



Gatherings

The agency newsletter of The Gathering Place Spring 2015

A place to call her own: Linda's story

If you ever meet Linda, you'll quickly realize that she is a character in the best sense of the word. She regularly exhibits an infectious laugh and is always ready with an entertaining story, told with a noticeable southern accent picked up from a childhood in Louisiana.

At 61 years old, Linda is full of energy and has an upbeat personality that contradicts the realities of a life that has seen true difficulties at times. "I was a long haul truck driver for the better part of a decade and a waitress for what seemed like hundreds of years," she says with a smile, followed by a wink. "As they say – jack of all trades, master of none."

In 2010, Linda became homeless after losing her home in Wheatridge. It wasn't the first time in her life she was without a place to live, but this most recent situation was intensified by a series of health problems. Over the past several years she has suffered a heart attack, two strokes, dental issues, and persistent high blood pressure.

Dealing with the challenges of not having a regular place to stay became more and more difficult and, in turn, took a toll on her body. It was during a visit to the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless to get her teeth fixed that she first heard about The Gathering Place.

"Being homeless this past time was quite an experience for me. But I'm a tough gal and know how to survive," says Linda. "I bounced around between women's shelters, stayed with friends, and had a stretch in transitional housing. The Gathering Place in some ways was like my healing place."

Along with being a resource for her to do laundry and eat meals in the dining area, The Gathering Place also allowed Linda to get help with her medical problems. "I use the Physical and Mental Health services quite a bit," she says. "Both the regular visits from the nursing students and the arrival every Wednesday of the Stout Street Clinic's mobile van have been helpful."

Linda was staying at The Delores Project, an overnight shelter for unaccompanied women, when she initially began coming to The Gathering Place. A few months after her first visit, she learned about our Housing Stabilization Program and was soon admitted.

The program, open to around 30 members of The Gathering Place at any given time, is run by Housing Stabilization Advocate Joseph Edwards and assists individuals in obtaining and sustaining permanent housing. This includes help with budget planning, banking, past credit issues, transportation, and more. Financial support can include assistance with the first month's rent and deposit upon moving into an apartment, along with vouchers for furniture and household items.

"When I met Joseph I was already on the waiting list for the Section 8 program," remembers Linda. "It took me 6 months to finally get into a place. Meeting regularly with him gave me the structure to stay on track and get prepared to be housed."

Linda has been in her own apartment now for a couple of months. In addition to the sense of stability and control that come with having a place of her own, she appreciates the small, quiet moments of domesticity that make up her day: choosing the right picture for a wall, the ritual of cleaning up your own personal space. When asked about the future, Linda envisions moving into a house someday with her son. One with a big yard for a dog.

Linda still visits The Gathering Place from time to time to meet with Joseph or use Betsy's Cupboard to supplement her food shopping. The community is one she takes pride in and greatly enjoys.

"I've always been a person who lives for the day and looks forward to tomorrow with a positive attitude," Linda says. "The Gathering Place is like family to me. You don't have to be blood kin with folks to be family. I personally appreciate the people I've met here and the help I received."



2014 annual report now available

Our 2014 annual report has been finalized and is available to download on our website at www.tgpdenver.org/publications. The report contains information about our programs and services, and lists our donors and volunteers for the past fiscal year. Below you'll see our basic financial information for the 2014 fiscal year, pulled from the financial section of the annual report. We have also included a pie chart that illustrates our diverse sources of income.

If you have any questions or would like to receive a copy of the full auditors report, please contact our Community Engagement Department at 303-996-9027.

THE GATHERING PLACE FINANCIAL STATEMENT October 1, 2013-September 30, 2014

Support and Revenue

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Contributions | \$1,759,702 |
| Net Special Events Revenue | \$175,784 |
| Contributed Supplies | \$308,563 |
| Donated Professional Services | \$160,015 |
| Program Service Income | \$183,450 |
| Other Income | \$50,021 |

