

Voices

Volunteers
of America®

COLORADO BRANCH

Helping America's most vulnerable.

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NEWSLETTER OF VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA COLORADO BRANCH | SPRING EDITION 2015

The Holidays and Volunteers of America

The Holidays take on a different meaning when you are worried about your next meal, your bills, or how you might make it through the day. Each year Volunteers of America Colorado transforms to “Holiday Central” as we prepare to serve America’s most vulnerable during what may be for many the most stressful time of the year. For Volunteers of America the holidays begin in July, when we begin collecting gifts for meals on wheels clients. Then in September, Adopt-A-Family gears up to make sure the children in our Head Start and youth programs will have presents for Christmas. Finally, the staff begins each October with a pep talk and the holidays are officially underway at Volunteers of America. The week before Thanksgiving, volunteers from Bryan Cave law firm pack 1,000 baskets to be handed out to families in need. The baskets feed a family of six and include Thanksgiving essentials; a turkey, pie, cranberries and all of the other fixings. On Thanksgiving Day, Volunteers of America delivers 2,500 Meals on Wheels and serves 1,500 meals at Jackson’s Sports Rock at a community dinner. Meanwhile, organizations throughout the metro area are organizing and holding “drives” to raise funds, food, and toys for our Christmas efforts.

December begins with a bang. Five thousand fruit baskets, Baskets of Joy, are packed and delivered with the help of dedicated volunteers. Ten families receive holiday home makeovers as part of Operation Christmas Tree, a joint project with ARC Thrift stores. Toy drives are completed. Two thousand Christmas baskets are packed and distributed to those in need, complete with turkeys from Safeway. Twenty-five hundred Meals on Wheels are delivered on Christmas day, all with a special gift to remind our homebound seniors that we care about them.

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Santa gives out presents and a Christmas tree at Volunteers of America.





Dianna L. Kunz,
President

A Message from the President

To our wonderful donors, friends and volunteers,

I would be remiss to not begin this letter without expressing a heartfelt thank you for all you have done for Volunteers of America during the past year, and especially the most recent holiday season. As you will see in this copy of Voices, more families were helped during the past 3 months than ever before in our 119 year history. Whether you made a financial gift, volunteered your time, adopted a family in need or simply continued with your regular volunteer efforts you have, indeed, stepped up and helped the most vulnerable in our community. In 2 Timothy 1:9 it states that God saved us and called us to be holy, not because of our works but because of his own plan and purpose. You opened your heart, you were moved and you answered that call and for that I am forever grateful.

Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers as we move into the New Year. The demand for our services continues to rise as does our need for support from people like you. 2015 will see us open two new programs in the Denver metro area. Our Early Education

Childhood Center, located in West Denver will serve low income children and families with quality early education preschool programs. We will be able to nurture and educate 170 of our youngest students and pave the way for their educational success at a very early age.

In this coming year we will also be cutting the ribbon on our Volunteers of America Veteran Resource Center. This resource center will not only house all of the VOA programs working with veterans but also host numerous other Veterans focused agencies. The Resource Center will be one place where a veteran can find assistance with housing, mental health issues, VA benefits, employment and more; all under one roof.

Whatever your gifts, whatever your talent and time, please stay involved with us. We are only as good as all of you and can only do what we do because of you. God Bless.

Sincerely,

Dianna L. Kunz, President

Did you know?

Southwest Airlines is the official sponsor of the Brandon Safe Haven.



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Dinner for Those Who Hunger



On Monday, January 20, 1985 the Volunteers of America held its very first Dinner for Those Who Hunger at the VOA Sunset Park. There were numerous partners that first year: Salvation Army, Coalition for the Homeless, Samaritan Shelter and Holy Ghost Church. On Monday, January 19, 2015 Volunteers of America hosted the 30th dinner. Our experienced kitchen staff cooked and

served over 1,300 servings of ribs, vegetables and sweet potato pie for the evening. Over thirty years, that is about 40,000 dinners and 40,000 ways to share in the spirit of Dr. King.

Volunteers of America is the sole presenter now and Kaiser Permanente furnishes the funds for the food. Volunteers from Kaiser, Southwest Airlines, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, and the Brown Palace all roll up their

sleeves and pitch in. ARC Thrift Stores distributes over 3 tons of free clothing and Starbucks makes sure there is plenty of warm coffee. KUVU 89.3 FM radio sponsors the meal and live music is provided by Sheryl Rene, Hazel Miller, Erica Brown, Lisa Bell, and friends.

The entire meal is an opportunity to honor the work and life of Dr. King. For 13 years, 1955-1968, Dr. King dedicated his life to fighting for civil rights and against prejudices and hatred of any kind. In addition to turning 30, this year's celebration took on special significance because of recent events in Missouri, Ohio, and New York City. Truly we must always do what we can to make sure racism and social injustices are challenged wherever and whenever they occur.

