



# **LOAVES & FISHES** **MINISTRIES** | FREMONT COUNTY

**2023 ANNUAL REPORT**

## Client Testimonies



“Making bad choices led to the loss of my home in Pueblo. With two daughters, life was tough. There was no room in the Pueblo shelter, so we were staying here and there with friends—not the best situation. My stepmom lives in Canon City. She told me about Loaves & Fishes and the shelter here. After five months of homelessness in Pueblo, the girls and I came to Canon City. The Loaves & Fishes staff offered help right away. We spent a month in the shelter and in January 2019, we moved into our own

apartment at Journey Home. Things are definitely better now. I have my own business, my girls are doing well in school, I’m active on the Resident Council, and the community events are great. It’s nice to have our own place. I’m glad to have a permanent address and to be able to focus on raising my girls. We are grateful. Our future is bright!” – Jessica Fields



“I thank our Father who placed me at New Creations Inn. For some years I have been blessed to facilitate Devotions there two times per week. He has filled my cup to overflowing through the group study of his Word and especially through worship and fellowship with the community there. I have been healed time and time again. I came there, as many do, with joys and wounds and found a community where those times of joy are celebrated and those

burdens are shared. In His word, and in the company of others seeking His Kingdom first, God furthers His work of making us all His New Creations.”—Patrice Fleming

“I would like to thank all staff for having my back and getting myself and my Emotional Support Animal dog “Brutus” a home to live in besides the streets. I like how the staff lets you keep your bed and stuff and bring your animal. You get good meals made by staff. I also love the fact that I was told “I would not be homeless again” by my case manager. Thank you and God bless.” – Desiree and Brutus aka “Cujo”

# 2023 Impact Snapshot



\$670,825 Food received through donations  
6,257 Food boxes distributed  
15,874 Meals served in our emergency shelter

183 Adults and 27 children stayed in our shelter  
21 Individuals received respite care



\$177,760 Rental assistance provided  
\$88,648 Utility assistance provided  
\$21,188 Other financial assistance provided

Journey Home provided housing to 34 families  
Restoring Hope provided housing to 15 families  
New Creations Inn provided housing to 21 families  
Greenwood Crossing provided housing to 15 families  
Totaling 100 adults and 20 children



270 Individuals identified as homeless in 2023  
179 Previously homeless individuals found housing  
or moved from the area

11% increase in homelessness in 2023  
31% decrease in housing placement for individuals  
experiencing homelessness in 2023

*As of December 31, 2023, 159 adults and 49 children  
were experiencing homelessness in Fremont County.*

# Journey Home Celebrates 5 Years

Happy 5<sup>th</sup> birthday Journey Home! From 2018 to 2023, JH provided housing to 70 families who were previously experiencing homelessness. This 30 unit apartment complex features a large community room, a computer lab, on-site laundry facilities, and a fitness center.



Cornerstones of the program are tenant voice and choice; hand-ups rather than hand-outs; and empowering rather than enabling. *Tenant leadership* is evident through a formal Resident Council and establishment as an official Neighborhood Watch chapter. *Hand-ups* can be seen as tenants step into their own struggles and secure services from local medical, behavioral health and non-cash benefit providers, as well as securing income. *Empowering* tenants results in greater self-confidence and improved self-esteem, which increases the desire for and ability to maintain housing stability.



A variety of community building activities (monthly potlucks, bowling, movie theater outings, etc.) encourage healthy relationships.

Transportation barriers are minimized through the grant funded purchase of a newer,

seven passenger vehicle. Three of the 23 households (76.6%) that report income are led by independent business owners. Tenants enjoy the opportunities they have to celebrate the thriving community they choose to call home.

## *Expanding our Services*



This new 5,000 sq ft warehouse is 1.5 times larger than our previous warehouse allowing our food program to grow, reaching the entirety of Fremont County.

This enlarged space will feature a client choice food pantry allowing families to select for themselves what grocery items they want. Client choice pantries bring a sense of dignity and control while reducing waste as consumers take only items they want and will use.

Once the warehouse is operational, the final project, re-purposing of the current pantry will begin. Our current food storage area is slated to become a Resource Navigation Center. The center will offer basic needs services including showers, laundry facilities, nutritious meals; as well as intensive services such as physical and mental health evaluations and care management services to help individuals transition from homelessness to housing stability. Estimated completion date is 2024.

## *Building Relationships*



The most important commandment Jesus gave us is to love God and love others (Matthew 22:34-40). Healthy relationships are so important that God didn't just suggest we treat others well; He commanded it.