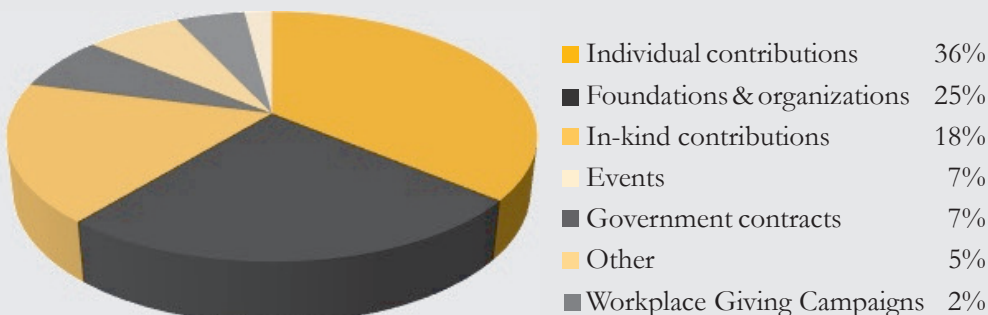
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE \$2,637,535

Expenses

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Programs and Services | \$1,743,598 |
| General and Administrative | \$392,351 |
| Fundraising and Development | \$337,069 |

TOTAL EXPENSES \$2,473,018

2014 REVENUE SOURCES FOR THE GATHERING PLACE



Celebration of Bridget Johnson



Back in February, our community witnessed what could genuinely be called the end of an era as **Bridget Johnson** finished up her tenure at The Gathering Place after almost 18 years on staff.

"I'm going to miss our members a lot," said Bridget during her going away party earlier this year. "We've laughed together, cried together. I've witnessed some amazing transformations during my time here. And that includes my own."

Bridget first came to TGP as a client in the late 1980's when it was located in a small storefront on Santa Fe Drive. After overcoming her own struggles with addiction, she was offered a position on staff in 1997. Her personal experience with homelessness allowed Bridget to relate to members of The Gathering Place who were dealing with similar challenges.

Over the years she contributed her immense talents to a variety of departments and projects at TGP, including her eponymous clothing bank on our third floor – Bridget's Boutique.

"My journey with The Gathering Place has already lasted over two decades," Bridget recently mused. "That's longer than a lot of marriages!"

We would like to thank Bridget for her many years at TGP and wish her all the best in the future.

There is still time to join our Colfax Marathon team and fundraise for us

The Gathering Place is a charity partner of the **Colfax Marathon** again this year so that means you can sign-up to race on our behalf on May 16-17. In addition to our staff and board relay teams, we have runners of every level who have decided to join the race and raise money to support the women, children, and transgender individuals we serve. Want to run for The Gathering Place during the Colfax Marathon? You can register for the event at www.runcolfax.org. Don't forget to select that you are running for The Gathering Place as your charity partner! Once you have registered, we will get in touch to see if you would like to raise money for TGP through running.

This year we are offering the following incentives for those who sign up to run and fundraise:

- Raise \$250 or more - Gathering Place t-shirt, plus post-race party on The Gathering Place rooftop
- Raise \$500 or more - Above items + Saturday night (May 16) pasta dinner at The Gathering Place donated by Anthony's Pizza and Pasta
- Raise \$1,000 or more - Above items + a cocktail gathering with the Executive Team of The Gathering Place
- Raise \$2,500 or more - Above items + entry paid in 2016 Colfax Marathon event of your choice
- Raise \$5,000 or more - Above items + 2 tickets to TGP Gala in September
- Raise \$10,000!!!! - Private rooftop wine and cheese reception for you and 19 guests, and above items

Interested in helping us fundraise for this event without running? Have questions? Contact Alex at alex@tgpdnver.org or 303-996-9048.

Stella's Coffee Haus to show and sell art made by TGP artists

A large collection of triptychs and original framed art created by artists of The Card Project is on display at **Stella's Coffee Haus** in the Old South Pearl Street business district now through May 15. Open every day between the hours of at least 7am to 11pm, Stella's will be selling all artwork shown, so come to not only peruse the variety of pieces but to take one home the same day! Your purchase helps support both the individual artists as well as the programs of The Gathering Place. Framed art from The Card Project makes a great gift for Mother's Day, or for any occasion. Stella's Coffee Haus is located at 1476 S Pearl Street in Denver.



