



Gatherings

The quarterly agency newsletter of The Gathering Place Summer 2012

Determined to overcome: Sharon's story

When Sharon* came to The Gathering Place for the first time—nearly 15 years ago—her story was much, much different than it is now. Back then she was struggling to rebuild a life wrecked by trauma, addiction, and homelessness. Today she celebrates her many accomplishments: being clean and sober for eight years, employed by the same company for six years, and happily married for one year on August 24.

"It's not impossible to get off drugs. And it's not impossible to overcome homelessness," Sharon says. "You just have to want it and you have to be determined to succeed."

Sharon has lived in Denver since she was two years old. In the early 1980's, she graduated from Montbello High School and enrolled in Barnes Business College, aspiring to be a legal secretary. But she attempted to bury the memories of childhood trauma in crack cocaine, which led to an addiction she couldn't shake.

"I used to forget and it did me in for a long time," Sharon says about the addiction. She wound up going to prison twice for drug related charges. While she was in prison the second time, her twelve-year old son's father died.

"From there on, my life changed," she says. "I knew I needed to take care of my son. I wasn't going back to that lifestyle."

She was paroled to Samaritan House and started coming to The Gathering Place during the day. "Without The Gathering Place, I would have been on the street more," Sharon says. "They helped me find shelter, fed me, clothed me, and helped me rebuild my self-esteem."

Eventually, things started to come together for Sharon. She was selected for a Catholic Charities housing program

that helped her to pay her rent for 2 ½ years. She also got a job as a waitress at a truck stop and developed a resolve through her Narcotics Anonymous group that helped her to resist the temptation to use drugs again.

"It was unbelievable," she says of the various opportunities. The difficult times didn't end immediately, of course. There were still unhealthy relationships to end and mistakes to overcome. But Sharon was determined to keep moving forward and she did.

She started a job in the mailroom of a company that provides business process and knowledge solutions for those in the healthcare, legal, finance, and commercial sectors. She also met her husband through a blind date arranged by a family member.

"All those years of dating losers, and I finally found a winner," she says, beaming.

Sharon still comes to The Gathering Place to use the computer lab, eat meals from our kitchen—"They're good meals that I don't have to cook!" she says with a laugh—and catch up with other

members of our community.

"My long term goal is to go on a cruise or take a trip to Hawaii," she says. "I want to travel to somewhere that I've never been. My husband says he would like to send me back to school, too."

This time, though, Sharon says she'd like to study health and nutrition. She enjoys the exercise of riding her pink cruiser bicycle everywhere as transportation and would like a profession where her job was to encourage others to be healthy.

But for now, she's content to focus on the hard-won victories that have brought her to this place.

**This individual's name has been changed at her request.*



Sharon stands outside The Gathering Place showing off her pink cruiser bicycle.

Did you know?

IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 2012, THE GATHERING PLACE:

- Received a total of 32,947 visits
- Provided 34,465 meals and sack lunches to members
- Gave out over 45,000 pounds of food and 2,138 toiletry bags from Betsy's Cupboard
- Saw 970 different individuals in Bridget's Boutique
- Distributed 150 bras through our partnership with SoL Lingerie
- Gave out more than 11,000 diapers to mothers and their babies
- Provided 120 haircuts
- Arranged 1,232 meetings with our on-site Denver Department of Human Services employee, Stacey Soom
- Facilitated 84 visits with pro bono lawyers
- Saw an average of 53 artists each month in The Card Project and sold over 9,600 cards
- Received 5,158 visits to our computer lab
- Held 76 GED tutoring sessions
- Celebrated with 4 women who received their GED certification and many more who passed their individual GED tests

Woman claiming association with The Gathering Place pleads guilty in charitable fraud case

On August 10, 2012, a Centennial woman plead guilty to charitable fraud, conducting a scheme to defraud by posing as a member of The Gathering Place's board of directors and collecting donations as such. She will be sentenced on September 28.

