Dear Friends of Sister Carmen Community Center,

I was reading a book recently and a short sentence in it jumped out at me and has stayed with me since. That sentence is, “Sorrow is transformed by love.” I honestly immediately thought of the incredible work done at Sister Carmen Community Center. Those who work and volunteer here are often confronted with participants’ sorrows. It is the love expressed through the staff’s and volunteers’ compassion and action that helps to at least begin to transform those sorrows into something more bearable.

You, too, are a very important part of this transformation. As donors and partners, you make it feasible for Sister Carmen to do what it does. Without you, it would be nearly impossible to provide the services and therefore express the love that makes Sister Carmen the amazing place that it is.

The time period covered in this annual report includes the celebration of Sister Carmen’s 40th year of incorporation and the 40 More! campaign that was launched to assist in paying the mortgage. While we still have a mortgage, it is much less burdensome due to the financial support from people such as yourselves. In addition, during these months of 2017 and 2018 the thrift store was able to sell nearly half a million dollars of clothes and household items, while the food bank provided over a million pounds of food to our neighbors in need.

And yet, despite all this good labor, the sorrows are still present. Among our participants there is an increasing need for support for rent payments, utility bills, and mental health services. Since the beginning of 2019, there have been over one thousand visits a month to the food bank and our advocates note increased stress in our participants. More than once I have had a participant say to me during a Friday afternoon shift at the food bank, “If you weren’t here, I would have nothing to eat this weekend.”

What can we do in the midst of all these sorrows? Are we to despair of ever lessening pain or making a difference? Anne Lamont tells us in her book, Almost Everything: Notes on Hope, that “[l]ove is why we have hope.” So, there’s that word again. Love has and will transform us and those we serve, whether that love is expressed through our lives, our work and our generosity. Ms. Lamont trusts that “[w]e have all we need to come through.” We at Sister Carmen believe that as well, because we have you as our champions.

Gratefully,

Kathleen Rimar
Chair, Board of Directors

FROM OUR CHAIR

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Sister Carmen Community Center provides assistance to the residents of East Boulder County who are in need, without discrimination.

WHO WE SERVE

- 8,501 individuals served
- 20% do not have health insurance
- 27% served are children
- 17% are unemployed
- 12% served are seniors (65+)
- 5% are retired or on a fixed income
- 4% have a disability
- 20% are single or divorced

![Gender Distribution](image)

53% Female
45% Male
<1% Transgender

OUR MISSION

OUR TEAM

STAFF
- 26 full-time, 9 part-time
- 10 are bilingual
- 20% identify as non-white

BOARD
- 5 women, 8 men
- 17% identify as non-white
- 1 former participant

VOLUNTEERS
- Over 1,000 active volunteers, including groups
- 22,500 total volunteer hours
COMMUNITY & FAMILY EDUCATION

Our goal is to empower families by offering them the skills and resources they need in order to make positive changes both at home and in the community. We strengthen families through parenting education courses that are evidence-based and proven to help reduce child abuse and neglect. In 2018, we began the collaborative Bridging Digital Divides with BVSD and other area organizations to offer digital literacy classes, internet access, and computer devices to families. We also offer civic engagement and leadership opportunities. Additionally, we’ve become a hub for professional development to support our staff and other Family Resource Centers by offering trainings on the Strengths-Based approach to service, the California Quality Standards of Care, Protective Factors, Motivational Interviewing, and the Family Development Credential.

Offered 6 Nurturing Parenting Classes, which empowered 80 parents of 96 children with new information on parenting skills and positive alternatives for discipline

25 adults recruited for the Family Leadership Training Institute, and 18 adults successfully completed the program

ADVOCACY

Our Advocacy Program is committed to strengthening individual, family, and community relationships through guidance that is one-on-one, culturally competent, and centered on the strengths and needs of the entire family. Our goal is to support healthy families and assist them in recovering from challenging experiences through access to coordinated resources, education, prevention, basic needs, and holistic supportive services.

928 individuals received advocacy services

Over $70,000 distributed to 137 families for utility assistance

$104,515.23 distributed to 208 families for mortgage or rent assistance

Supplied $16,795 in Thrift Store vouchers for essential items for families

528 individuals received bus tickets

VALERIE, SCCC PARTICIPANT

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the help you have given to my family. My son has a difficult illness and was unable to work for over 2 years, and going without food was not an option! Sister Carmen helped me provide for my family in the hardest of times: food, utilities, financial/legal counseling, and moral support. My deepest gratitude to you all!
An important aspect of regaining stability is consistent access to nutritious food, necessary medical care, and mental health counseling. Sister Carmen provides supportive services that can stop the downward spiral of a crisis situation so that families are not faced with the difficult decision about whether to buy food or pay for rent. We also offer nutritional classes and workshops about preparing healthy meals on a budget.

### FOOD

- **1,165,099** pounds of food and household items distributed to **2,103** families
- **628** pounds of food harvested from our onsite community garden

### EXERCISE

- **66** individuals attended **1+** classes
- **3** classes per week (1 Zumba and 2 Yoga)

### EDUCATION

- **57** individuals attended our Eating Smart, Being Active class for adults
- Offered **8** 4-week sessions, including 4 in English and 4 in Spanish

### OTHER HEALTH SERVICES

- **101** individuals received onsite mental health counseling
- Spent **$21,800.04** on vision needs for **84** participants
- **92** adults and children received bikes
OUR COMMUNITY GARDEN

Built seven years ago, the Sister Carmen Community Center Garden has been invaluable for our participants, children’s programming, and volunteer program. So much gratitude and hope has come to volunteers, participants, and children by being able to reconnect with nature, feel a sense of purpose, and connect with our mission – all while providing much needed and desired fresh produce for our food bank participants. In the 2018 growing season, with the support of dozens of volunteers and our amazing garden coordinator, Robyn Rathweg, 1012 pounds of nutritious, organic food was produced and distributed.

