they fear that when this is all over, they may lose the housing they currently have. My advice for people wanting to help is show compassion, try to understand what they are going through, and educate yourself."

Days closed  
due to  
COVID-19

2

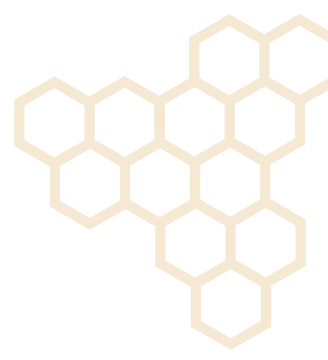
3,000%

Increase  
in food  
procurement  
budget

### Introducing Culturally-relevant Bags and Boxes

When Metro Caring had to close our market and shift to a pre-packed distribution model, the first thing staff and volunteers started working on was how to incorporate choice into this new way of distributing food. This led to the creation of some of our food bag options such as our Latinx bags, filled with produce like cilantro, tomatoes, nopales, hot peppers, avocados, masa flour, rice and beans. During the month of Ramadan we were able to offer our Muslim community members bags with items like figs, dates, tea, zaatar, lebni, nuts, oil, olives, rice and Halal chicken. For the first time we were also able to offer Lunar New Year bags to community members with items like broccoli, green beans, oil, red envelopes, lotus root, green onions, cabbage, ginger, oranges, noodles and banh tet.

We began the use of two mobile shelving systems for our walk-up area and drive-thru containing all sorts of non-food items like diapers, wipes and many personal hygiene items. Via our delivery process we were able to accommodate special requests and dietary restrictions to ensure that community members who could not come in-person for food were still able to benefit from the added choice options.





# Volunteers, IDs, & Urban Agriculture

Number of unique volunteers for the year

3,601

Total number of volunteer hours for the year

23,016

9,997

Number of Coloradans helped with IDs

27

Number of statewide community partners for ID voucher program

## Hiring Community Members as Part-time Staff

It has been incredibly rewarding to engage with our community members in several different capacities. We have brought on ten community members as part-time staff to help meet the increased operational demand. They have stepped up as exemplary leaders, mentors, and innovators, always thinking outside the box. Without their additional support and insight, we would not be where we are. They work tirelessly covering all our shifts, six days a week. The passion they radiate for our mission and community inspires all of us.

## Language Justice

To continuously pursue equity, language justice is at the forefront of our anti-hunger movement. We meet people where they are, and aim to ensure all community members are met with an inclusive and safe landscape. This includes expanding services, resources, and personnel with the language skills to match our diverse community. Currently we work to translate documents into Spanish, Arabic, and Mandarin Chinese. With a community that speaks over 50 languages, this is only the beginning of our language justice work.

# A Community Member Story of Resilience

Sharlotte is a single mother of four children who lost her job due to the pandemic. To make ends meet, she began selling homemade jewelry and accessories out of their home, which was her car at the time. Having done this to survive for eight months, supplementing her food needs with Metro Caring's drive-thru distribution, she would walk around with her children, applying for jobs and selling accessories. She recently landed a new job in Denver, one that she is overjoyed by. She promises we will continue to have her electrifying energy visits us at Metro Caring.



76

Total number of garden plot participants



Total number of seedlings distributed

5,000+

## Greenhouse

Our greenhouse is offered to community partners each year to grow vegetable, herb, and flower seedlings for local entrepreneurs, mutual aid organizations, and community gardens. Our goals are to share our resources to build knowledge, power, and wealth in our local communities.