The Gathering Place became aware of this individual, Candice Jenkins, and her activities when individuals she had approached for contributions called us to verify the information and that we had received their donations. We then contacted the Colorado Attorney General's office and cooperated with them throughout their investigation and the resulting legal proceedings.

While we are certainly glad that this ordeal is over and that Jenkins' fraudulent fundraising activities have ceased, we believe that this situation highlights a couple of important reminders for anyone making a donation to any charitable organization:

- Every year a number of wonderful individuals and organizations do fundraising on behalf of a variety of nonprofit organizations like The Gathering Place. We truly appreciate their time and efforts.
- If you ever have a question about someone who approaches you to ask for a "donation" for our organization or any other, you should feel free to:
 - Ask questions,
 - Call us to confirm the individual or group's connection to us,
 - And, be suspicious if you are being asked to make a check out to that individual or group, rather than to The Gathering Place.

Thank you so much for your continued support of The Gathering Place and for your participation in all of the events that benefit us!

Summer health fair held at The Gathering Place

On Friday, July 13, a number of local organizations came to The Gathering Place to provide health and wellness screenings, referrals, and information to our members. Groups attending were the **American Cancer Society, Brother Jeff, The Center, The Center for African American Health, Clínica Tepeyac, Cooking Matters Colorado, Denver Health Community Voices Enrollment Van, Denver Health Family Planning Clinic, Denver Health Tuberculosis Clinic, Denver Health Women's Mobile Clinic, It Takes a Village, Mental Health Association of Colorado, the Mile High Council, National American University nurses, Loretto Heights School of Nursing at Regis University, Stout Street Eye Clinic, Stout Street COPD Clinic, and Susan G. Komen Foundation.**

We are extremely grateful to these community partners. A total of 126 individuals attended the fair and many of them said that they had received information that was new or directly related to a health concern they have. Thank you all for coming and for providing such a great service!



6th Annual Turner Golf Tournament on August 14 sells out



Emily Mays reacts to a putt while Travis Bricker watches.



Dayle Jones (third from left) has organized this event for six years.

On August 14, **Turner Construction** hosted the 6th Annual Turner Open Golf Tournament at The Golf Club at Bear Dance in Larkspur, Colo. This sold-out event raised nearly \$18,000 for The Gathering Place. We were so proud to be joined by many familiar faces and companies who have supported this event over the years.

We want to say a special thank you to the sponsors of the 2012 tournament: **RK Mechanical/RK Specialties, SimplexGrinnell, Siemens Industry, E&K of Denver, Lampson International, Kroenke Sports Charities, Harmon, Inc., Cobb Mechanical, Professional Service Industries, Turner FMS, Flatiron Corporation, JonesLangLaSalle, LPR Construction Company, Mtech, Oldcastle, SunBelt Rentals, FOI Commercial Interiors, Schuff Steel, Johnson Controls, Inc., Dean Electric Inc., A.C. Dellovade, Inc., and Republic Services.** And most of all, thank you to Turner Construction and Dayle Jones for organizing and hosting such a wonderful event!

**Save the date for
the 2013 gala:
April 12, 2013**

**The theme is a secret,
BUT this is one event you
won't want to miss!**

Help with the 2013 gala!

It's never too early to start planning a fabulous event! We are looking for volunteers to help us with the 2013 gala. The commitment level varies based on your role with the event. We will need people to help secure auction items, sell tickets, and help addressing and stuffing invitations. If you are interested in volunteering, please email Laura Meixell at laura@tgpdnver.org or 303-996-9048.

Third-party events benefit The Gathering Place

We are thankful for the numerous community members and business owners who have chosen to show their support for The Gathering Place by creating and/or hosting a special event or fundraiser for us. Several events have happened recently. They are:

- August 9 & 10: Evening benefiting The Gathering Place at Comedy Works hosted by Sundyne Corporation
- August 29: The Garage Sale Millionaire Book Launch with Aaron LaPedis at Fascinations Street Art Gallery
- August 30: A Gala of Giving: A Summer Fashion Benefit at The Walnut Room hosted by Francesca Costa, Kazim Tercan, Karen Lindstrom, Miriam Hanson, and Alejandro Valentino.