Kids from other programming here at Sister Carmen also have the opportunity to explore, learn, and grow in our garden every year! Sister Carmen’s Childcare Development Worker, Christine Comment, expressed how important the garden is for her – “the ability to take kids to play and explore in the SCCC Garden (and related indoor projects like painting garden rocks) has truly been a godsend for being able to have kids enjoy being outdoors, especially since the play space is limited here.” In the garden, children of all ages get the opportunity to pick flowers or produce, identify bugs of all kinds, pull carrots and taste them, release ladybugs, and of course, play in the dirt.

Besides hosting volunteers and providing food for foodbank participants, the organic garden supplies food for untold numbers of bugs and birds through planting flowers and herbs attractive to pollinators. A side benefit of having these plants in the garden is that the staff and volunteers can have fresh flower bouquets July through October. Whimsical art invites exploration. The garden offers a pleasant place to sit or stroll, especially for people going through stress. The garden feeds the body, but it also feeds the spirit.
According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2016 American Community Survey, there are at least 2,474 city of Boulder Residents without a computer or Internet subscription in their home, and 11,899 in Boulder County. Sister Carmen Community Center believes that digital equity is essential for full participation in our society, democracy and economy. That’s why, in 2018, we partnered with other area organizations and Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) to create a new program, Bridging Digital Divides (BDD), to connect underserved families and individuals with digital resources that they would otherwise not be able to access on their own.

BDD promotes digital equity by providing affordable technology to low-income households, teaching basic computer skills to individuals that need them, and collaborating with partners who are already doing good work to further their missions and create a sustainable community-driven movement towards digital equity. This digital literacy series consists of 8 two hour classes, in Spanish, covering the basics of email, internet search and security, scams and phishing, typing and word-processing, as well as navigating local online resources such as the BVSD parent portal, used to check students’ grades and communicate with teachers. Childcare and dinner are provided, as well as a Chromebook for participants with perfect attendance!

2018 was our first year and we launched 10 digital literacy series with 145 participants, 90% of whom were women. All of our 2018 participants were Latino, but we are hoping to open the program to low-income English speaking participants, including more seniors in 2019 by adding at least one bilingual series. We are proud to announce a graduation rate of 98%!

Every year at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic, Sister Carmen elects a Volunteer of the Year who has demonstrated exemplary service to the organization. This year, we’re proud to honor Jeanmarie! 

Jeanmarie first learned about Sister Carmen through her church and originally got involved because her son needed volunteer hours. She enjoyed it so much that she decided to stick around. For the past six years, Jeanmarie has gone above and beyond as a volunteer for both our food bank and development departments.

It takes many helping hands to run a food bank, and Jeanmarie is always happy to dive in at every step of the process. Our food bank follows a strengths-based approach, which means participants can shop for what they need based on household size. This way, people can choose the food they want for their families rather than receiving items they may not be able to use. Volunteers like Jeanmarie make sure the donations are organized and sorted, the shelves are stocked, and that every shopper feels welcome and supported.

“My favorite job is to assist shoppers,” she says. “It makes me feel good to help them with what their need is at the moment—I imagine it’s overwhelming for someone if it’s their first time visiting.”

Although it can be emotionally taxing to support people during difficult times, Jeanmarie believes the volunteers and staff members are key components of the positive, welcoming atmosphere at SCCC. “People are here for the right reasons,” she says. “It’s out of their hearts; they’re here.”

When she’s not volunteering, Jeanmarie loves traveling, home improvement projects, and spending time with her family and poodle mix, Bosley.
FINANCIALS

**INCOME**

- In-Kind Food & Personal Items: $2,325,740
- Donations (Individual, Foundation, Other): $1,709,083
- Thrift Store: $663,355
- Boulder County: $418,092
- Interest and Other: $12,261
- Loss on Disposal of Assets: ($530)

**EXPENSES**

- Program Services: $3,939,222
- Thrift Store: $579,422
- Fundraising: $214,406
- Administration: $120,150

**TOTAL:** $5,128,001
**TOTAL:** $4,853,200
Last year, Sister Carmen Community Center celebrated its 40th anniversary of service to this community! As much as we wish we weren’t needed, we understand there will always be people who fall on hard times and we want to make sure there is always a door open to them. So, with sustainability in mind, we launched our 40 More! Campaign to pay off our mortgage so that we can be here for another 40 years, serving our community and lending a hand to whomever needs our assistance.

Through this campaign and with the generous support of our donors, we raised a total of $272,245 towards 40 More! This has allowed us to make huge payments towards the principal mortgage, reducing the length of the loan by nearly 6 years (from April, 2026 to February, 2020) and saving us a total of $102,773 in interest! This will significantly grow Sister Carmen’s potential impact by decreasing our operational expenses, allowing us to expand programs and services to reach more people overall and deepen our level of commitment to each individual. Over the next year, as we share news, updates, and stories, we invite you to follow along, and walk with us, to bring generosity and hope to East Boulder County.
Robert and Sandra Hopper
Sharon and Wayne Hykan
Jeremy, Tess and Anne Jackson
Erik and Merrell Johannson
Karol and Lynn Johnson
J Renee Johnston
Dave and Rita Kerno
KLA Associates
Kevin and Donna Koepping
Lafayette Homebrew Supply LLC
Michelle Lieber and David Sutton
Longmont Community Foundation
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