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. August 28, 1963.

Fall Wrap Up

The 21st Annual Western Fantasy welcomed Trace Adkins to Denver in October with a sell-out crowd and amazing dinner provided by Epicurean Catering. The annual gala raised over \$1 million for Volunteers of America programs and services.

STUFF FOR STUDENTS

A big thank you to King Soopers and Channel 9 for collaborating on the annual Stuff for Students School supplies drive. Stuff for Students provides over \$50,000 worth of school supplies to schools for teachers to use in the classrooms. School districts from across the state benefitted from the drive, which collects supplies in August and September.

WINE, WOMEN AND FOOTBALL

Thank you for your support of the annual Wine, Women and Football to raise funds for the Volunteers of America Brandon Center. The center provides respite and security to women and children escaping homelessness and domestic violence. This year's event, together with our fabulous sponsors and CBS4, raised over \$45,000 for the cause.



Trace Adkins singing at Western Fantasy XXI.



Prayers are Answered

Three years ago Hannah*, a 36 year-old Iraqi Freedom veteran, suddenly found herself homeless. She and her daughter were forced to flee their home because of domestic violence. She heard of an organization assisting female veterans and made her way to Denver. That organization was Volunteers of America.

“They found me a temporary place in their shelter for women and children, and then we moved to Clermont Commons, a beautiful home where I could cook dinner and read stories to my daughter,” she said. “I could not believe such an amazing program was available to me. The prayers I had repeated over and over were answered. I don’t want to imagine where my daughter and I would be without Volunteers of America.”

Could there be a better purpose for planning a future gift than helping the most vulnerable in our community? Hannah’s life has been changed—because many donors have supported Volunteers of America through a

combination of annual gifts and estate planning. They have taken the time to reflect carefully upon their philanthropic goals and have acted to make a difference in the lives of others. People who give from their estates tell us of the tremendous satisfaction they experience in knowing their legacy will make a real difference for many generations to come.

Whether your legacy comes in the form of a direct gift, a bequest in your will, an annuity, remainder trust or many other vehicles for planning a gift, you will be providing services for those most in need, helping us plan for future needs, and creating opportunities for the underserved.

We stand ready to help you create a philanthropic strategy tailored uniquely for you. For more information, contact our planned giving manager, Joan Blick at 720-264-3329 or jblick@voacolorado.org.

** name changed to protect privacy*

Donate Your Car

Recent increases in scrap metal prices make it the perfect time to donate! Visit VOAColorado.org and click "Donate Your Car" or call 1-877-VOA-1CAR today.

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The Holidays and Volunteers of America

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Why do we do this? Because we believe that this is our mission – to take care of those in need and help those in our community who have fallen on the toughest of times. One grandmother was the recipient of Operation Christmas Tree. She and her grandkids made sure they were out of their home and volunteer “elves” came to decorate and leave presents while they were away. She called Volunteers of America crying.

“Thank you,” she said. “Before this we were living in our car. We have never had our home decorated for Christmas and we cannot believe how beautiful it is. Bless you.”

This is why we do what we do.



Serving Our Community

At Volunteers of America something is always in the works. Through the month of April VOA teams with 5280, Avocet Communications, and ARC Thrift for Feed Colorado, one of the largest food drives in the state to help Meals on Wheels. We also hold a Good Friday service with the Denver Rescue Mission, where guests are also invited to dinner and a foot washing. In May we get ready for I Remember Mama, when the Tavern Hospitality Group hosts 100 low-income women to a Mother’s Day high tea and Metro Taxi provides the women with transportation. Our projects are a group effort to help the population’s most vulnerable and continue our mission serve those in need. Enclosed is a return envelope if you would like to make a gift to VOA programs and services. Your invaluable support allows us to continue our work in Colorado.

To find out how to donate or volunteer, go to www.voacolorado.org.



**I Remember
Mama is
Wednesday,
May 6th at
the Tavern
Uptown!**

Become a fan of Volunteers of America. Check out our Volunteers of America photos, news and upcoming events on facebook.



Would you like to receive VOICES over email? Please send us your email address and we will deliver your VOA news and events electronically! Email info@voacolorado.org.

Volunteers of America does not telemarket or solicit for donations over the phone. If you receive a marketing call from Volunteers of America or Meals on Wheels, please call Michael James at 720-264-3322.

Voices is a publication of the Volunteers of America Colorado Branch. Please send any changes of address or inquiries to the Development Office, Volunteers of America, 2660 Larimer Street, Denver, CO 80205 or by calling 303-297-0408.

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