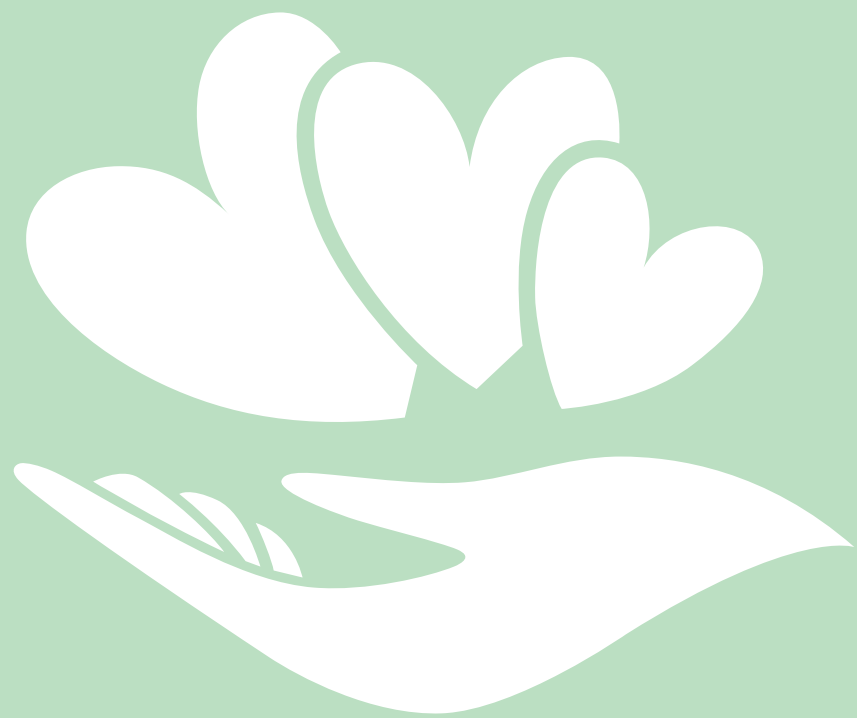


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*/'karita:s/ (noun) love of humankind, charity*

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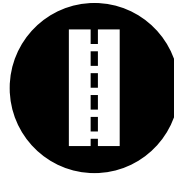
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# UTAH pride CENTER

## To empower and celebrate Utah's diverse LGBTQ+ community

Growing up in rural Oklahoma, the message Chris Jensen heard about the queer community — at school, at church and just about everywhere else — was loud and clear. Gay people were sinners and he should stay away.

“Hearing these things and knowing I was a gay kid who couldn’t come out to the people I loved was very harmful,” Jensen said. “That can leave a shell of a kid.”

The chance to connect with other kids going through the same thing as he was would have made a world of difference, Jensen said, but the closest LGBTQ+ pride center was hundreds of miles away. When Jensen moved to Salt Lake City in 2001, one of the first things he did was look up the Utah Pride Center and ask how he could get involved. Today, Jensen serves as chair of the center’s board of directors.

“Pride centers are symbols to me of an inclusive community,” Jensen said. “I am just so happy to be part of such a great organization.”

Now in its 29th year, the Utah Pride Center exists to empower and celebrate the diverse LGBTQ+ community in Utah by providing a safe and welcoming place for education and support, said Jonathan Foulk, chief operating officer of the center. The largest LGBTQ+ resource center in Utah, the Pride Center is headquartered in downtown Salt Lake City, but its programs and outreach are available across the state.

“We are the home for the LGBTQ+ community whether it is here at the center or virtually,” Foulk said. “No matter where you are in Utah, you are welcome at the Pride Center.”

Much like Jensen, Foulk also understands first-hand the importance of a supportive community and a safe gathering space for members of the queer community of all ages. Foulk was living in foster care when he came out and his foster family kicked him out. The first place he went was the LGBTQ+ center in Sacramento, California, where he lived.

“I found resources that literally saved my life,” he said.

Those same life-saving resources are available at the Utah Pride Center to people of all ages, “from cradle to grave,” Foulk said. And while the COVID-19 pandemic created some challenges for the center — the annual budget went from \$2.6 million in 2019 to \$1.5 million in 2020, and staff members went from 24 to 12 — a shift to virtual programming allowed the Utah

Pride Center to reach more people than ever.

One department that has benefited greatly from a virtual delivery model is the Pride Center’s Suicide Prevention Department, which was officially formed in March 2020. With the physical Pride Center closed, suicide prevention director Katie Perkins, who was already working remotely from St. George, shifted her focus to remote delivery of suicide prevention education and outreach programs, particularly in rural areas of the state where they are so critical, she said.


One initiative Perkins launched was suicide prevention resource boxes that can be ordered by schools,

**CONTINUED on page 4**



Going into the pandemic, the Utah Pride Center had 24 employees. The staff was restructured and cut back to 12 during 2020. Today the Pride Center has 15 full-time staff

members delivering programs and services including mental health support, wellness classes, suicide prevention and more. Photo courtesy of the Utah Pride Center.





