



# Gatherings

*The quarterly agency newsletter of The Gathering Place* Holiday 2013

## Holding onto hope: Yadira's story

Even as Yadira sits in the quiet room of The Gathering Place's Family Area and talks about moving out of her apartment and in with friends just a few weeks ago, there is something different about her demeanor and the tenor of the story she shares. Despite her current circumstances, she isn't frantic. She's hopeful.

"We had lived in that apartment for almost two years," Yadira says. She received an eviction notice at the beginning of October, but it wasn't a surprise. She's been out of work since March, though she and her sister, Jael, have been babysitting to bring in a small income—enough to pay part of the rent for the past several months. Family members have helped with the rest as they were able, but this time, there was no way they'd be able to pay even a portion of the \$630 rent.

So, Yadira, her two children, Andrea and Josue, and her sister packed up their clothes and a few essential items and moved in with friends before they were officially evicted. "We didn't want the kids to see us getting kicked out, so we moved out early," Yadira says. "I really didn't want to go to a shelter, either. We did that once when I was a kid, just for one night, but I know how I felt. I didn't want my kids to feel that way. Besides, there isn't a place where me, my kids, my sister, and my mom can all be together."

Yadira was born in Fresno, Calif. and moved quite a bit as a child. Her family eventually landed in Memphis, Tenn., where she graduated from high school, got married, and got pregnant—all in the same year. She and her husband moved to Mexico to be near his family, but he quickly became abusive. So, in 2008, Yadira moved back to Colorado with Andrea—who was barely a year old—to live with her mother and sister. She was pregnant with Josue at the time.

After arriving in Colorado and shortly after Josue was born, Yadira was diagnosed with a nonmalignant brain tumor. She had an eight-hour surgery that removed most of the tumor and then a follow-up Gamma Knife procedure a few months later intended to prevent any future growth. She now

has MRIs every two years to monitor the tumor and ensure it is not growing again.

Eventually, Yadira was able to find work and get an apartment of her own. Last year, she had a steady job at a fast food restaurant until she needed surgery on her left foot to remove a bone spur. When she returned to work, she was lucky to work a full day once a week. "I had always been the first person they called when someone couldn't make it and I would always go in," she says. "They hired more and more people and everyone's hours went down. We were off more days than we were working."

Her mom lost her job at the beginning of 2013, as well, and had moved in with friends. Shortly after that, the family came to The Gathering Place for the first time. Here Yadira, her children, her mother, and her sister have found support and essential resources in the form of food, clothes, and internet access to look for jobs.

"I love coming here because I feel a warmth and loving spirit when you enter the building, but even more when you come into the Family Area," she says.

She and her mother attended an on-site presentation by Work Options for Women and her mother applied for and was accepted into the program. Yadira continues to look for employment using our computer lab. "I'm looking into restaurants, front desk work, everything," she says.

Her boyfriend recently moved to North Dakota to work in construction, so she has been thinking about moving there. "They have a lot of jobs," she says. "Just being a crew worker at McDonald's pays \$12 an hour there."

"I just want a better job and to be stable," she continues. "I want to have my own place again and to not worry about rent or buying food. And I want my kids to be happy."

But for now? Yadira's family will continue to come to The Gathering Place for assistance until things turn around. And, there's still hope, she says. "We'll move forward. I'm glad to have a place for my kids to stay. It's hard, but we'll take it step by step, day by day, and we'll start over again."



Yadira (center front) with her children, Andrea and Josue, and her sister, Jael.

## Staff and structure changes at The Gathering Place



**The Gathering Place®**  
*a refuge for rebuilding lives*

During our nation's economic recession, The Gathering Place saw an increase in the need for our services, but a decrease in donations and other funding resources. And although we have experienced some amount of recovery in the past few years, the reality is that our revenue streams have not returned to pre-recession levels.

As our executive team began to plan for the next fiscal year (which began October 1, 2013), they brought to the table both this financial reality and a new understanding of who we are and our vision for the future, which were laid out by our new mission and vision statements. These were developed by our staff and board of directors through numerous conversations and strategic processes over the past year. In order to be fiscally responsible, to continue to provide needed services, and to remain true to the core of who we are and the impact we want to make in our community, the executive team decided to embark on the process of restructuring our organization and rethinking how some of our services are provided.

