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Food bank serves up hope

BY SARA B. HANSEN

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James Turner, a disabled dad of two teenage daughters, gets food at the Food Bank for Larimer County once or twice a week.

He also goes to the Salvation Army to get canned goods.

Turner, a former custodian with Poudre School District, had to stop working after he suffered a heart attack and then injured his back.

Living on Social Security Disability payments is tough, and getting help putting food on the table is crucial.

"They do a great job there," said Turner, 61. "It's helped us out quite a bit. It's nice to walk in and get what you need. It's almost like walking into a grocery store, except you don't have to pay."

Turner also appreciates the food advice the staff offers.

"I don't usually use their recipes. I usually do my own things, but sometimes it's really helpful. It puts something into your head."

Turner's family is one of about 12,000 families that visit the food bank each month.

The food bank is serving about 30 percent more people this year than last, said Amy Pezzani, food bank executive director.

Not only is the charity serving more people, those clients also are visiting the food bank more often. In September 2008, the food bank had 11,572 visits. In September, the number increased to 14,931.

The food bank is set to distribute 7.5 million pounds of food in 2009, compared to 6 million pounds distributed in 2008, Pezzani said.

Additional Facts

A chance to give to neighbors in need

Throughout the holiday season, the Coloradoan, Windsor Beacon, Loveland Connection and other regional media have joined together with the Northern Colorado Empty Stocking Fund to raise money for nine human service agencies in Larimer and Weld counties. Stories on the agencies appear each Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. Contributions will be partially matched by El Pomar Foundation. Secure credit card contributions may be made at www.nocoempty-stocking.org or by calling 211. Checks may be mailed to Northern Colorado Empty Stocking Fund, P.O. Box 466 Fort Collins, CO 80522.



James Turner of Fort Collins sits at his kitchen table Monday. He is a single father with two daughters and after losing his job, he uses the food bank to help supplement his resources. (V. Richard Haro/The Coloradoan)
