

# **Students on Colorado campuses go hungry: Potential Rotary project**

## **By Peter Jeschofnig, Glenwood Springs Sunset RC**

In a recent conversation with my friend Peggy Halderman, a Rotarian in the Golden RC , who discovered the issue of hidden childhood hunger in her community and who founded the Golden Backpack Program, I was made aware that hunger issues also exist at Colorado colleges, and even elite colleges, like the Colorado School of Mines. I was so surprised that I decided to follow up on this issue and discovered that college food pantries are now common, as skyrocketing rents and tuition force many kids to skip meals.

Numerous Colorado colleges and universities are grappling with student hunger. At least eight campuses have opened food pantries, four of them in the last six years. Two of the surveyed colleges that do not have brick-and-mortar food pantries, Colorado State University-Fort Collins and the University of Colorado -Boulder have other food assistance programs for their students, including a mobile food pantry.

In November 2018, Regis University held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new pantry which carries canned vegetables, peanut butter, noodles and hygiene products.

Red Rocks Community College, which has had a pantry for at least 14 years, sees an average of 100 students per week. Community College of Denver's pantry, now more than 8 years old, serves 300 students per semester. Metro State's food pantry sees 40 to 50 students per week, and according to the food pantry supervisor, the number is growing. CU-Denver's pantry opened in 2010 and sees about 100 students per month. The number of students using Colorado Mesa University's pantry has grown since it opened in 2012, from just a few to about 20 per week, according to supervisor Rose Willett.

A 2013 Colorado State University survey found approximately 10 percent of its students experienced food insecurity, meaning they lack access to consistent, healthy food. Last year, its mobile food pantry had 2,264 unique visitors and about 50 percent visited more than once.

In 2015, 184 food pantries were registered nationally with the [College and University Food Bank Alliance](#), as of September 2018 there were 686.

This short article is designed to help you reflect on potential hunger issues at the college in your town. Could this be a potential project for your club?



# Students on Colorado campuses go hungry: Potential Rotary project (cont.)

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## References and further readings:

In time of plenty, students on Colorado campuses are hungry

<https://www.coloradoindependent.com/2018/11/21/colorado-student-hunger-food-pantries-tuition-costs-high-rent-regis-college-metropolitan-state-university/>

College Students Around The US Struggle With Food And Housing, Is It The Same For Colorado Students?

<https://www.cpr.org/2019/09/30/college-students-around-the-us-struggle-with-food-and-housing-is-it-the-same-for-colorado-students/>

The Colorado School of Mines has a hunger-related FB page: "Fighting Hunger at Mines"

<https://www.facebook.com/fightinghungeratmines/>

Food pantry for hungry Community College of Denver students expands:

<https://denverite.com/2019/12/19/food-pantry-for-hungry-community-college-of-denver-students-expands/>

Fighting Hunger at Mines wins 2019 Mayor's Award for Excellence

<https://www.minesnewsroom.com/news/fighting-hunger-mines-wins-2019-mayors-award-excellence>