As this process was beginning, The Gathering Place experienced a summer filled with transition and change. Over the course of a few months, a number of employees left us for other opportunities, and, given the work being done

simultaneously by the executive team, each vacated position was thoroughly evaluated before pursuing the rehiring process. Some staff members changed positions within the organization, as well.

In late September, our CEO began the process of restructuring the organization, based on input from the executive team that she had gathered over several months. As part of the reorganization, The Gathering Place has reduced its overall departments from six to three: personal growth, community engagement, and internal resources. Our overall staff numbers have been reduced from 36 to 31.

For the time being, no programs have been eliminated, though some will now operate differently. We are currently in the process of evaluating how to best staff Betsy's Cupboard and Bridget's Boutique—both with paid staff and volunteers—but those services remain available. We also await information on funding for our Housing Stabilization Program and will determine the future of that program as information becomes available.

The process of making these changes was difficult and we expect that it will take some time for things to “feel normal” again. However, The Gathering Place is still committed to serving and supporting women, their children, and transgender individuals in Denver who are experiencing homelessness or poverty. We will continue to provide high-quality programming and services, collaborating with other entities in the community whenever possible.

Thank you for weathering these changes with us and for all that you do to continue to support The Gathering Place and the work that we do.

## Food stamp benefits reduced beginning November 1, 2013

On November 1, the nation's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) was scaled back due to the expiration of a benefits boost from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. SNAP currently provides assistance to an estimated 23 million households—almost 48 million people—in the United States. The cuts are expected to total \$55 million in Colorado alone, and though the reductions will vary by family situation, it is estimated that with the reduction, SNAP benefits will provide \$1.40 per individual, per meal, versus the previous \$1.50.

So, what can you do to help? One option is to rally your friends, coworkers, or family members to do a food drive for Betsy's Cupboard. Though 20 pounds of food a month may not seem like a lot, it may be just what a family needs to help them make ends meet when their SNAP benefits are reduced. The Gathering Place distributes over 7,900 pounds of food and 375 toiletry bags (filled with essential items like shampoo and toothpaste) each month from the cupboard. To learn more or to organize a drive, contact Lydia Rodriguez at 303-996-9046 or [lydiafaye@tgpdenver.org](mailto:lydiafaye@tgpdenver.org)



## Third Annual Tommy Vickers Memorial Golf Tournament held at The Club at Pradera on September 23



(left to right) Doug Vandezwaag, John Frogge, David Jewell, and Jeff Durbon pause for a quick photo on the course.

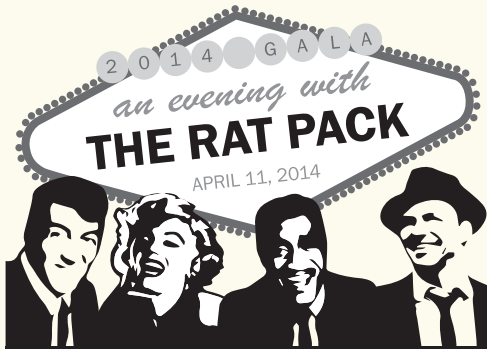


Mike Laity (center), shoots the winning putt for the putting contest while finalists Ben Farrow (left) and Pat Clark (right) look on.

The Gathering Place was honored to celebrate the life and legacy of Tommy Vickers at the **Third Annual Tommy Vickers Memorial Golf Tournament** on September 23, 2013. Held at The Club at Pradera in Parker, Colo., the event raised \$27,095 for our organization. The event's golfers were met with a beautiful—albeit windy—day on the course and were joined by their non-golfing friends at a 19th Hole Party, which featured drinks, dinner, and a silent auction.

This year's tournament sponsors included: **Jewell Insurance** (Title Sponsor), **Lanny Martin** (Gold Sponsor), **Denver Life Magazine** (Magazine Sponsor), **Arta Tequila** (Drink Sponsor), and **E&K of Denver, Ernst & Young, Feldhake & Associates, The Floor Care Company, Glenn Jones, KPMG, and Turner Construction** (Hole Sponsors). Thank you to everyone for your support of The Gathering Place through this event!