Everything we do at Loaves & Fishes Ministries has this goal in mind.

Building relationships happen as we:

- Teach life skills classes
- Prepare and eat meals together
- Study the Bible
- Celebrate FriYAYs
- Play together
- Host recovery and support groups
- Celebrate birthdays and holidays
- Visit clients in their homes
- Drive clients to appointments

# Homelessness in 2023

Our community continues to work hard to make homelessness rare and brief when it does occur. Our homeless response system continues to be refined and new strategies implemented.

**An effective homeless response system encompasses the following elements:**

- Organized outreach to unsheltered people
- A structure in place to assess assign and assist those who are experiencing homelessness
- Homelessness prevention and diversion
- Emergency shelter
- Supportive housing options and wraparound services during and after homelessness.

**In 2023 the following strategies were implemented:**

- Coordinated street outreach conducted 5 days a week with several community partners
- New housing vouchers that target high utilizers of emergency medical services
- New housing vouchers for judicially involved households
- Quarterly meetings with Canon City Police Department to discuss high utilizers having police involvement
- Wrap around services during and after homelessness
- A Give Back Community Service program with our unsheltered community
- Monthly Fremont County Homeless Coalition meetings
- Ongoing technical assistance from Community Solutions to end homelessness in our community



*Fremont County was recently recognized for their work in reducing Veteran and Chronic Homelessness during the Built for Zero Learning Session in Washington DC.*

# Services Provided

**Chayah House Emergency Shelter** – Our shelter offers a safe place for men, women and children to sleep. Hot meals, showers, and laundry facilities are available. Open every day from 4pm – 8am.

**Homelessness Prevention Financial Assistance** - Rental and utility assistance for low income households.

**Street Outreach** – Builds relationships with people experiencing homelessness who may be disconnected and alienated not only from mainstream services and supports, but from the services targeting homeless persons.

**Food Pantry** – No one should go hungry in our community. Our food pantry and mobile food pantry are open to all. Additional food support is available to low-income senior citizens.

**Work and Gain Employment and Education Services (WAGEES)** - Strives for a nonjudgmental holistic approach to individuals recently released from prison. Our WAGEES program is not just about getting a job to survive, it's about building confidence and skills to thrive.

**New Creations Inn Respite** - Sometimes individuals need a safe place to rest and get relief from difficult situations. Through our partnership with Solvista Health, short-term respite care is provided for adults who are experiencing a mental health crisis.

**New Creations Inn (NCI) Transitional Housing**- Offers a fresh start to single adults who are seeking a Christ-centered safe, supportive, structured and sober-living environment.

**Restoring Hope Rapid Rehousing** - Assists families and individuals who are experiencing homelessness transition into permanent housing and reach self-sufficiency.

**Journey Home Supportive Housing** – Supportive housing option for previously homeless individuals and families. Journey Home has 30 apartments; 22 one-bedroom and 8 two-bedroom. Residents actively help plan social and recreational opportunities to create and maintain a thriving community. Local community partners provide direct services to address tenant health and wellness needs.



## Who we are

The vision for Loaves & Fishes Ministries of Fremont County began with our local pastors as they desired a more holistic way to help neighbors in need. Since 1984, we have been serving people who are experiencing homelessness and poverty by providing essential services and life-changing programs.

From the beginning, our foundation has been grounded in the Gospel of Christ. Our goal is not for individuals to become dependent on us or the programs we offer, but instead to find freedom in Christ that will lead to a restoration with God, their families and their communities.

## Our Core Values

**Holistic approach**— We believe in a holistic approach that deals with the spiritual, physical, relational and economic brokenness faced by those we serve. Our hope is to make a lasting difference in Fremont County by affecting change in all of these areas.

**Origin in Dignity**—We believe that all people have inherited dignity by being created in the image of God and thus have an innate right to be valued, respected and to receive ethical treatment.

**Partnerships**—We believe that partnerships with other nonprofits, local businesses, government agencies and faith based communities are essential as we seek solutions for our community. In addition, these relationships extend to those who are touched through this ministry as we strive towards a cooperative attitude in every interaction.

**Empowerment**—We believe in empowerment instead of handouts, where solutions are lasting and transferable. This method of ministry requires patience and perseverance, but this approach leads to healthier families and ultimately a stronger community.



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***Loaves & Fishes Ministries is an eligible project for the Homeless Contribution Tax Credit. This status provides an additional 30% state tax credit for cash contributions of \$250. Please call (719)275-0593 for additional information.***