Salt Lake City Mayor Erin Mendenhall helps raise a Pride flag at the City and County Building in Salt Lake City. Support from lawmakers and government officials has helped the LGBTQ+ community make great strides in acceptance, said Pride Center Board Chair Chris Jensen. Photo courtesy of the Utah Pride Center.



While members of the LGBTQ+ community can find services such as counseling and support groups in other places, the specialized focus of the Utah Pride Center creates a safe space for all members of the queer community to be themselves and share their experiences authentically. Photo courtesy of the Utah Pride Center.

## Suicide Prevention RESOURCES

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Utah's suicide rate is 34 percent higher than the national average.
- Rates of suicide attempts are 3-4 times higher for LGB individuals and 8-10 times higher for transgender individuals.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

- Take suicide prevention training.
- Help spread suicide prevention resources.
- Help normalize conversations surrounding mental health and suicide.
- Encourage others to seek help.
- Work to become an LGBTQ+ ally.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255.
- Text CONNECT to 741741 for the National Crisis Text Line.
- Find other resources here:  
<https://utahpridecenter.org/prevention/crisis-support-hotlines/>

### FROM page 3

churches, counseling centers, businesses — just about anyone. The boxes include buttons, stickers, magnets and pamphlets with information including crisis hotlines. People can get resources discreetly, Perkins said, either for themselves or for friends or family in need. Even just seeing a button on a friend's backpack could be a nudge for someone else to get the help they need.

There's a lot out there that people aren't aware of," Perkins said.

So far 134 boxes have been distributed — 72 just in 2021, so far — and many organizations have ordered refill packets as well.

Perkins also conducts virtual QPR suicide prevention trainings twice a month, open to anyone. Private trainings can also be arranged.

QPR — which stands for "question, persuade, refer" — is a nationally-recognized training curriculum that helps people recognize the warning signs of suicide, persuade the person to live and then refer them to additional resources that can help. Perkins refers to it as "CPR for mental health." Individuals who complete the training become certified "community gatekeepers."

But the most important outcome of QPR training is opening an honest and educational dialogue about suicide. One myth about suicide, Perkins said, is that talking about it increases the risk of someone dying by suicide, when really the opposite is true.

"We're trying to get people comfortable talking about suicide with their loved ones and in their social circles," she said. "It's not shameful, it's not taboo, and we should be talking about it because it's happening."

The final program delivered by the Suicide Prevention Department is a support group for survivors of suicide loss, such as family members and friends of those who lost their lives to suicide. Suicide does not discriminate, Perkins said, and the group includes people of all ages, genders, ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic circumstances.

The Utah Pride Center also operates a suicide loss support hotline, open during business hours Monday through Friday, with free bereavement counseling and referrals to additional resources.

"There is no timeline on grief," Perkins said. "And this is a unique

type of grief that takes up a unique kind of space."

Spreading the word about programs like this is critical to the work and success of the Utah Pride Center, Foulk said. Many people think the only thing the Pride Center does is throw a big parade and weeklong party every year, but the center's impact is much more than that.

"We have individuals that reach out to us daily who say, 'I'm coming out and I don't know what to do and I don't know where to go,'" Foulk said. "The one thing that we want everyone to believe in is that we should all have the chance to be our true, authentic selves."

Other services offered at the Utah Pride Center include mental health services such as therapy and support groups; education and training for schools and businesses to help them elevate LGBTQ+ individuals within their communities; wellness programs such as yoga, healthy cooking, and meditation; youth and family programs that reach more than 100 kids a week; and a program for seniors called SAGE.

Because of cultural and religious influences in Utah, many people are older when they come out, Jensen said, which can mean losing support networks they've had for many decades. The SAGE program became even more critical during the pandemic, as many older Utahns were isolated in their homes. The Utah Pride Center distributed 30 laptops, made sure everyone had Internet access and kept people connected and supporting each other virtually. Foulk said he is especially proud that the Pride Center didn't lose a single senior during the pandemic — to COVID or anything else.

While many of the services offered at the Utah Pride Center can be found elsewhere — counseling for example — it is the specialized focus

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COMMERCIAL INTERIORS



Jonathan Foulk, chief operating officer of the Utah Pride Center, stands in front of the center's downtown Salt Lake City location. The Utah Pride Center is the largest LGBTQ+ resource center in the state and delivers its programs both in-person and virtually. Photo courtesy of the Utah Pride Center.

FROM page 4

on the needs of the LGBTQ+ community that makes the Pride Center such a valuable community resource, Jensen said.

“You can go and get counseling elsewhere and you can go get senior services elsewhere, but they are not going to understand the queer identity issues and the things members of the community might have gone through,” Jensen said. “We’ve seen and heard it all in this space and this is a judgment-free zone.”

The final way the Utah Pride Center supports the LGBTQ+ community is by celebrating and sharing their stories. And while the annual Pride Festival and parade are not the only thing the Pride Center does, they are a big part of elevating the stories of the queer community in Utah.

This year’s festival started June 1 and was a five-day, timed and ticketed COVID-safe event telling the story of “queerness in Utah,” Foulk said. Washington Square in downtown Salt Lake was turned into a Pride Story Garden with photos and installations from local artists. This year’s festival also included a socially distanced march from the Utah Capitol to Liberty Park and a road rally — a sort of “inside-out Pride Parade” with decorated vehicles.