## Mark your calendars now: 2014 gala set for April 11



Save the date to join The Gathering Place for our 2014 gala, *An Evening with the Rat Pack*, which will be held on April 11, 2014, at the Hyatt Regency-Denver Tech Center.

We are pleased to announce that the **Randall A. Carter Foundation** and **Benefactor/Boettcher & Co.** will once again be the presenting sponsor of our gala. Other sponsorship opportunities are available, ranging from \$2,500 to \$7,500. If you are interested in obtaining more information about gala sponsorships or might be interested in volunteering your time to make this event a success, please contact Brenda Roush at [brenda@tgpdenver.org](mailto:brenda@tgpdenver.org) or 303-996-9027.

## Annual Tina Stein celebration focuses on community



Each year, the staff, volunteers, members, and donors of The Gathering Place come together during our

annual Tina Stein celebration to eat, sing, and dance as we celebrate the most important aspect of who we are: our community. We want to say a special thank you this year to **Allstate**, who sponsored lunch for our celebration, and to **New Hope Baptist Church, Ready Temporary Services, Rudy Grant & The Buffalo Riders Band, and Lucy and Rick Kissinger** for their contributions to the event. You all embody what truly makes The Gathering Place so wonderful. Thank you!

## Donation list for Betsy's Cupboard

Through Betsy's Cupboard, our emergency food and supply pantry, The Gathering Place provides an average of 7,900 pounds of food and 375 toiletry bags each month for women, children, and transgender individuals who otherwise might not have these resources.

If you are interested in sponsoring or organizing a food or supply drive, or just want to learn more about Betsy's Cupboard, please contact Lydia Rodriguez at 303-996-9046 or [lydiafaye@tgpdenver.org](mailto:lydiafaye@tgpdenver.org).

### A quick note about food donations:

In an effort to support the health of those we serve at The Gathering Place, we prefer organic, low-sodium, and low-fat food item donations whenever possible. According to the Colorado Health Foundation, two out of three Coloradans will be obese by 2017 and will suffer from obesity related diseases. The likelihood that an individual will experience obesity triples when their family income is less than \$25,000 a year.

### NON-PERISHABLE, UNEXPIRED FOOD

- Beans (dry or canned) • Beans and rice combos
- Bottled water • Bread • Brown rice • Canned fruits in 100% juice • Canned tuna, chicken breast, or salmon • Canned vegetables • Cereal/oatmeal (whole grain preferred) • Cheese • Coffee, tea, cider packets, or cocoa packets • Condiments-mayonnaise, mustard, etc. • Fresh meats • Frozen entrées • Frozen and/or fresh veggies and fruits that do not have to be refrigerated (e.g. apples, oranges, potatoes, squash, tomatoes, onions, carrots, green beans) • Gatorade • Granola/cereal bars
- Make-a-meal items: Tuna or Hamburger Helper
- Microwavable items • Milk (powdered or canned)
- Peanut butter • Snack items (e.g. tuna and cracker packs, crackers, nuts) • Soups and stews • Spaghetti sauce • Whole wheat pasta • Vegetarian products
- 100% bottled juice

### NEW PERSONAL SUPPLIES

- Combs/brushes • Cosmetics for all skin colors
- Denture care - Polygrip/Efferdent • Deodorant
- Hair care products • Lip balm • Lotion • Razors
- Shampoo and conditioner • Tampons/pads
- Toothbrushes, toothpaste, and floss

### NEW BABY ITEMS

- Baby powder, lotion, shampoo, and bath wash
- Baby wipes • Children's vitamins • Pedialyte • Sippy cups • Unexpired baby food • Unopened packages of diapers (sizes newborn, 4, 5, 6 and Pull-Ups)

### OTHER

- Can openers • Computer flash drives • Dish soap
- Dryer sheets • Fabric softener • Gift cards: King Soopers, Safeway, craft stores • Laundry detergent (preferably powder) • Reusable shopping bags • Tissues/Kleenex • Toilet paper

