Friends:

If I look back on 2021 from a Sister Carmen Community Center perspective, it’s obvious that there were many challenges in East Boulder County. The pandemic continued to disrupt life in our community, the Omicron variant reared its head and The Marshall Fire devastated Superior and Louisville.

It’s hard to take any positives from that. I think we can, however, take comfort in how the community responded.

I was at the Center the morning after the fire. 20 or so volunteers had showed up. No one had asked them to. There was a line of trucks and cars stretching out into the road, each carrying bottled water, food, clothing, and other supplies. No one had asked them to. Over the next few days, the community gave many thousands of dollars to the Center. Once again, no one had asked them to. All of these stakeholders knew instinctively that Sister Carmen was the organization that would be leading the effort to help, as did those who were displaced.

It’s a belief that our community will roll up its sleeves and help wherever is needed that gives me comfort.

At Sister Carmen, we play a facilitation role, connecting those who need help with those who can give it. In trying times, our staff and volunteers have done that well. I am sincerely grateful to them.

Because of their efforts, we’ve been recognized by all the local press and each of the Denver TV stations. We’ve been paid visits by the Governor, our Senator, and our Congressman. Our staff has been asked to serve on many of the committees that have been formed to work on recovery efforts.

I am an optimist. I do believe that things will get better. I also believe that Sister Carmen will help our community weather any storm.

For the part that you have played and will play in the future, I thank you!

Sincerely,

Dave Ireland
Board Chair

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

**WHO WE SERVE**

5,580 individuals served

- 34% served are children
- 7% served are seniors (65+)
- 2% have a disability
- 22% do not have health insurance
- 54% Female
- 45% Male
- <1% Transgender
- 10% are retired or on a fixed income
- 15% are single or divorced

**OUR MISSION**

**OUR TEAM**

**STAFF**
- 28 full-time, 8 part-time
- 12 are bilingual
- 36% identify as non-white

**BOARD**
- 7 women, 5 men
- 33% identify as non-white
- 1 former participant

**VOLUNTEERS**
- Over 1,400 active volunteers, including groups
- 24,000 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, which were held online throughout the pandemic. Our Bridging Digital Divides program was in high demand as life shifted online, and we were able to hold virtual classes, provide devices, and connect participants with internet access. Additionally, we’re 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 4 Nurturing Parenting Classes, which empowered 69 parents with new information on parenting skills and positive alternatives for discipline

25 parents attended our first series of Active Parenting for parents of teens and pre-teens

205 participants attended digital literacy classes and 135 devices (Chromebooks and hotspots) were distributed

ADVOCACY

Our Advocacy Program, which expanded significantly due to the pandemic, 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. We support families and assist them in recovering from challenging experiences through access to coordinated resources, education, prevention, basic needs and holistic supportive services.

2,824 individuals received advocacy services

Over $208,524 distributed for utility assistance

$1,429,226 distributed to 679 families for mortgage or rent assistance

Supplied $8,775 in Thrift Store vouchers for essential items for families

188 participants received bus tickets

I can finally sleep at night and rest assured that my son and I will continue to have a roof over our heads. I am so amazed at the wonderful programs you have available to help people like me in their time of need.

ANONYMOUS SCCC PARTICIPANT
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.

No nutrition or exercises classes were held last year due to the pandemic, but distributions of healthy meal kits in collaboration with local high school students, recipes from Bridge House, and food from local farmers. Families through our Community & Family Education programs signed up to receive meal kits with meat or vegetarian options.

1,144,903 pounds of food and household items distributed to 1,485 families

1,000+ pounds of food harvested from our onsite community garden

1,069 pounds of food distributed to 75 participants through our Kestrel satellite food pantry

Spent $35,187 on vision needs for 122 participants

19 adults and children received bikes
COVID-19: HOW THINGS LOOKED A LITTLE DIFFERENT THIS YEAR

Sister Carmen’s 2020 – 2021 fiscal year was probably more difficult than any year since our inception. Many of our programs faced challenges with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic. We had to adapt and adjust extremely quickly, not only to make sure we met the sudden influx in demand for our basic needs services, but also to ensure our staff and volunteers were as safe as possible. Normally a busy bustling place for the community with free childcare and open-to-the-community spaces, SCCC was suddenly faced with the daunting task of continuing and increasing service capacity while also staying physically distant from the public.

