

## Empty Stocking: Food Bank provides essential help for Greeley family

By Megan Conner  
For The Tribune

Without the help she receives from the Weld Food Bank, Tenneya Roth would face some difficult decisions.

“Probably me and my boyfriend wouldn’t be eating sometimes so that the kids could eat,” the 31-year-old Greeley resident said. “They’ve been a great asset. I’m really glad they’re there.”

Each year the food bank donates about 8 million pounds of food and serves about 10,000 clients a month. “It’s a challenge to meet the growing number of needy people, while the number of people who can contribute continues to decline with more job losses,” said Kevin Mullin, the food bank’s chief fundraiser. The food bank has benefited from the work of 7,000 volunteers. Last year, the volunteers racked up about 25,000 donated hours, which is equivalent to 12 full-time staff members, and collected 255,000 pounds of food. It has developed a slew of programs to meet the diverse needs of its clients. The programs include monthly food supplements, assistance according to income and even emergency food boxes that are rationed into a three-day supply.

“We don’t have a typical client because all of their needs are different,” Mullin said.

Roth said she and her daughters usually go to the food bank about four times every six months. Mostly she gets fruits and vegetables as well as cottage cheese, which her kids love. “I have three kids and times have been tough for a while, so when we have no food, they help a lot,” she said of the food bank, which she started using about four years ago. “My boyfriend works on the oil fields, so some months are harder than others.”

The help from the food bank comes in especially handy during the holidays, said Roth, who is raising an 18-month old baby, a 6-year-old boy and an 8-year-old daughter. “That’s a lot of kids to try to get presents for,” she said.

The Weld Food Bank is one of the eight nonprofit agencies that will benefit from the Northern Colorado Empty Stocking Fund this year, a holiday fundraising campaign that provides resources for local human service agencies dedicated to helping community members struggling to meet basic needs.

“The Empty Stocking Fund provides dollars during the holiday season when the amount of food the food bank distributes goes up significantly,” Mullin said. “It is just-in-time funding.”

### NORTHERN COLORADO EMPTY STOCKING FUND

Since its founding in 2007, the Northern Colorado Empty Stocking Fund has raised over \$333,000 to support health and human service agencies in Larimer and Weld County. With matching funds provided by El Pomar Foundation, every dollar grows by 33 percent. United Ways of Larimer and Weld County cover all administrative costs for the campaign, meaning every dollar donated goes directly to the recipient organizations. This year’s recipient agencies include: Catholic Charities of Larimer County, Catholic Charities of Weld County, Connections for Independent Living, Crossroads Ministry of Estes Park, Food Bank of Larimer County, Greeley Transitional House, House of Neighborly Service, and Weld Food Bank. For more information, please visit [www.nocoemptystocking.org](http://www.nocoemptystocking.org)