



The Gathering Place®
a refuge for rebuilding lives

ANNUAL REPORT ON IMPACT
2020



Dedicated to the 4,794 members that visited in 2020 and their families who were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. In honor of these folks, and after all the lessons learned and challenges overcome in 2020, TGP is building a more equitable and resilient community than ever before. TGP has always been committed to equity, and we are doubling down to build a more resilient organization to serve our community.

Your generous support allows us to create and implement the most impactful programs serving the most vulnerable population of Denver — women, transgender individuals, and their children.

TGP offers stabilizing services to combat poverty and address the impacts of underlying forms of marginalization and oppression that may have contributed to poverty or homelessness.

Thank you for fighting poverty with us!

2020 was a difficult year for everyone. For thousands of people in the Denver metro area who don't have stable housing, challenges brought on by the coronavirus pandemic were intensified. Stay-at-home orders brought uncertainty to people who don't have a safe place to call home. Schools were closed and families experiencing homelessness suddenly did not have a place for their children to receive food and shelter during the day. Public health recommendations around hand washing and mask wearing were an impossibility for people without access to supplies and running water. Traditional shelters didn't always have adequate space to allow social distancing. Unemployment hit record numbers, with women and people of color disproportionately impacted by job losses.

These are systemic problems. The pandemic exacerbated them and highlighted how deep those disparities are for poor women, women of color, and transgender individuals. The recovery is going to take a long time. This community was impacted the hardest and, unfortunately, they will likely be the last to recover.

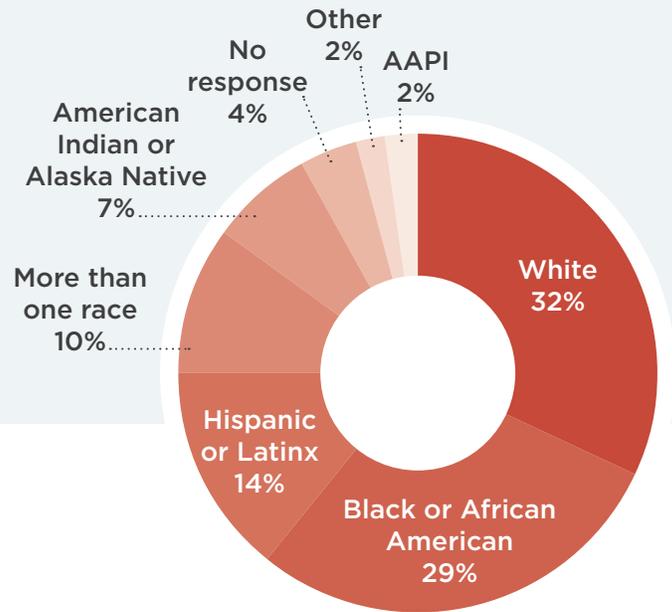
In response, we are adding new programming, increasing our focus on emergency services and ensuring a continuum of supports are in place to help people not just resolve an immediate crisis, but to make long-term changes to obtain long-term stability. As an organization, we are dedicated to making sure we have the right programming, right supports, and right services in place to ensure individuals can recover in the best way possible.

Sincerely,

Julia Stewart

Our members face a multitude of systemic barriers that make it difficult to meet even their basic needs, much less attain long-term stability. Health, safety, racial and economic factors all play a role in housing instability for our members. Forty percent of members reported a physical or mental health concern, while 24 percent fled domestic violence. Data also shows that people who are Black, Latinx, and Native American experience systemic inequalities leading to higher rates of BIPOC individuals experiencing poverty and homelessness. On top of these concerns, our members are also faced with rising rents and housing prices, combined with low vacancy rates and low-wage work. **These wider structural forces, like poverty, inequality, lack of affordable healthcare, institutional racism and more are what the programs and services at The Gathering Place work to address.**

POVERTY DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTS PEOPLE OF COLOR



Feletcia has lived in Denver for six years and has experienced homelessness twice during that time.

She has always kept a job. In fact, she kept four jobs to afford rent. Her weekdays started at Cherry Creek Schools, working Monday through Friday, then at Dollar Tree in the evenings from 4 pm to close. On Saturday and Sunday, she worked at La Quinta Inn. When she wasn't on the schedule at Dollar Tree, she filled in hours working in home healthcare.

The majority of our members report an annual income of \$6,500 or less. A single individual living in Denver County needs a minimum annual income of \$26,430 to cover basic costs such as housing, food, transportation, healthcare, and taxes, according to the Colorado Center on Law and Policy's 2018 Self-Sufficiency Report. The increasing cost of living in Denver makes affordable housing even further out of reach for individuals who are working minimum wage jobs or have only one household income. In addition, homelessness and housing instability make it harder to find and maintain a job, manage health conditions, and advance education.

1170
INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED JOB READINESS COACHING AND SUPPORT

MEMBERS ATTENDED EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS
349
TIMES

“I WANT TO WORK. I’M NOT TRYING TO BE HOMELESS. MY BLOOD PRESSURE WAS SO HIGH DURING THIS TIME—I WAS A WALKING CORPSE. I WOULD JUST SIT AND WORRY THAT I WOULDN’T BE ABLE TO PAY MY RENT BECAUSE I DIDN’T HAVE A JOB,” SAID FELETCIA.

When COVID hit, Feletcia was laid-off from three of her four jobs, leaving her with just the hours working in home healthcare, which was not enough income to get by. When she couldn’t find more work, she was at The Gathering Place every weekday working with our case managers to try to find another job.

Unable to afford rent, Feletcia was forced into homelessness and spent months trying to maintain her home healthcare job while living in shelters.