450+

Total number of seeds packets distributed



# Health, Nutrition, & Community Activation

Total number of Healthy  
Tradition participants

14



32

27

Total number of  
Kidz in the Kitchen  
participants

Total number of  
Cocina y Nutrición  
participants

3  
(english)  
23  
(spanish)

Total number of  
Diabetes  
Self-Management  
participants

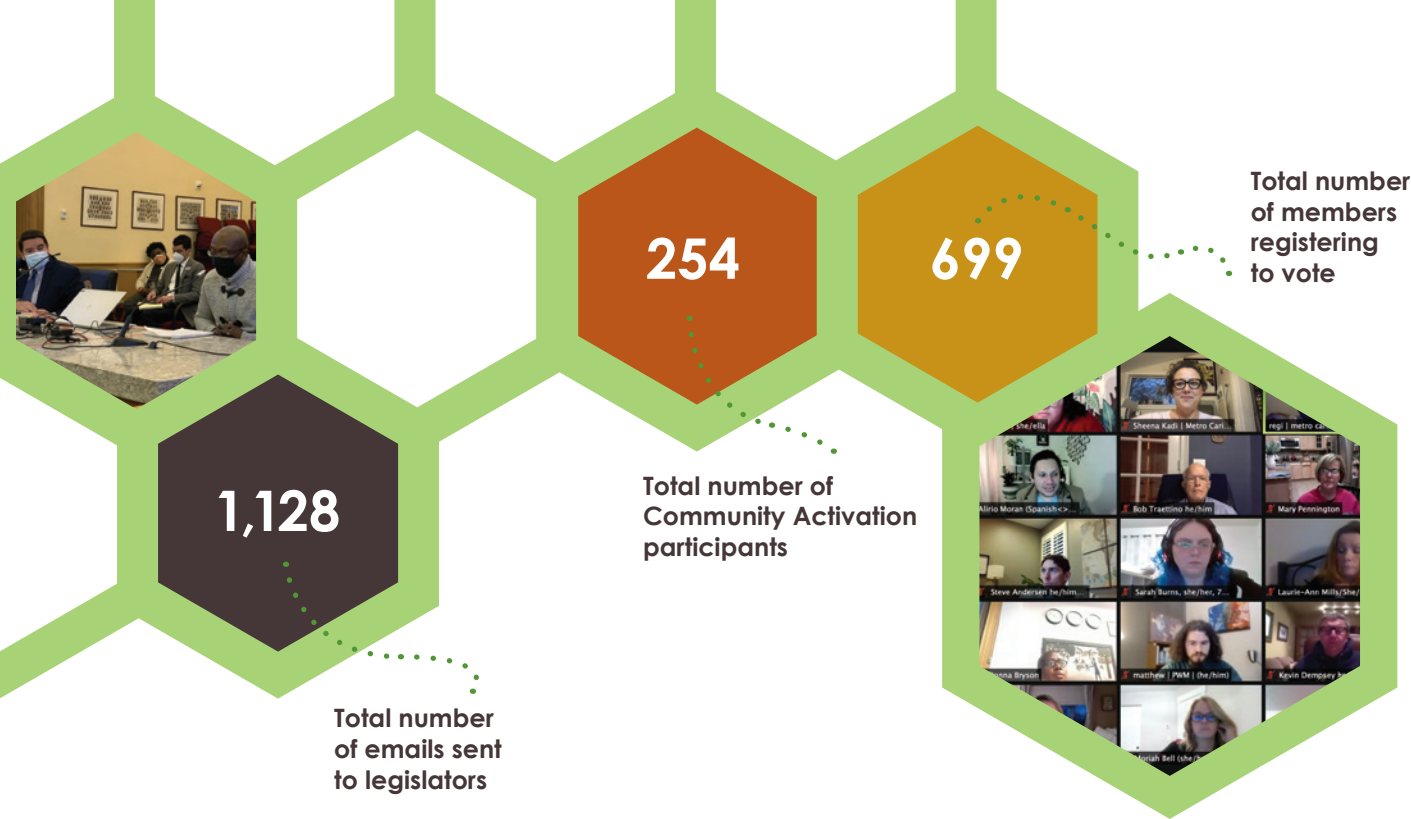
## A Community Member Story of Resilience

Adriana\* was involved in Cocina y Nutrición in Spring 2021. The past year held many difficulties for her, as she supported her young child in remote learning and staying healthy, and her husband had a challenge with immigration. Then, like many others, she became infected with COVID-19 and even after recovery experiences lingering side effects. She told Eva that Cocina y Nutrición had made a big impact for her and now she seeks to exercise each day and encourage her child to do so as well to stay healthy. She shared, "Being active is the best medicine."

