



## Neighbors Helping Neighbors | Community Partners in HUD's Region VIII Respond to Needs Created by Pandemic

### #Inthistgether

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*As communities combat the coronavirus outbreak, HUD is highlighting stories of communities coming together to help their neighbors in need.*

**Boulder, Colorado** – In mid-March, Jessica Helson started a micro-community to match patrons with families in need. The intent was a simple one-on-one match that could cover a small expense like a prescription, a bill that won't be forgiven, diapers, groceries, a tank of gas. The average gift is just \$135. Krysia Gallagher was one of the awesome people who facilitated groceries for a family in need. She said she was looking for a way to stay connected and help out during the pandemic. *"I like the fact that it's honest, and quick, and really helps someone immediately, right around here,"* Gallagher said. Neighbors helping neighbors. Bennett looks forward to the day when she can pay the kindness forward, because we are all in this together. [Read the full story from Denver CBS](#)



[Photo courtesy of CBS](#)

**Casper, Wyoming** - Casper College employees, trustees and foundation and alumni board members have donated over \$10,000 to the Casper College Cares Student Emergency Fund. The

fund was set up in early April to help Casper College students finding it difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic to make ends meet. *“Many of our students were barely getting by during the good times and now find themselves without a job, going to school virtually from home – many with kids going to school from home with them, and trying to figure out how to put food on the table and pay all their monthly bills,”* said foundation executive director Denise Bressler. After hearing about some students who had requested emergency support through the Casper College Student Success Center, Bressler reached out with an email plea and challenge to employees and others to raise \$5,000 that the foundation would match, to help those Casper College students in need. Less than two weeks later, donations had climbed past \$5,000. The goal was raised to \$10,000, with the Foundation matching every dollar donated up to \$10,000. That goal, too, was surpassed. [Read the full story from Casper Star Tribune](#)



[Photo Courtesy of the Casper Star Tribune](#)

**Grand Forks, North Dakota** – The Grand Forks Housing Authority offers \$1.5 million in services annually at their EnVision Center in North Dakota. During the coronavirus pandemic, the EnVision Center continues to be a vital part of the community by offering assistance applying for jobs through the U.S. Census Bureau and the local workforce center, navigating unemployment benefits, and offering internet access and training through their dual-designation as an EnVision Center and [ConnectHomeUSA](#) participant.

The *Homeless Families with Children* case worker, provided via the local public-school system, distributes school lunches to children through their partnership with the local school district while ensuring that educational needs are met. The EnVision Center also features a collaborative partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the University of North Dakota that provides a part-time counselor to address mental health needs. COVID-19 has presented many challenges to the residents in Grand Forks, but the staff of the Housing Authority look forward to building on the current Grand Forks EnVision Center programs to ensure the most pressing needs of the community are met.



*Photo courtesy of Grand Forks Housing Authority*

**Colorado Springs, Colorado** - The pandemic is adding stress to daily life for many, including those who dedicate their time care for others. Experts from Pikes Peak Area Family Caregiver Support Center in Colorado Springs say COVID-19 concerns are adding stress to the already stressful life of many caregivers. They're working to provide their services while social distancing by offering remote consultations via video, phone, or email. They also have other resources, including virtual support groups. [Read the full story from KKTV](#)



*[Photo Courtesy of KKTV](#)*

**Browning, Montana** - Just hours after the Blackfeet Nation reported its first active coronavirus cases on the reservation, Loren Racine took action. Racine created a Facebook group, called "[Blackfeet Community Help](#)," to connect elders and other vulnerable people with "Good Samaritans."

"If you don't feel safe going into town or the public, ask for help," Racine, 37, wrote in one of his first posts to the group. In other posts, Racine reminded people not to enter elders' homes when

assisting them and to always maintain a safe distance. Racine works at Glacier Family Foods, a grocery store in Browning. Before cases emerged on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, he was reaching out to friends and family, offering grocery runs. Creating the Facebook group allowed Racine to reach more people. Within days, the group amassed more than 600 members. Dozens of people offered grocery runs, food donations, cleaning products, masks and hygiene kits.