# volunteers

## Giving back throughout the year

The holidays are upon us and our holiday volunteering opportunities have been filling up quickly. But, since giving back might be on your mind, we want to encourage you to think about making a new year's resolution (early!) to do that throughout the year. Here are some tangible ways you can contribute to The Gathering Place all year long:

- Facilitate a donation drive of food, toiletries, new socks and underwear, or baby diapers, wipes, and toiletries. Contact Lydia Rodriguez at 303-996-9034 or [lydiafaye@tgpdenver.org](mailto:lydiafaye@tgpdenver.org).
- Sponsor a meal with your co-workers, family, or friends. Contact Justine Zollo at 303-996-9034 or [justine@tgpdenver.org](mailto:justine@tgpdenver.org).
- Staff a fundraising event or join our event volunteers. Contact Brenda Roush at 303-996-9027 or [brenda@tgpdenver.org](mailto:brenda@tgpdenver.org).



If you want to engage in a regular, on-site volunteer placement, the first step in the process is to attend one of our monthly Volunteer Welcome Tours. These occur on the third Thursday of each month at 4 p.m. You can sign up for the next tour on our website at [www.tgpdenver.org/volunteer](http://www.tgpdenver.org/volunteer).

## Service opportunities for your family

The kids are out of school, your relatives are visiting, and everyone is looking for meaningful ways to share their holiday spirit. Volunteering as a family is a wonderful way to be together while making a difference.

While we don't have on-site opportunities available during the holiday season, that doesn't mean your spirit isn't needed! There are still many ways you can support The Gathering Place in your home with your family gathered with you. A few suggestions:

- Does your family love to bake? Read Eve Bunting's wonderful book "December" and then bake some cookies, muffins, scones, or bread together to bring to The Gathering Place. Cookies are always a special treat and the other homemade baked goods will be enjoyed for breakfast.
- Does your family do a holiday gift exchange? Consider donating a gift card for our Share the Joy holiday giving program, which allows members of The Gathering Place to choose and purchase gifts for their loved ones (more on page 7).
- Do you have new family members on the way? Help another mother celebrate her new arrival by putting together a set of new baby items, a receiving blanket, and some newborn clothes in a diaper bag. Or honor our mothers by purchasing and donating a collection of the basics: diapers, wipes, and baby toiletries.

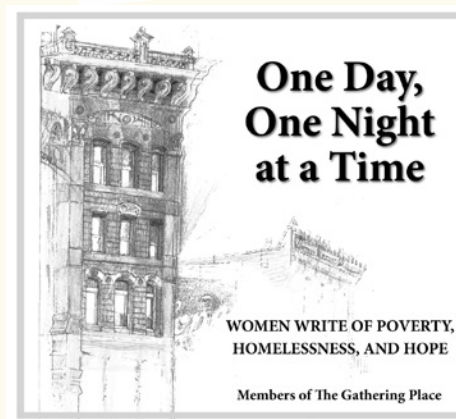
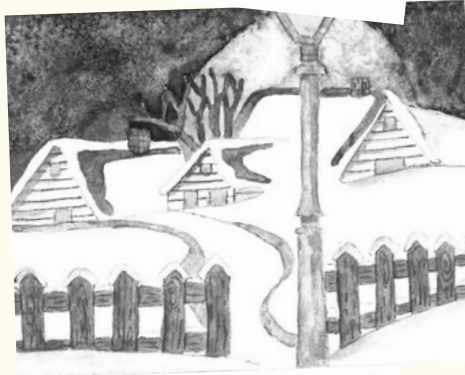
## Give a gift with meaning this year with cards, triptychs, or books created in programs at The Gathering Place

Looking for the perfect holiday gift or holiday cards? The Gathering Place has your solution for either dilemma with a wide array of beautiful handmade cards and triptychs from The Card Project, and the book, *One Day, One Night at a Time*, which includes writings and art from women participating in our Thursday afternoon Writers' Group.