Join us for the 2015 Gathering Place gala



Leslie Foster: a quarter century of leadership

Mark your calendars now to join The Gathering Place for our 2015 gala Inspire!, which will be held on Friday, September 25 at Wings Over the Rockies.

Our premier annual event, this year's gala is moving from the spring to the fall and will be a celebration of **Leslie Foster** and her 25 years as president of TGP.

We are excited to announce that the Randall A. Carter Foundation and Benefactor/Boettcher & Co. will again be the presenting sponsors of the gala this year. Other sponsorship opportunities are available, ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000.

Although the gala is not until September this year, it is never too early to start planning a fabulous event! We are looking for volunteers to help us with preparations. The commitment level varies based on your role with the event. We will need people to help secure auction items, sell tickets, and help address and stuff invitations.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Brenda Roush at brenda@tgpdnver.org or 303-996-9027.

Donation list for Betsy's Cupboard

Through Betsy's Cupboard, our emergency food and supply pantry, The Gathering Place provides an average of 4,000 pounds of food and 182 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.

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

Thank you to our many volunteers



Staff member Cesar Gevert poses with Pet Partner volunteers MaryAnn Vogt and Fern

Every week, more than 150 volunteers come to The Gathering Place to give of themselves to help our organization be the best it can be. These volunteers contribute their time and skills to help in a variety of ways: greeting members and providing information; preparing and serving meals; playing and working with children while providing support to staff in the Family Programs area; offering help in the computer lab; restocking items and taking appointments in both Betsy's Cupboard and Bridget's Boutique; and performing numerous other tasks and activities throughout the building.

During the 2014 fiscal year, our volunteers contributed 19,857 hours of service, time that is equivalent to 9.5 full time staff positions. Thank you to all of our volunteers for everything you contribute to The Gathering Place. We could not do what we do without you!

TGP volunteers in a league of their own



Week in and week out our amazing volunteers keep their focus on our members and support our staff in order to help everything run smoothly. For one week in April, we like to turn that focus back onto them as we observe **National Volunteer Week**.

From April 12 to 18 we let our volunteers know how much they mean to the TGP community and showed them that they consistently knock it out of the park. Upon entering our Welcome Area, visitors to 1535 High Street were greeted by decorations in a baseball motif that celebrated all of our volunteers. As a token of our appreciation, we provided complimentary passes to our volunteers and a guest to watch the Colorado Rockies take on the Los Angeles Dodgers on May 8 at Coors Field. Additional tickets for the game may be purchased for \$11. Please contact Volunteer Coordinator Lydia Rodriguez at lydiafaye@tgpdenver.org or 303-996-9046 with any questions.

Feeding body, mind, and spirit: meals at The Gathering Place

At the Gathering Place we serve three meals a day: breakfast at 8:30am, lunch at 11:30am, and snack at 3:30pm. For many of our members, knowing that they are able to enjoy a nutritious and hearty meal without worrying about how to pay for it comes as a great relief. After taking a break to eat and fill their stomachs, they can focus their energy on other important matters that need attention.

Lunch is our main meal of the day and an event that many at The Gathering Place build their visit around. Beyond simply existing as a large room filled with tables and chairs, at mid-day the TGP dining room becomes the focal point of our entire building and a place to actively build community and create bonds over a shared meal. Staff, volunteers, and members come together to eat and participate in conversation. Members who have something they need to do over lunch can receive a sack lunch to go.

The kitchen and dining room are overseen by **Will Fox**, Food Services Manager, and **Leon Washington**, Head Cook, who together have over 50 years of experience in the food services industry. Even so, they are only two individuals. Given the fact that TGP serves around 5,700 meals a month, it is no wonder that they both are very appreciative of the many volunteers who help in the kitchen.

“The volunteer that come each week are the heart of what we do,” says Fox. “If we didn’t have our volunteers, we wouldn’t make it. Creating the meals in the kitchen is all about teamwork and having each other’s back.”

Another piece of the puzzle in making the kitchen run smoothly is our meal sponsorships. In addition to weekly volunteers, we occasionally have groups come to The Gathering Place to assist in the kitchen. These groups, often made up of individuals from businesses, schools, church groups, or philanthropic organizations, not only sponsor a meal financially but also take part in preparing and serving the food. One particular treat for our members is when a group sponsors a hot breakfast filled with pancakes, eggs, and bacon!