[Read full story from the Great Falls Tribune](#)



[Photo Courtesy of the Great Falls Tribune](#)

**Dickinson, North Dakota** – There is a way to get help for residents dealing with stress as a result of the pandemic in North Dakota. Project Renew is helping people talk about their stress in an anonymous hotline specifically for the stress caused by COVID-19. Project Renew enables people to learn more about the local community and what’s available,” The hotline is available Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Whether it’s coping strategies, listening services, or connecting individuals with other community resources and agencies, Project Renew is free and anonymous for North Dakotans. While Project Renew helps those searching for someone to listen, it also helps give tips on how to handle stress and pressure before it becomes a major problem. The project also helps parents during these unpredictable times as well as those struggling with their jobs. [Read the full story from The Dickinson Press](#)



*[Photo courtesy of the Dickinson Press](#)*

**Murray, Utah** - Ten ICU nurses from New York's Northwell Health system arrived in Utah last week, more than three months after Intermountain medical professionals went to the Empire State to help with the COVID-19 surge. *“During the height of the pandemic here in New York, we were grateful for the extraordinary support provided by the Intermountain Healthcare System,”* Michael Dowling, president and CEO of Northwell Health, stated in a press release. *“We are now delighted to be able to reciprocate by sending staff to assist them in their current battle against this disease.”* [Read the full story from KUTV](#)



*[Photo courtesy of KUTV](#)*

**Northern Hills, South Dakota** - Amid school closings, event cancellations and calls for social isolating because of the COVID-19 outbreak, residents of Northern Hills communities are coming together to support one another. With schools closed, students won't get their normal breakfast and lunch meals. For some families, feeding the kids at home is not in their budget. Students in Spearfish, Whitewood, Belle Fourche and Sturgis can pick up a free lunch locally during the time school is closed. Volunteer groups in other communities have put together donations and packed lunches that students and their families can pick up. [Read the full story from the Black Hills Pioneer](#)



*[Photo courtesy of the Black Hills Pioneer](#)*

**Grand Junction, Colorado** - By March 14, Colorado Mesa University (CMU) learned that more than 250 of their students were at risk of having to give up on their education journeys due to hardship. So CMU launched [the Maverick Relief Fund](#) on April 10. That's when donations began pouring in from the community. By July, generosity from 140 supporters had provided nearly \$135,000 in relief funds for CMU students impacted by COVID-19. CMU was able to deploy these funds directly to more than 142 students.

"The Maverick Relief Fund is quickly becoming one of our most important tools to keep these students in school, and we are hugely appreciative to the community for the support," said CMU's Director of Integrated Services and Advising, Anna Nichols. CMU President Tim Foster believes the connection between supporting students and having a vibrant community is easy to identify. He noted that 120 CMU and Western Colorado Community College student volunteers stepped forward during the crisis to work at COVID testing centers, call centers and to make thousands of masks and face shields. [Read the full story from Colorado Mesa](#)



[Photo courtesy of Colorado Mesa](#)

**Salt Lake City, Utah** - In March, Hoang Ha, a computer programmer, created a website called [Neighbors Helping Neighbors](#), where elderly or immunocompromised people can put in grocery or errand requests. In less than a month, Ha's website [nhelpingn.com](#) amassed 418 volunteers across Utah and fulfilled 362 requests, spanning St. George to Ogden. "It's really, really reduced our stress," said Harold Carr, a Salt Lake resident who was one of Ha's first clients. Carr is in the at-risk age group and his wife, Flavia Cervino-Wood, has a breathing disorder. The intuitive website allows anyone in Utah to put in a request, be it for groceries, hygiene products, prescription drugs or even bank withdrawals. Ha wrote several algorithms that pairs a volunteer with someone in need, based on the location and type of request. [Read the full story from the Deseret News](#)



*[Photo courtesy of the Deseret News](#)*

*To find HUD resources related to the coronavirus, visit [www.hud.gov/coronavirus](http://www.hud.gov/coronavirus).*

*Read more stories of [#NeighborsHelpingNeighbors](#) by following [@HUDgov](#) and [@SecretaryCarson](#) online.*

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