View an up-to-date list online at www.tgpdnver.org/events.

As you can see from the list above, there are numerous types of events and activities that can be done in a way that benefit us. If you are interested in hosting an event or fundraiser for The Gathering Place, please contact Laura Meixell at laura@tgpdnver.org or 303-996-9048.

Donation list for Betsy's Cupboard

Through Betsy's Cupboard, our emergency food and supply pantry, The Gathering Place provides an average of over 8,000 pounds of food and 400 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

- Peanut butter • Soups and stews • Coffee, tea, cider packets, or cocoa packets • Brown rice • Beans, canned or dry • Whole wheat pasta • Spaghetti sauce • Milk, powdered, shelf stable, or canned • Canned tuna, chicken breast, or salmon • Canned fruits in 100% juice or its own juice • Canned vegetables • Make-a-meal items (Hamburger or Tuna Helper) • Frozen entrées • Beans and rice combos • Snack items (e.g. tuna and cracker packs, crackers, nuts) • Granola bars • Oatmeal or other whole grain hot cereals • Whole grain cold cereal • Mayonnaise • Mustard • Ketchup • 100% Bottled juice • Bottled water • Vegetarian products • Microwavable items • 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)

NEW PERSONAL SUPPLIES

- Deodorant • Lotion • Toothbrushes and toothpaste • Tampons/pads • Shampoo and conditioner • Razors • Hair care products • Denture-Polygrip/Efferdent • Cosmetics for all skin colors • New socks and underwear for women and children • Laundry detergent • Fabric softener • Dryer sheets • Dish soap

NEW BABY ITEMS

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

OTHER

- Tissues • Toilet paper • King Soopers/Safeway gift cards • Small can openers • Computer disks/flash drives • Craft store gift cards • Gift cards for children's birthday gifts

volunteers

Different ways to volunteer with us

The Gathering Place is fortunate to have many dedicated volunteers who serve on site every week. But, we know that not everyone can volunteer Monday-Friday 8:30-5:00, and our needs certainly reach beyond our business hours. If you are looking for an "out of the box" service opportunity, please consider:

- Staffing a fundraising event or joining our event volunteers. Contact Laura Meixell at 303-996-9048 or laura@tgpdenver.org.
- Joining The Card Project Marketers to deliver cards to retailers or to sell cards at holiday markets or craft fairs. Contact Denise Lines at 303-996-9068 or denise@tgpdenver.org.
- Facilitating a donation drive for Betsy's Cupboard, our on-site food and toiletries bank. Contact Lydia Rodriguez at 303-996-9046 or lydiafaye@tgpdenver.org.
- Encouraging shoppers at the Whole Foods in Capitol Hill to purchase items for Betsy's Cupboard on "Buy an Extra" day, which typically falls on the fourth Monday of each month. Contact Brenda Roush at 303-996-9027 or brenda@tgpdenver.org.

Volunteer snapshot for June 2012:

170 regular onsite volunteers
+ 82 meal sponsor volunteers
+ 30 facility maintenance volunteers
+ 10 Delaney Urban Farm work day volunteers
= 1,932 hours served & immeasurable lives touched!

Holidays are right around the corner

Over the past couple of months, you've probably heard about numerous "Christmas in July" sales. Well, the holiday season started even earlier in our Volunteer Department this year. In April, we received our first call from a business asking to reserve a date for their employee Feast and Festivity!

Feasts and Festivities are a big part of our holidays at The Gathering Place and mean a great deal to our members. These afternoon gatherings are an opportunity to build community and celebrate the season in a variety of ways. Last year volunteers hosted afternoon festivities of gift making, craft projects, holiday sing-a-longs, movies and popcorn, and much more. Many of these groups also sponsored the afternoon meal—the "feast"—by purchasing food, cooking on site, and then sharing the meal with our members.

