

# La Puente Home

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## Summary About La Puente:

Colorado's San Luis Valley is a vast, isolated, region that experiences national-high rates of poverty. Poverty begets hunger, homelessness and other crises that destabilize families. La Puente is our community's response to address the effects of poverty by providing a safety net of services, where individuals and families get what they need to stabilize, heal, strengthen, and ultimately thrive.

Annually over 16,000 individuals and family members receive at least one of our services, including emergency shelter, nutritious food from one of our 15 pantries, housing with support services, youth-stabilization services, homeless prevention resources, soup kitchen meals, home outreach visits, and more. With the objective of meeting the needs of the homeless and community members in crisis, La Puente's services both restore and strengthen people's lives, to empower them to live independently, with dignity.

Each day, La Puente depends on the generosity of those who support our mission. With thousands of hours of volunteerism from youth and adults, patronage of our Rainbow's End Thrift Stores and Milagros Coffeehouse, and financial support from individuals, businesses, and churches, we are able to provide both hope and vital services when families need it the most.

Since 1982, La Puente's Shelter has provided a place where people, facing homelessness, can step into safety, care and opportunity. The causes of and the path from homelessness differs for each person. What is consistent is the need for a first step. If the step is too high, no other initiative will be effective.

Our shelter is the step that provides lodging, showers, meals, case management, and aid to overcome employment barriers. By offering dignity and hospitality we also offer the hope and support to begin a journey to stability. The shelter is led by Tona, it's director, yet is primarily staffed by a team of full-time volunteers, who manage just about e In 2018, 615 individuals were sheltered, affording 11,238 nights of provisional lodging. We also provided 48,180 community meals for shelter guests and community members. Meals are served three times daily with breakfast at 6am, lunch at 12pm, and dinner at 6pm.

There are various models of shelter. We follow a transition model, providing a limited stay, with the services and case management geared towards helping the willing to identify and move forward to their next step. For some this is behavioral health or addiction treatment. For others it is overcoming housing or employment barriers. The limited stay is used as motivation and can be extended for short periods for those working on a plan. For those not yet ready, they must move on, but leave with the understanding that we are a place of second chances.

La Puente's kitchen is tired and worn out. It has served over 650,000 meals since getting any attention. Aspects of the kitchen are not compliant with Health Department requirements, and we have been given the grace to work to get the kitchen overhauled.

What we need: A larger stove, which triggers the need for a large hood, fan, ductwork, and upgraded return air. We need freezers (we currently use residential chest freezers in our pantry) and a new fridge. The sinks are shot, the floor is cracked, and everywhere you look needs a facelift. Whatever you can do will make a jhuge difference!

Thanks,  
Lance