Businesses, families, and individuals often place bulk orders for their holiday greeting cards through The Card Project, and thousands of these cards are sold at arts and craft fairs each year. Cards from The Card Project are sold for \$2 a piece, with \$1.50 of each sale returning to the individual artist who created the card. You may come by The Gathering Place during our regular business hours to purchase cards in person, visit one of the many retail outlets in the Denver area that carry cards from The Card Project (a list of stores is available online at [www.tgpdenver.org/cpvendors](http://www.tgpdenver.org/cpvendors)), or you can visit our booth at one of the many craft fairs we are attending this year (a full list of these fairs is available online at [www.tgpdenver.org/events](http://www.tgpdenver.org/events)).

In addition to its wonderful cards, The Card Project also offers several great holiday gift options. The first of these is our Card of the Month program, which is available for three-, six-, and twelve-month time frames. Each month, those in the Card of the Month program receive five handmade cards, created by one artist, along with a short biographical note about the artist. The cost of signing someone up for this Card of the Month gift is \$12/month, which includes the cards, biography, and shipping.

The Card Project is also home to a variety of triptych art, with styles to fit almost any art or decor preference. The triptychs are three-fold pieces of art that include three 4 by 6 inch pieces, matted



and encased in a black wooden frame that is 10 by 16 inches. Each triptych costs \$25, of which 50% will be paid to the artist who created the piece and 50% will reimburse The Gathering Place for the triptych supplies.

All of these gifts are created in The Card Project, a program of The Gathering Place that provides a safe and supportive community for women to express themselves through art while earning money for their work.

In addition to the cards and artwork available through The Card Project, The Gathering Place now has a book available for purchase. The book—*One Day, One Night at a Time*—was published just this spring and includes writings by 33 different authors who have attended our Thursday afternoon Writers' Group over the past several years. The pieces range from poetry to prose, each eloquently revealing the joys and heartaches, struggles and triumphs of their authors. The writings are accompanied by artwork, created by those published in the book. The book is available for \$20 at The Gathering Place and is \$25 plus shipping when purchased online.

Cards, books, and triptychs can all be purchased at The Gathering Place during our regular business hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Tuesday 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. You can purchase a book from the publisher online by visiting [www.tgpdenver.org](http://www.tgpdenver.org) and clicking on the book icon in the right sidebar.

To learn more about The Card Project, invite us to a craft fair, sign someone up for the Card of the Month program, or to place a bulk order for holiday or occasional cards, please contact Kelsey Kenfield at 303-996-9068 or [cards@tgpdenver.org](mailto:cards@tgpdenver.org).

# supporters

## Become a Sustainer of Hope today!

### *Sustainers of* **HOPE**

The Gathering Place's monthly giving society



The most valuable resource offered at The Gathering Place is often the hardest one to see: Hope.

When someone comes to The Gathering Place seeking help, it is usually tangible help. A place to rest, safe from the elements or the dangers of the street. A warm,

healthy meal. A GED class. Diapers and formula. Information on obtaining housing. Access to a computer. A warm coat for the winter.

With your support, our staff and volunteers are able to provide all of these things. But along with these concrete items and services, we provide one more thing: Hope.

Without hope, all of our other services dim. Our resources just don't go as far. Obstacles seem insurmountable. Change feels impossible.

Hope is often the key ingredient for our members. With hope, the world opens up. Imagining a future is no longer quite as daunting. Rebuilding a life seems possible. So we make certain to hold onto hope for all those we serve, and to help them find it when they're ready to look for themselves.

**Today we're asking YOU to continue your support of that hope, and all it entails, by joining our monthly giving program, Sustainers of Hope.** Your monthly gift of \$10 or more will sustain the hope that we offer to our members, reminding them that people care and offering them the support they need as they face their next challenge.

You know, maybe hope isn't so hard to see, if you just know where to look. It's in the excited energy of a woman signing up for our resume classes, looking to improve her job opportunities. It's in the smile of a mother who knows her child just ate a delicious, healthy meal. It's in the relaxed body language of a transgender individual who knows she has finally found a place to be safe during the day. In fact, hope echoes each time someone says, "Welcome to The Gathering Place. How can we help you today?"