While we can finally see the horizon ahead, we want to take a moment to look back at all we’ve been through and appreciate what we’re getting back:

SCCC’s main administrative offices were still open to the public, but we conducted the majority of appointments by phone or zoom. Community spaces including the childcare room, conference rooms, and classroom were closed. Family Leadership Training Institute (FLTI), exercise classes, cooking and nutrition classes were put on hold. Now, those spaces are finally opening up again to in-person activities, and we intend to offer these programs again in 2022. Many of our staff have the option to work from home as well as in the office on a flexible schedule. While this was instituted because of the pandemic, we intend to continue these options going forward for the physical and mental health of our staff and to promote a better work-life balance.

Given the increase in demand our Advocate team has now expanded to 9 full-time Bilingual Advocates plus one Advocate Manager.

In 2020 our Thrift Store was temporarily closed for safety concerns, then reopened with limited capacity and by-appointment only so that we could stay safe and cater to our most vulnerable residents. The store is a big generator of general-operating revenue for the organization, so this was a difficult choice, but we are happy to report the store is open again at full capacity and is busier than ever!

In early 2020 we converted the Food Bank from self-shop grocery model to drive-through food box distribution using a contact-less check-in system. We delivered boxes upon request, something we intend to continue long-term. We hired temporary workers to help, some of whom have since accepted permanent positions as part of the Sister Carmen family! We’ve since opened up to in-person shopping again, but plan to continue the drive-thru model as well, to offer more choice and flexibility to participants.

Bridging Digital Divide has continued despite the added challenge of teaching digital literacy via Zoom or one-on-one. But this program has continued to be very popular and more necessary than ever. We intend to start in-person classes again in 2022.

The result of all these changes and our hard work is that we’ve been fortunate enough to not have an outbreak at the organization and we’ve successfully and consistently met the needs of our community. We’ve distributed more Direct Financial Assistance to more families in one period than we have in the history of the organization. We have not run out of food, but have consistently delivered a wide variety of nutritious groceries and essential items to families. We’ve connected the disconnected. We’ve been here for our community through and through.
Sister Carmen Community Center has been offering educational opportunities to parents of young children for many years, but parents of older children have been requesting us to offer something similar. So in April of 2021 we launched a new program, Active Parenting of Teens, to support parents of teens and ‘tweens!

This nationally recognized and evidence-based curriculum gives parents the guidance and support they need to turn the challenges of raising a teenager into opportunities for growth. Parents learn methods of respectful discipline, skills for clear, honest communication, concrete strategies to prevent risky behavior, how to be an encouraging parent, and much more. In six sessions packed with activities, discussion, real-world examples, and feedback, parents learn a proven approach to parenting, plus indispensable techniques and insights for overcoming obstacles, bringing happiness and harmony into the home.

The program is offered in both English and Spanish at Sister Carmen. The 25 parents (11 English- and 14 Spanish-speaking) who attended in 2021 loved it so much that they wanted to keep it going! Parents were able to make friends and grow their network of support. Now, they are more aware of opportunities to connect with their teenagers, have the courage and skills to open up conversations, and language to speak with them about difficult topics. We are ready to be here for parents and look forward to offering this program again in April of 2022.

For more information, contact Julie Piller at julie@sistercarmen.org.

Program Spotlight: Active Parenting of Teens

Volunteers of the Year: Nancy and Harry Blum

Nancy and Harry have been wonderful, dedicated volunteers for many years, volunteering over 1,200 hours! They have volunteered multiple shifts during the pandemic when we needed help the most.

They are quick to take on any job that’s needed and help show new volunteers the ropes. Nancy and Harry are compassionate, fun, and hardworking volunteers who have done outreach for volunteer recruitment, food drives, and more.

“They are truly our Food Bank volunteer rock stars!” says Ruth Perry, our former Food Bank Manager. “Like clockwork, 3 times a week for 3 hours each time, they always arrive with enthusiasm, compassion, efficiency and a wonderful sense of humor! Their commitment to volunteering is exceptional.”

“Even though there are a lot of ways to spend your day when you retire, volunteering has always been a part of our lives,” says Nancy.

“We simply needed a purpose in our lives and a way to give back. Sister Carmen Food Bank was the answer. I love to hear Harry laughing and having fun with his coworkers. We are constantly busy, moving and getting plenty of exercise. Yes, we are tired at the end of our shift, however, it is a great feeling to be needed and give back to the community.”
**INCOME**

- Contributions & Grants: $3,792,147
- In-Kind Food & Personal Items: $2,850,432
- Thrift Store: $313,435
- Government Grant (PPP): $291,000
- Interest and Other: $11,302

**EXPENSES**

- Program Services: $6,455,864
- Thrift Store: $564,186
- Fundraising: $207,227
- Administration: $200,273

**TOTAL:** $7,258,316

**TOTAL:** $7,427,550
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Thank you to the following generous donors who each contributed over $1,000 to Sister Carmen Community Center during our past fiscal year!

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