While the kitchen relies on large distributors such as Shamrock Foods for basics and local businesses like



From left to right: Will Fox; kitchen volunteers Kay Fry, Patti Capps, and Susan Long; Leon Washington

McGregor’s Garden for dairy and dry goods, it is the donations of food from community and personal gardens that allow The Gathering Place to offer healthy and seasonal produce to those we serve. “My job is to provide healthy meals that taste good and will keep people full,” says Fox. “We serve up a lot of meals at The Gathering Place but I’m more proud of the fact that we favor preparing recipes from scratch using fresh ingredients when possible. We even have a vegetarian option each meal.”

After the din of lunch quiets down, staff, volunteers, and members will clean both the kitchen and the dining room in order to repeat the process again at the next meal. Members who decide they would like to assist in wiping tables, mopping floors, and taking out trash will receive chore points that they can then redeem for a variety of items on our chore cart.

It takes a lot of work to serve almost 1,400 meals a week. Yet despite the challenges, at The Gathering Place we see the role of providing nourishment as an integral part of our work. And its benefits extend beyond just the importance of alleviating hunger.

“Food brings people together – period,” Fox says. “At almost every type of gathering you go to there is food present. It gets people more comfortable around each other and is a great equalizer.”

“Preparing good food is a way for us to say ‘welcome’ to our members,” adds Washington. “It shows the community that we care about them and are here to help.”

supporters

Young philanthropists and volunteers show that everyone can make an impact

For one group of friends, it took the form of a classic lemonade stand set up on a sunny day. For another, it was a Penny Harvest conducted at their school to collect loose change. A third group decided they wanted to write a grant proposal on behalf of The Gathering Place through the Denver area organization

Youth Roots. Then there were

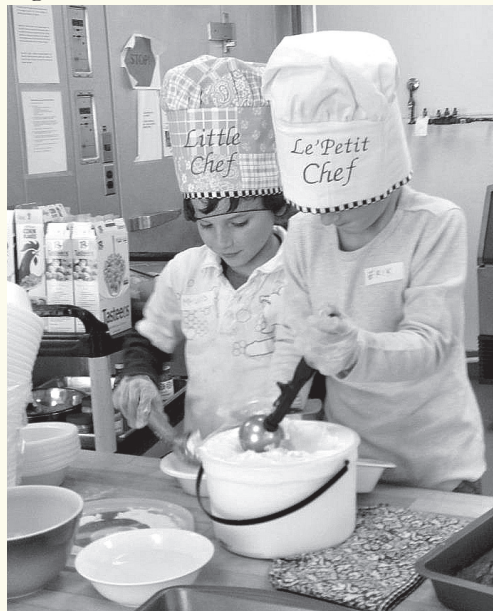
some new twists on collecting donations and fundraising: a sock drive in October (naturally dubbed Socktober!) and a Hop-A-Thon where children obtained pledges for every two-legged hop that they made. Over the past year, The Gathering Place has benefited from many wonderful examples of young people engaged in philanthropic giving, service learning, and volunteerism. These students demonstrate, through efforts driven by a high level of energy and passion, that those of all ages can make a difference.

Youth philanthropy can be used effectively in schools to educate students about community issues and teach them to search for solutions in order to make the world around them a better place. This realization is nothing new. In fact, The Gathering Place has two school partnerships that have long served as evidence of this idea. Since 1999, students at **The Logan School for Creative Learning** have helped us sell greeting cards from The Card Project, while at the same time learning about important issues surrounding homelessness. **Montessori School of Evergreen** has been sending their students to serve snack at The Gathering Place once a month for over a decade. Their visits, along with the brownies and ice cream they dish up to our members, are always a treat!

“Service education is important to our school and the visits to The Gathering Place help students learn about social issues they might not get exposed to otherwise,” says **Michelle Rogers**, Lower Elementary teacher at Montessori School of Evergreen. “The children can’t wait to serve dessert and speak with the members. The ladies have started giving the kids a standing ovation when they’re acknowledged. They love it!”