*\*Name changed for privacy.*







### Colorado Necessary Documents Renewal

Have you ever experienced that sinking feeling in the pit of your stomach when you realize you're lost your purse or misplaced your wallet? Or spend days and weeks trying to replace the items that were stolen or lost? It takes time and money to secure the documents for a Colorado ID. It costs an average of \$50 a person to get all the documents together necessary to apply, and for low-income people, \$50 is prohibitively expensive and ultimately a barrier to replacing their documents. Metro Caring partnered with Colorado Center on Law and Policy and 26 other statewide partners to ensure this program continues to be funded in the future.

### COVID-19 Education

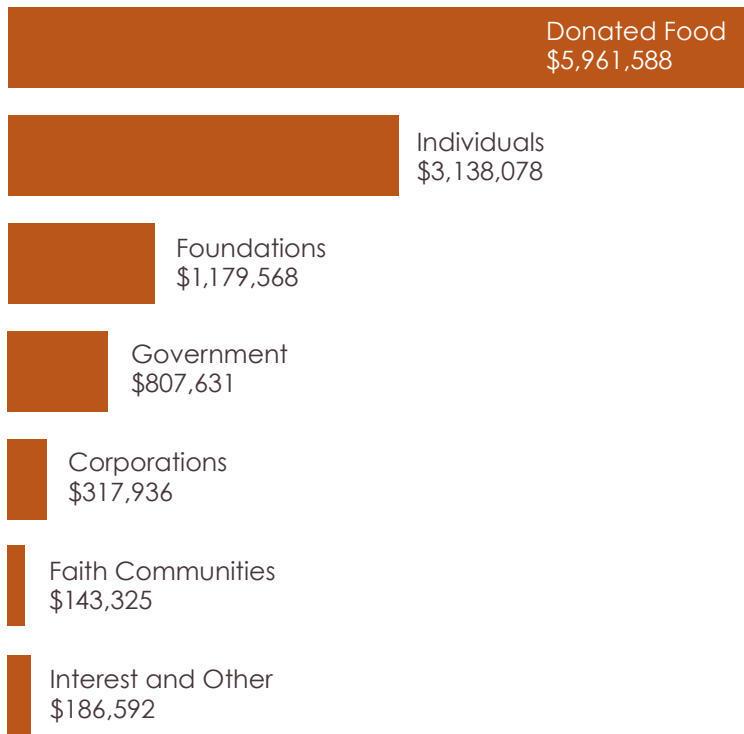
A large majority of our 83,000 community members identify as Black, Brown, or Indigenous people of color (BIPOC). Therefore, our Metro Caring community has been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 health pandemic and economic crisis. BIPOC Coloradans have experienced higher rates of COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and death; we have suffered disproportionate losses of income during the economic crisis; and we have disproportionately had more barriers to accessing the COVID-19 vaccine than our white neighbors. As a trusted messenger to our community, we hosted virtual Champions of Vaccine Equity community meetings to answer questions around the vaccination, and hosted a vaccination clinic to ensure our community has access to the COVID vaccine.