So, invite your family, friends, or colleagues to spread joy this holiday season by sponsoring a Feast and Festivity on any Monday or Wednesday from November 26 to January 4. We also have breakfast or lunch meal sponsorship opportunities on most weekdays. To schedule a date or get more information, please contact Trisha Koizumi at 303-996-9044 or trisha@tgpdenver.org.

Fresh vegetables and fruit grown at The Gathering Place



Pictured above, starting at the top left corner: A planter full of vegetables and flowers in The Gathering Place's rooftop garden. Right: Carrots grown in the rooftop garden. Bottom left: Table grapes climbing the greenscreen® in the rooftop garden.

With breathtaking views of the Rocky Mountains and numerous planters filled with vegetables, herbs, and fruit, the rooftop at The Gathering Place is a welcome escape from the hum of activity inside the building. Members are invited to participate in a seasonal gardening program, helping to plant, nurture, and harvest produce from the rooftop garden that is used for meals served on site or distributed through Betsy's Cupboard. In 2011, over 90 pounds of produce were harvested from the rooftop garden. This year's crops have included lettuce, carrots, beets, tomatoes, beans, grapes, cherries, and basil.

Our Food Services Program benefits greatly during the summer months from fresh produce grown in our own garden; from produce that is donated to us from the **Whittier Community Garden**, the **Grow Local** plot in Civic Center Park (tended to by Returned Peace Corps members), and **Kiowa Vally Organics, Inc.**; and from the produce we purchase from **Delaney Farms**, a local Community Supported Agriculture endeavor. All of these locally grown vegetables and fruits help us to place a high priority on meeting the nutritional needs of our members, while ensuring that every meal is thoughtfully prepared and served with the utmost dignity.

Vegan Kale & White Bean Soup

1. In a skillet, sauté 2 tablespoons of olive oil and 2 medium onions.
2. Add 4 tablespoons of fresh garlic, 2 cups of carrots*, 1 cup of celery, 4 large handfuls of greens, and continue to sauté.
3. Add sautéed vegetables to 1 to 1 ½ gallons of vegetable broth in a stockpot.
4. Add four cups of white beans (rinsed, if canned).
5. Heat and season to taste with garlic, salt, and pepper.

Enjoy!

**Consider using purple carrots for a twist!*

supporters

Pet Partners bring smiles and laughter to those at The Gathering Place



MaryAnn Vogt and her Boston Terrier, Fern, visit with a member.

We are fortunate to have three teams from **Denver Pet Partners** who come to The Gathering Place each week to visit and spend time with all of us. The goal of Denver Pet Partners is to enhance lives and promote the

human-animal bond through activities and therapy. **MaryAnn Vogt** and her Boston Terrier, **Fern**, along with **Margaret Smith** and her Old English Sheepdog, **Moose**, visit with the adults on the first and second floor, while **Anne Stowers** and her Portuguese Water Dog, **Addison**, spend time on the third floor in the Family Area with children and their mothers.

These terrific dogs and their owners bring a great deal of happiness to all of us at The Gathering Place. Faces light up with smiles upon their arrival and individuals wait patiently for some special one-on-one time with their furry friends. We appreciate each team's time every week and the unique way they are able to lift our spirits!

Global Communications Group chooses The Gathering Place as a charity partner for its 2012 golf tournament

The Gathering Place was one of four beneficiaries for the second annual **Global Care Foundation Golf Tournament**, held on July 19 at Inverness Golf Course. Each organization – The Gathering Place, along with Warren Village, YouthBiz, and the Denver Rescue Mission – received a \$5,000 contribution from the proceeds of the event.

The tournament, a 144 player shotgun start, was part of the 2012 GlobalExpo Supplier Fair hosted by **Global Communications Group**, which featured representatives and speakers from a number of leading telecommunication carriers, equipment providers, and data centers.

