

## TOGETHER, EMPTY STOCKING FUND AGENCIES HELP **FAMILIES TRANSFORM THEIR LIVES**

BY LESLIE MASSEY, LESLIE, MASSEY@GAZETTE, COM

Towing three children with her, a young mom realized in order to save her own life she had to get away from her abusive husband. He had already tried to kill her on more than one occasion.

EL POMAR FOUNDATION

After finding their way to the Pikes Peak region, she and her children were eager to start over and discover a better life. Fortunately this mom connected with the right organizations, offering indispensable resources that would not only keep her family safe, but also get them on the right track to a fresh start.

"It was hard walking through the door the first time," she said. "But I had three children and we just needed a way to start over."

With a hand from three Empty Stocking Fund agencies, TESSA, The Resource Exchange and Tri-Lakes Cares, this young family was soon making progress, becoming self-sufficient, and building the kind of life they had hoped for.

"Each of these agencies touched our lives in some way," the mother said. "They each provided what we needed at the time to

The Gazette-El Pomar Foundation Empty Stocking Fund provides resources for 20 local health and human service agencies in the Pikes Peak region on the front lines of helping people in crisis and assisting other in attaining self-sufficiency. The 33rd annual campaign begins Thanksgiving Day 2016 and runs through January 20, 2017.

make it work."

TESSA, she said, saved her life by arranging a safe, confidential place for her family to live without persistent fear of being tracked down by her ex-husband, as well as legal advice and guidance to reinvent their lives. As the only provider of completely confiden-

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# RECIPIENT AGENCIES

- American Red Cross of Southern Colorado
- Care and Share Food Bank
- CPCD... giving children a head start
- Ecumenical Social Ministries
- Griffith Center for Children, Chins Up Youth & Family Services
- Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountain
- Marian House, Catholic Charities
- Mercy's Gate
- Partners in Housing
- Peak Vista Community Health Centers
- REACH Pikes Peak
- Silver Key Senior Services
- TESSA
- The Home Front Cares
- The Resource Exchange
- The Salvation Army of El Paso County
- Tri-Lakes Cares
- Urban Peak
- Westside CARES
- YMCA of the Pikes Peak Region



A volunteer delivers watermelons from Care and Share's mobile food pantry

Every One Counts

### **UPCOMING AGENCY EVENTS**

- **August 18:** The Spin Cycle Grand Opening at ESM! Location: Ecumenical Social Ministries at 4 PM
- **August 27:** Grapes on the Ground fundraiser supporting Partners in Housing. Wine and beer tasting with hors d'oeuvres. Location: Myron Stratton Grounds at 5:30 PM
- **September 8:** Griffith's Kitchen culinary competition fundraiser supporting Griffith Centers for Children. Location: Garden of the Gods Club at 6 PM
- **September 10:** Rockin' the '60s fundraiser for Silver Key Senior Services. Location: Antlers at 6 PM
- **September 13:** Annual Innkeeper fundraiser for Lutheran Family Services. Location: Hotel Elegante at 5 PM
- October 8: Positive Exposure's "Change How You See, See How You Change" Photography Exhibit Opening. Location: Chapel Hills Mall

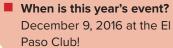
# WHAT DOES A **200** DONATION PROVIDE?

- \$20 buys three GED practices tests for Math, English and Social Studies (Urban Peak)
- \$20 provides one smoke alarm & batteries (American Red
- \$20 offers more than 150 meals to your Southern Colorado neighbors at risk of hunger (Care and Share)
- \$20 serves more than 110 meals at Marian House (Catholic
- \$20 provides five children with their own book for learning at home (CPCD)

## PAUL FRANCO'S HOLIDAYS FOR HOPE

- Tell us about Paul Franco's Holidays for Hope. Each year we host a very fun holiday party to raise money for the Empty Stocking Fund. We have live music, dancing, heavy appetizers, a silent auction and a live auction with 10-12 high-end items. 100% of the proceeds are donated to the Empty Stocking Fund. Overhead for the event is covered by sponsors.
- How long have you been hosting Holidays for Hope? This will be our 7th year! In our first year we had about 60 guests and raised about \$1.200. At our last event we raised almost \$22,000 and had around 120 quests. Many of our quests have come every single year!
- How did you initially hear about Empty Stocking Fund? I was a sponsor and active in the Jack Quinn's Running Club. One

very cold Tuesday evening in December 2009 we hosted the Quinn's Run at our office. One guest was a Fellow from the El Pomar Foundation who was raising money for ESF. We developed a relationship with her, and very quickly asked if we could host a fundraising event for ESF the following year.





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tial support services in El Paso and Teller Counties, TESSA provides vital assistance for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

With a developmentally disabled son to care for, support services from The Resource Exchange were also an indispensable tool in her efforts to build a new life.

A client and volunteer interact at Tri-Lakes Cares

"The Resource Exchange acted as an advocate for my son through school," she said. "His disability is not visible so it's hard for people to recognize he is disabled. The Resource Exchange trained him in appropriate ways to interact with other people."

The only human services organization in northern El Paso County, Tri-Lakes Cares helps out families in that region whose income does not sufficiently cover all of their basic needs such as housing, food, utilities, transportation and health care.

"Tri-Lakes Cares gave me stability," said the mother. "There's not another place like it. They uniquely bring humanity to their services - you don't feel like just another number. You see the same case manager every time and develop a relationship."

Grateful for the help that allowed her to establish a new life and new opportunities for her kids, this young family eagerly became a part of the Tri-Lakes Cares team from the other side.

"It felt good to be able to give back," she said. "My kids also volunteered and it was really nice to help others learn about the resources available to them."

The organizations who made it possible for this family to find success are each one of the 20 distinct recipient agencies of The Gazette-El Pomar Foundation Empty Stocking Fund (ESF).

To learn about volunteer opportunities and other ways you can help these incredible organizations and others in providing valuable support to families in our community, visit fillanemptystocking.org.

## STAY IN TOUCH WITH US

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