Total number of community members vaccinated at Metro Caring clinic with CDPHE

**544**

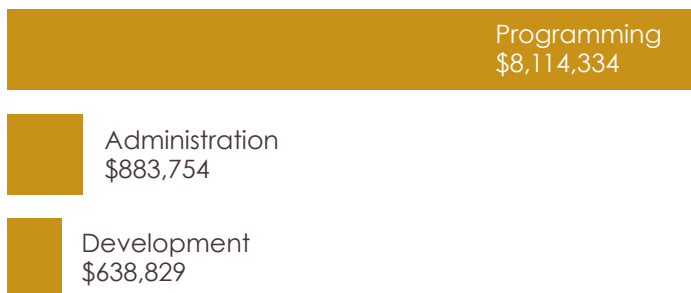
# Financials & Board

## Income



**TOTAL INCOME:** \$11,734,718

## Expenses



**TOTAL EXPENSES:** \$9,636,917

**TOTAL NET ASSETS:** \$7,490,202

**INCREASE IN NET ASSETS:** \$2,097,801

## Board of Directors

### Chair

Deborah Price  
Retired CFO,  
Thermoflex Corporation

### Vice President

Iris Gardner  
Career Director,  
Trilogy Education Services

### Secretary

Jamen Tyler  
Managing Director,  
StoneTurn LLP

### Treasurer

Mike Porter  
Retired,  
Nexus Corp.

Shen Nagel, M.D.  
Pediatrician,  
Pediatrics West P.C.

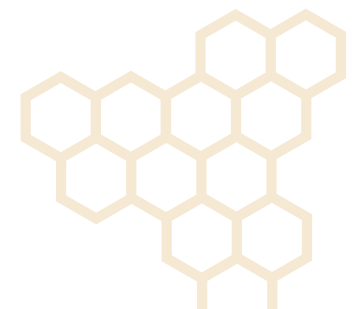
Jo Ann Pegues  
Retired Registered Dietitian

DC Coulon  
Retired Youth Counselor,  
Denver Human Services

Doug Hock  
Communications Consultant,  
Doug Hock Communications, LLC

Nicole Lang  
Senior Communications Specialist,  
Stantec

Teva Sienicki  
CEO,  
Metro Caring



## Roots to Rise Society

By making a five-year financial pledge to the organization, Roots to Rise Society members are a special group of friends that believe in Metro Caring's mission and want to ensure that we can meet people's immediate need for nutritious food for as long as needed in our community and invest in the long-term work of movement building, organizing, and advocacy to end hunger at its root.

### \$25,000+ per year

Deborah Price

### \$10,000-\$24,999 per year

Becca and Robert Reichenberger  
Mike and Cheryl Porter

### \$1,000-\$9,999 per year

Adeeb and Heidi Khan  
Adrienne Hipsher and Jason Davies  
Al and Sheryll Kraizer  
Andrea and Tad Miller  
Anonymous  
Ayelet Margolin-Lehtman and Michael Lehtman  
Bill and Rhonda Crossen  
Bob and Marty Longway  
Bob and Shirley Traettino  
Brian and Lori Whitney  
Carlotta Mast  
Caroline H. Beavers  
Central Presbyterian Church  
Charlie Lanigan  
Colleen Barrett  
David and Jean Scott  
David Suppes  
DC Coulon  
Dick and Deborah Galaty  
Dominic Dezzutti  
Don and Marianne Hamilton  
Donna Munip  
Doug and Jenny Hock  
Dr. Nancy McMahon  
Ellen Reath

Erik Hicks  
Ernie and Alice Jablonski  
Ethan and Lauren Watel  
Gifford Dudley  
Hartman Axley  
Iris Gardner  
Jamen Tyler  
James and Lisa Van Someren  
James East and David Johns  
James W. Braun  
Jan and John Douglas  
Janice and Chuck Woodward  
Janie and Ray Johnson  
Jason and Molly Gaines  
Jennie and Kevin Lewis  
Jim and Chirl Sienicki  
Jo Ann and Sam Pegues  
John and Patricia Shively  
Judith Ackerman and Jon Brause  
Kelly L. McCormick  
Krista and Dan Wesdyk  
Kurt Bethke  
Linda Mitchell  
Lisa and Warren Hughes  
Lisa Whitesides  
Luke and Nicole Laydon  
Lynne and Ralph Valentine  
Madeline McKeever  
Marisa Porter  
Mark Bell and Alex Katich  
Martha Burroughs  
Matt and Laura Arentsen  
Megan Sawyer