She would rush home from work to make it to the shelter to get a bed for the night. Relying on public transportation to get to and from work, she found herself constantly worrying about stopped traffic and making sure she could stop to pay bills, while having enough time to get to the shelter before it closed. When she did get a shelter bed, she felt like she had no privacy and was walking on eggshells to stay in line with all the rules and regulations and to not upset the people she shared a space with.

COVID-19 exacerbated existing challenges and instability for individuals’ already experiencing poverty and homelessness. These individuals frequently depend on public spaces to use the restroom or for a safe space to stay during the day, and most rely on public transportation to commute. During the height of the pandemic, all public spaces like libraries, coffee shops, and parks were closed, leaving people who were unhoused with few places to go. Buses were running on a limited schedule, making daily commutes more difficult. The pandemic also impacted the economy and individuals who weren’t already experiencing poverty and homelessness were now faced with this new reality. Our city’s growing need for emergency shelter and comprehensive wrap-around services was compounded drastically by all these factors.



THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC, WE NEVER CLOSED OUR DOORS. WE NEVER STOPPED SERVING OUR MEMBERS. AND, WE JOINED FORCES WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS TO ADDRESS THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS ACROSS THE CITY.

Betsy's Cupboard, TGP's food pantry, was visited **3,945** times, totaling **\$79,300** in food provided to members and doubling food distribution in response to the pandemic.

In 2019, **50,020 pounds of food** was distributed through the cupboard. In 2020, with the increased need, TGP distributed over **74,000 pounds of food**.

4,022
ADULTS VISITED TGP
36,392
TIMES



In April 2020, TGP was instrumental in establishing Denver's first 24/7 shelter for women and transgender individuals, located in the Denver Coliseum. Each day, TGP staff and volunteers showed up to provide excellent support and care for the nearly 500 individuals who accessed this facility. The 24/7 shelter offers enhanced safety for unhoused women and transgender folx as well as access to COVID testing, healthcare, and other basic necessities all while following public health guidelines. It provides secured long-term shelter, a dedicated bed, and stability, which has led to a tremendous improvement in mental health for those staying at the Coliseum. In August, the auxiliary shelter transitioned from the Denver Coliseum to a former Rodeway Inn motel.



24/7 SHELTER AT THE DENVER COLISEUM SERVED

479

INDIVIDUALS THROUGH

27,290

VISITS TO THE SHELTER



In October, Feletcia transferred into the 24/7 shelter where she could come and go as needed. Now working seven days a week in home healthcare, she could wake up, go to work, and not have to worry about making it back before the shelter closed.

“I DIDN’T HAVE TO LUG SUITCASES, BACKPACKS, AND COATS AROUND. I WASN’T CRYING ANYMORE BECAUSE MY FEET WERE SOAKING WET AND FROZEN FROM THE ELEMENTS. IT WAS A SAFE SPACE WHERE I COULD LAY MY HEAD ... AND I WAS ALWAYS ABLE TO ACCESS RESOURCES AS I NEEDED.”

At the 24/7 shelter, she was able to work with case managers to find long-term, affordable housing. She moved into a newly renovated space of her own in December 2020.

90

PEOPLE WERE PLACED AT THE 24/7 SHELTER THAT HAS PRIVATE ROOMS AND MORE SPACE

“THESE WORKERS... ACTUALLY REALLY CARE”

—ANTONIO A.

WITHIN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF OPERATION, **23 PEOPLE OBTAINED EMPLOYMENT AND 15 PEOPLE RETAINED PERMANENT HOUSING.**

In addition to meeting basic needs and maintaining access to emergency services, we ramped up our longer-term supports, securing funding for a housing-focused case management program in 2020 and successfully launching in 2021. TGP also joined with other agencies in 2020 to form the Denver Rehousing Collaborative, which works collectively to help people overcome barriers to housing, find appropriate housing, and help people develop the income needed to sustain long-term stability in that housing. We provide direct support, navigation, and resources in building home, health, purpose, and community, to ensure our members are treated as whole people and are given the opportunities they deserve to rebuild their lives.

Through connections at TGP, Feletcia is now working full-time in a program at the Women's Bean Project. She is already trying to line up her next job once the program ends. Her goal is to save up to buy a car so she can get to and from work more easily.

Meeting
Basic Needs

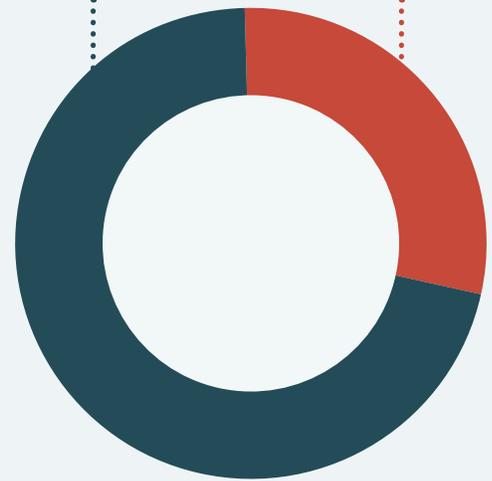
71%

Program	\$1,620,072
Administrative	\$250,219
Fundraising	\$204,109
Total Cost	\$2,074,400

Fostering
Personal Growth

29%

Program	\$657,442
Administrative	\$101,542
Fundraising	\$82,829
Total Cost	\$841,813



“THE GATHERING PLACE IS WHAT IT SAYS IT IS. PEOPLE GATHER TOGETHER. THEY HELP YOU OUT. THEY HELP YOU HELP YOURSELF OUT,” FELETCIA SAID.



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Julia Stewart

THE GATHERING PLACE

"Volunteering at The Gathering Place brings me joy and gives me a sense of purpose. It's the highlight of my week!"

— DECOYIA, VOLUNTEER



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