Montessori School of Evergreen students ready to serve



Preparing ice cream and brownies for dessert

TGP beneficiary of ticket sales from The Vagina Monologues

A total of three performances of Eve Ensler’s The Vagina Monologues were held on February 15 and 16 and raised \$3,960 to benefit The Gathering Place. The shows were organized by director **Angela Cooper** and performed by a local group of actors, all of whom donated their time and talents to the production. The performances were held at **Lannie’s Clocktower Cabaret** on the 16th Street Mall and were all well-attended.

We were thrilled to have Ms. Cooper and five selected actors come visit TGP the week before the public event to put on a special preview for our members followed by a Q & A. Thank you to everyone involved in the production and to those who came out to see the show!

New Annual Fund Manager at The Gathering Place

The Gathering Place is pleased to announce that **Emily Bunker Peterson** has joined our staff as the new Annual Fund Manager. Prior to starting her new job in March, Emily worked as an AmeriCorps VISTA member for Boulder County CareConnect, an organization that provides safety net services to seniors and adults with disabilities. When not in the office, Emily enjoys rock climbing, hiking, and practicing yoga. She says she is looking forward to learning from both the stellar members and staff of The Gathering Place.





Food drives help to keep Betsy's Cupboard full

In 2013, 49.1 million Americans lived in food insecure households, including 33.3 million adults and 15.8 million children.

- Feeding America

Did you know that members of The Gathering Place can receive up to 25 lbs of food a month from Betsy's Cupboard? This food, along with the meals we offer, help prevent food insecurity among those we serve. Betsy's Cupboard is a choice food pantry, meaning individuals can 'shop' among the items available and choose what they would like to receive. Last year, we distributed close to 55,000 lbs of food. Keeping food stocked on the shelves of Betsy's Cupboard is a community effort, however, as most of the items in the pantry are donated. If you or someone you know would like to organize a food drive for The Gathering Place, please contact Lydia Rodriguez at lydiafaye@tgpdenver.org or 303-996-9046. See the yellow section of page 4 for our preferred donation list.

Grow a Row for The Gathering Place in your garden this year

It may just be April but garden planting time—and summer—will be upon us before we know it. As you are making plans for your garden this summer, we ask that you consider planting a few plants, or a row of plants, from which you will donate produce to The Gathering Place.

We are grateful for the ability to serve a variety of fresh, healthy vegetables and fruit in our meals and to offer the same quality produce to those who receive food from Betsy's Cupboard. So join with us this year to ensure that everyone has a chance to eat local!



Sign up for our email list to receive important information

We promise not to spam you! Joining our email list is a terrific way to keep up with what is happening at The Gathering Place. We send out a monthly e-newsletter with information about programs, urgent needs, and upcoming events and promotions that will benefit our organization. You can sign up for our email list on our website, www.tgpdenver.org. Once you're there, click on "Join our email list" at the top of the homepage.



Tax credit information for gifts made to The Gathering Place

The Gathering Place operates in a Denver County Enterprise Zone and contributions equal to or greater than \$250 are eligible for a 25% state tax credit. In addition, stock and substantiated in-kind contributions qualify for a 12.5% credit. To receive this credit, the state requires you to provide your taxpayer identification number or the last four digits of your social security number when you make your donation. You also must file your taxes electronically.

Alternatively, gifts of \$1,000 or more made to support our Family Programs are eligible for the Colorado Child Care Contribution Credit. This allows up to 50% of your contribution to be used as a state tax credit. Stock and in-kind contributions are not eligible for this credit. Please contact your tax advisor for up-to-date information about the value of the Colorado Child Care Contribution Credit, as it changes regularly.

According to state regulations, either of these credits must be requested at the time of the donation. If you are making a donation by check, specify the credit name in the memo section. If you are using a credit card, attach a note. If you are calling in your donation, please tell The Gathering Place representative you speak to that you would like to receive the credit.

For more information about either tax credit, contact Melanie Durham at 303-996-9067 or melanie@tgpdenver.org.

The Gathering Place

a refuge for rebuilding lives

1535 High Street
Denver, CO 80218

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**Community College of Denver
employee at The Gathering Place

Photography Credits

The Gathering Place Staff
Patrick Currey

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 poverty or homelessness.

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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A MEMBER OF COMMUNITY SHARES OF COLORADO

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