Mel Stolzenburg  
Meredith Wells and Therese Pocrnick  
Mike and Jill Ogborn  
Mike and Susan Boulden  
Milt Kahn and Betsy Herrick  
Mr. Stuart Ferguson and Ms. Carolyn Welsh  
Nancy Hodges  
Nicholas and Amy Rosevear  
Nicole Lang  
Paul Heitzenrater and John Farnam  
Ray and Marcia Giske  
Richard Abels  
Rick and Kim Turnage  
Rick and Pat Kahn  
Russell and Sue Haskell  
Sarah Boulden  
Sean and Sue Connelly  
Shelley Hook  
Shen Nagel  
Spiros Antoniadis and Barbara Wells  
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church  
Stephanie and Chris Hegland  
Steven Morrow and Denise Cope  
Susie and Henry Higginbottom  
Teton Waters Ranch  
Teva Sienicki and Adrienne Russman  
Todd Miller  
Tom and Kris Stoever  
Tom and Mary Brook  
Way Shen and Chris George

## The GreenHouse

The Greenhouse is a special group of supporters who have chosen to donate monthly.

Alan and Cheryl Zimmerman  
Alexander Merkle and  
May Merkle-Tan  
Amelia and Reut Tenne  
Amy Lorton  
Andrea Helsel  
Andrew and Andrea Carpenter  
Andrew Treaster  
Annie Sovcik and David Stapleton  
Arlene Pickett  
Barbara Schaller  
Barry Ollman  
Betsy Miller  
Bonnie Adrian  
Bruce and Priscilla Brookens  
Bryan and Katy Kaproth-Gerecht  
Buck Mann  
C. Rundell Brown  
Carema CookMasaud  
Carrie Zwiler  
Catherine Hupp  
Charles and Suzanne Strickland  
Christ Episcopal Church  
Christy Elwell  
Colin O'Brien  
Cory Loney  
David Craven  
David Cunningham  
David Krause  
David Lock  
David Pardo  
Debra Thomas  
Diane Moy  
Dick Hess  
Doug Wheeler  
Durango Jenkins  
Ed Kester

Elaine Gunnell  
Elexis Schroder  
Elisabeth Arenales  
Elisha Wilson  
Ellen Wells  
Emily Nease  
Esther Muzzillo  
Ethan Carlson  
First Avenue Presbyterian Church  
Fred Applehans  
Graham Ignizio  
Helen Tuttle  
Holly Gray  
Hosanna Fortmeyer  
Jacqueline Winter  
Janet Hukill  
Jeanne Griffiths  
Jenni and Ted Dyman  
Jennifer Willard  
Jessica Berfeld  
Jessica Sushinsky  
Jillian Meissner and  
Patrick Hannon  
Joe Francis  
John (Jack) Schmitt  
John and Ginger Hostetler  
Josiah Hutchinson  
Judith and David Peters  
Judy Schultz  
Justin Batchelder  
Karen Goldrick  
Katherine Boyd  
Katherine Donato  
Kathryn Seitz  
Katy Parr  
Kayla Mauriello  
Kevin Lindahl and Ben Fiedler

Kristen Gray  
Kristine Lupoff  
Kurt and Susan Reisser  
Lannea and Nathan Hand  
Lara Jakubowski  
Laura MacKenzie  
Laura Roth  
Laurel Adler  
Laurie and Chris Romer  
Laurie Kepros  
Linda Mallory  
Lisa Martin  
Lorie Obernauer  
Lou Novak  
Lynn Hawthorne and  
Andrew Loizeaux  
Margaret Banner  
Marjorie Britt  
Marla Digitale  
Martin Okey  
Mary Bell Nyman  
Mary Kate Zukiewicz  
Mary-Elizabeth Waldrep  
Matthew E. Milliken  
Melissa O'Meara  
Michael and Julia Steiner  
Michael and Mikaila  
Barton-Gawryn  
Ming Nagel  
Miriam Post  
Mitch Lehn and Kirsti Peterson  
Nora and Yale Passamaneck  
Olga Reyes  
Pat Blumenthal and  
Ron LaFollette  
Patrick Sandvig  
Peggy Ulrich-Nims