Thank you to Global Communications Group, to your tournament's many sponsors, and to all of the golfers who made this event such a success. We truly appreciate your support and efforts on our behalf!

Recent grant awards from foundations total nearly \$200,000

Throughout the year, numerous foundations provide generous grant funding to support the services and programs at The Gathering Place.

Our community would not be complete without the following funders: **The Denver Foundation, Helen K. and Arthur E. Johnson Foundation, Franciscan Friars of Holy Name Province May Bonfils Stanton Memorial Fund, Helen M. McLoraine Gathering Place Endowment Fund, The Nord Family Foundation, The Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Colorado, The Pioneer Fund, Venoco, Inc., and Walmart Foundation's State Giving Program.**

Thank you to all of our foundation funders! Your support enables us to do important, life changing work each day.



Representatives from The Gathering Place (far left, Samantha Horoschak, Director of Annual Giving), Warren Village, YouthBiz, and the Denver Rescue Mission accept a check for \$5,000 (for each agency).



Workplace contributions make a huge difference

Does your company have a workplace giving program or participate in one through an organization such as Community Shares of Colorado or Mile High United Way? Workplace giving is an easy way to support The Gathering Place and you probably won't even notice the small amount missing from your paycheck each month. But think about what a \$10/month contribution becomes in just one year!

The following are The Gathering Place's ID numbers for various workplace giving campaigns:

- **Community Shares & Partnership for Colorado:** #5026
- **Denver Employees Combined Campaign & Colorado Combined Campaign:** #5050
- **Metro Denver Combined Federal Campaign:** #41763
- **Mile High United Way:** Ask your campaign coordinator for an agency write-in form.

If your company has a workplace giving program, encourage your co-workers to support us, too!

Make an impact through planned giving, matching gifts, or recurring donations

Planned giving, matching gifts, and recurring donations are all high-impact ways to give to The Gathering Place. Planned giving allows donors to incorporate their philanthropic wishes into their financial and/or estate planning. You can leave a legacy and help sustain the mission of The Gathering Place by naming us as a beneficiary in your will, life insurance policy, 401(k), IRA, or other estate plans. For more information about naming The Gathering Place as a beneficiary, please ask your estate planner or attorney to contact Lisa Zavoda at 303-996-9061.

Many companies have matching gift programs that will double or even triple your donation to The Gathering Place. You can find out about the availability of these types of programs by contacting your human resources department.

And, recurring donations are a great way to give a small amount each month (week, quarter, etc.) to The Gathering Place, which adds up to a significant gift over the course of a year. You can set up an automatic recurring donation to The Gathering Place through GivingFirst.org.

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 \$500 are eligible for a 25% state tax credit. In addition, stock and substantiated in-kind contributions qualify for a 12.5% credit.

When making a donation for which you would like to receive the Enterprise Zone Tax Credit, please specify DUEDC (Enterprise Zone) in the memo section of your check. If using a credit card, simply attach a note. If you are calling in your donation, please tell The Gathering Place representative. According to state regulations, the credit must be requested at the time of the donation.

As of January 1, 2012, legislative changes for the state of Colorado require that all taxpayers claiming Enterprise Zone tax credits from any eligible organization file their 2012 tax returns electronically. Additionally, in order to qualify for the Enterprise Zone tax credit, all donors must provide The Gathering Place with their taxpayer identification number (FEIN, or Social Security Number, or Colorado Account Number). Without record of the taxpayer identification number, we are unable to submit your donation as an Enterprise Zone contribution.

For more information on this tax credit, contact Samantha Horoschak at 303-996-9043 or samantha@tgpdenver.org.

The Gathering Place

a refuge for rebuilding lives

1535 High Street
Denver, CO 80218

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
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The 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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A MEMBER OF COMMUNITY SHARES OF COLORADO

Campaign Codes:
Community Shares of Colorado: 5026
City and State (DECC and CCC): 5050
Federal Campaign (CFC): 41763



The Gathering Place
a refuge for rebuilding lives

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