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Weld Food Bank is serving up help

BY DAN ENGLAND

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GREELEY - Kelley and David Goss don't believe in credit cards.

They pay all their bills. Their four boys have learned to use the air hockey table next to the doorway as one of their main sources of entertainment.

They're so careful with money, they've learned how to keep the heat down and wear a lot of clothes around the house.

Temperatures have dipped below minus 10 degrees already this frigid winter. There's no doubt they've been cold at times.

Yet, they also have had to use the Weld Food Bank to fill in the gaps.

"We paid all the bills, and Monday we were out of money," Kelley Goss said last week. "So all that week we had no money. We had \$16 in the bank, and my husband called me and said he needed gas, so I told him to put \$16 in."

They don't use the food bank every month; but without it, they might have had to go without good meals or maybe much food at all. That would be pretty rough in a family with four growing boys, ages 9 to 14.

"Whatever we don't spend on bills," Kelley said, "that's what we use for food." The Gosses do not qualify for food stamps, and Kelley Goss realizes there are a lot more people hurting worse than they are.

Their home looks nice, with classy furniture and rooms for the boys.

They're the kind of family that probably wouldn't need the food bank at all in better times. But David Goss, who works for a contracting company that maintains computers, was laid off twice, and every time he got a new job, he had to take a pay cut over his last one. This fall, he didn't get laid off - something the Gosses are thankful for - but he did have to take a pay cut.

It all adds up.

There are limits as to how often the family can use the food bank, but they usually get enough when they are there to last them for quite a while. The food is good, high-quality merchandise, and if the bank's trying to get rid of bread products, it's even better.

"They sent the kids home with a lot of cookies and cupcakes last time," Kelley Goss said. "They liked that."

She thought about working part-time but wants to stay home and home-school the kids. She wants to stay involved.

"I want to see what they're learning," she said.

The kids earn their spending money by working in neighbor's yards in the summer - Kelley and the boys took care of eight this summer.

Everyone will get something for Christmas. She usually buys a gift with every paycheck, starting in the summer.

It will be a long, cold winter, but she is confident they will get through with an occasional nudge from the food bank.

"We have a lot of wants but not a lot of needs," she said. "We'll be fine."

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.nocoemptystocking.org or by calling 211. Checks can be mailed to Northern Colorado Empty Stocking Fund, P.O. Box 466 Fort Collins, CO 80522.