Penny Sue Hollon  
Peter and Julie Sauer  
Peter Ferguson  
Peter Thulson  
Rachel Hanson  
Rebecca Johnson  
Ria Bates  
Richard and Cheri Colter  
Rick Wallace  
Robert and Pam Hubbard  
Robin Rasco  
Saletha Isaacson  
Sam Pegues  
Samantha Kingston  
Sarah Grey  
Sarah Hulslander  
Shelby Healy  
Stephanie Jensen  
Stu and Gina Mesnier  
Susan and Chris Dolson  
Susan Bardwell and Frank Scalise  
Susan Ladley  
Susanna and Mark Donato  
Tasha Russman  
The Bindbeutel Family  
The Yasui-Estacio Family  
Theo Isoz  
Theresa Cashman  
Tim Baldwin  
Tim Creany  
Tom Keyse and  
Jen Courtney-Keyse  
Tyler Corson-Riker  
Vanessa Souza  
Wil Smith and Bryce Clark  
William and Marilyn Henderson  
Zach and Ashley Leonard



## Community Partners

Atlas Metal  
 Augustana Lutheran Church  
 Bender West Foundation  
 Bethany Lutheran Church  
 Cambiar Investors  
 Central Presbyterian Church  
 Christ Church United Methodist Church  
 Christ Episcopal Church  
 Cranleith Foundation  
 Delta Dental of Colorado  
 Denver Community Credit Union  
 Domanica Foundation  
 First Plymouth Congregational Church  
 First Unitarian Society of Denver  
 Great Western Bank  
 Holman Enterprises  
 I.A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation  
 KeHE  
 kindColorado  
 Kroenke Sports Charities  
 Kroger Company Foundation  
 LBW Consulting Group LLC  
 Liberty Global, Inc.  
 Mabel Y. Hughes Charitable Trust  
 Mile High United Way The Sparkjoy Foundation  
 Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church  
 Most Precious Blood Catholic Church  
 No Kid Hungry  
 Offen Johnson Robinson Neff + Ragonetti PC  
 PDC Energy  
 Perkins Coie LLP  
 QEP Resources, Inc.  
 Rose Community Foundation  
 Saint John's Episcopal Cathedral  
 Singer Family Foundation  
 St. Andrew's Episcopal Church  
 STM Brands  
 The Anschutz Family Foundation  
 The Anschutz Foundation  
 The Blueprint to End Hunger  
 The Carson Foundation  
 The Denver Foundation  
 The Denver Post  
 The El Pomar Foundation  
 The Giving Stone  
 The Harvey Family Foundation  
 The Nord Family Foundation  
 The Vera & Joseph Dresner Foundation  
 The Schlessman Family Foundation  
 The Thomas W. Bean Foundation  
 The Tyler Family Foundation  
 TIAA  
 Trinity Second Century Foundation  
 Trinity United Methodist Church  
 Visa Inc.  
 VF Corporate Foundation  
 Wattis Foundation  
 Wellshire Presbyterian Church

**Metro Caring**  
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 MetroCaring.org



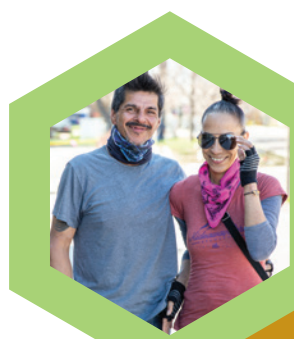
## A Community Member Story of Resilience

"When I found myself out-of-work and living out of my car, it was one of the lowest points in my life. I didn't see how I could ever get back on my feet. Thanks to the ID Voucher Program, I was able to obtain a copy of my driver's license for a new job opportunity. I've been at that job for two years now, and have moved out of my car and into an apartment."

—Sofia Rodriguez, Metro Caring community member



Total amount raised for closing the COVID-19 gap



**\$187,514**  
 (plus \$50,000 match)

**\$243,786**  
 (plus \$100,000 match)

**4,896**

Total amount raised during Colorado Gives Day

Total number of unique donors for the year