To learn more about our Sustainers of Hope program, visit our website at [www.tgpdenver.org/hope](http://www.tgpdenver.org/hope). For questions, or to sign up over the phone, contact Samantha Horoschak at [samantha@tgpdenver.org](mailto:samantha@tgpdenver.org) or 303-996-9043.

## Remember to "Give where you live" on Colorado Gives Day

Presented by **Community First Foundation** and **FirstBank**, Colorado Gives Day will take place during a 24-hour period starting at 12 a.m. on **Tuesday, December 10, 2013** and running until midnight that night.

Last year, 400 individuals made donations to The Gathering Place on Colorado Gives Day, and the total amount we received—which included funds from a few private matches and a proportional boost from the Colorado Gives Day Incentive Fund—totaled over \$78,000. These donations are critical to supporting the programs and services offered at The Gathering Place throughout the year.

100% of your donation made or scheduled to be made on Colorado Gives Day (you can schedule a gift today for December 10 that will count as a Colorado Gives Day gift) this year through the [ColoradoGives.org](http://ColoradoGives.org) website will come directly to The Gathering Place. So, mark your calendars now to do your end of year giving on December 10!



## Receive a tax credit for your gift to The Gathering Place



The Gathering Place is a qualifying organization for the Colorado state Enterprise Zone tax credit. Enterprise Zones exist to encourage private involvement in economically distressed areas. The Gathering Place operates in a Denver County Enterprise Zone and contributions equal to or greater than \$500 are eligible to receive a 25% state tax credit. Stock and substantiated in-kind contributions also qualify for a 12.5% credit.

For more information on this tax credit and how to receive it, please contact Samantha Horoschak at [samantha@tgpdenver.org](mailto:samantha@tgpdenver.org) or 303-996-9043.

# share the joy



## Share the joy of giving with those at The Gathering Place

“Share the Joy” is The Gathering Place’s holiday giving program. Through it, we provide individuals and families with gift cards so that they can experience the joy of giving with their loved ones during the holiday season.

We truly believe that mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and friends know best when it comes to giving to their loved ones. And the true joy that can be felt when shopping for and choosing that perfect gift is a heartwarming, cherished holiday tradition that many who visit The Gathering Place will not have the opportunity to experience this year.

Though it may seem small, one \$25 gift card will allow an individual receiving services at The Gathering Place to shop for presents or other much needed items for their family and loved ones without worrying about how to pay for those purchases. And just one \$25 gift card will ensure that the children who come to The Gathering Place can open a holiday gift this year chosen specifically for them.

You can “Share the Joy” this holiday season by donating a gift card—or cards—to The Gathering Place from Walmart, Target, King Soopers, or Safeway. Hosting a holiday party or participating in an office celebration? Encourage attendees to bring gift cards in lieu of gifts. The cards can be mailed to The Gathering Place in the envelope included with this newsletter or dropped off in person.

**Please plan to have your gift cards or monetary donation designated for “Share the Joy” to The Gathering Place by Friday, December 13** so that we can distribute them and allow the recipients time to do their holiday shopping. Donations that are not used during our “Share the Joy” distribution will be used at the discretion of The Gathering Place’s executive team to serve our greatest needs. If you have questions about our “Share the Joy” program or how to donate to it, please contact Tanya Wheeler-Berliner at 303-996-9028 or [tanya@tgpdnver.org](mailto:tanya@tgpdnver.org).

SHARE THE  
JOY



## The Gathering Place

*a refuge for rebuilding lives*

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Denver, CO 80218

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\*Denver Dept. of Human Services  
employee at The Gathering Place

\*\*Community College of Denver  
employee at The Gathering Place

## Our mission



The Gathering Place is a community of safety and hope where positive relationships, choice, and essential resources transform lives.

### Our Guiding Principles

We serve women, children, and transgender individuals who are experiencing homelessness or poverty.

We believe in hope as an important change agent and hold that hope for everyone.

We believe deeply in the power of community and continue working to develop it.

Our key values include recognizing individual strengths, building respect and trust, and offering acceptance unconditionally.

### The Gathering Place

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