“I am really hoping to make all of Salt Lake a rainbow and really recognize why we are here and what makes us unique,” Foulk said.

The LGBTQ+ community in Utah has made great strides toward

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acceptance and understanding, Jensen said, and the visibility of events like the Pride Festival only helps the cause, both for people outside the LGBTQ+ experience and within it. Representation matters, he said, and when young queer people can see others like them thriving, they can see a path for themselves as well.

“There is something to be said for kids who can see adults who are like them who are happy and healthy,” Jensen said. “I truly believe it’s a promise that tomorrow will be better for these kids.”

**UTAH  
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Events such as the annual Pride Festival and Parade help elevate and celebrate the experiences of the LGBTQ+ community in Utah. Visibility helps increase the acceptance of the queer community and resolve misconceptions and misunderstandings. Photo courtesy of the Utah Pride Center.

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## Helping families when they need it most

The Family Support and Treatment Center's goal is to build a community of happy, healthy individuals and families by preventing and treating child abuse and other family trauma

The mission of the Family Support and Treatment Center in Orem is simple: to build a community of happy, healthy individuals and families. What it takes to do that — preventing and treating child abuse and other family trauma — can be a bit more complicated. But it is also where the Family Support and Treatment Center excels.

Founded in 1984, the Family Support and Treatment Center started out with a focus on treating the effects of child abuse and trauma that had already taken place. But a few years later, in 1989, the organization merged with an intervention organization and expanded its focus to include prevention of abuse and trauma in the first place.

“We believe really strongly in prevention,” said Janelle Christensen, executive director of the center. “If families had had a little support in their critical moment, they could have had less trauma as a family and could have stayed intact as a family.”

One program that helps families in that critical moment is the Crisis Respite Nursery, a 24/7 safety net available to any member of the community in crisis. Some parents contact the nursery because they have a child who needs to go to the emergency room and there is no one else to watch their other kids. Sometimes parents are in crisis themselves and don't feel safe to take care of their kids. Other times they just need a break to go grocery

shopping or to a doctor's appointment. Whatever the case, they can make a phone call and have a safe place to take their kids — ages 11 and younger — within 30 minutes.

Parents can also schedule free child care in advance, and regular three-hour blocks of respite child care are available to families using

other services, such as therapy, at the Family Support and Treatment Center.

“We are there so parents can take better care of themselves and take care of their situation so they can come back and be ready to parent safely again,” Christensen said. “If we can lower the stress of the parent, we can really lower the chance of abuse hap-

pening in the home.”

In 2019, the Crisis Respite Nursery served 375 families and 900 kids. Numbers were down in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic forced the center to suspend scheduled child-care options. As in-person care has resumed, the nursery implemented enhanced cleaning protocols, masks and temperature checks but many families have been reluctant to come back.

It's a nerve-wracking trend, Christensen said, as reports of mental health crisis and substance abuse have been up during the pandemic and many victims have been forced to spend more time in close quarters with their abusers.

“We're seeing all kinds of reasons to be on more high alert and serve more families, but at the same time, fighting this fear and anxiety of whether it's safe,” Christensen said.

The only statistic that is down is reports of child abuse, she added, though most professionals attribute that to the fact that abused children aren't being seen by other adults like teachers and school counselors.

A large part of the Family Support and Treatment Center's prevention efforts focus on educating kids themselves to recognize and report abuse.



*The Family Support and Treatment Center uses play therapy, an evidence-based approach, to help young children process abuse and trauma. Photo courtesy of the Family Support and Treatment Center.*

CONTINUED on next page





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The center works with schools in the Alpine, Nebo and Provo school districts to teach kids about "stop and go" touches, what to do with secrets, how to get away from abusers and report them and other tools that can prevent trauma and abuse.

"That has been a really powerful program," Christensen said. "When kids are so young, they don't know that these traumatic things are things that don't happen in every home."

One social worker in the Provo School District told the Family Support and Treatment Center that she usually receives one report of abuse every school year, but during the week the center presented its prevention education program, she received one a day. That might seem like a bad thing, Christensen said, but sees it as the opposite.

"That would be happening to those kids whether we found out about it or not, so we should celebrate that we learned about it and could get those kids the help they need," she said, "let alone the kids who get the tools to prevent someone from abusing them in the future."

For older kids, prevention tools include apps to help with stress management and education about dating violence and how to use technology safely. And for adults, the center offers free parenting classes — currently offered virtually — that help moms, dads and other caregivers focus on their relationship with their child or children, manage difficult behavior and adapt to changes and challenges within the family.

"We've had lots of people who reported the parenting class gave them the tools they needed to see their kids and hear their kids and find joy in parenting again by changing their perspective," Christensen said.

But despite all the work the Family Support and Treatment Center puts towards education and prevention, abuse and trauma still happen.



*The mission of the Family Support and Treatment Center is to build a community of healthy, happy individuals and families through education and the prevention and treatment of child abuse, trauma and other personal and family concerns. The center serves an average of more than 19,000 clients a year. Photo courtesy of the Family Support and Treatment Center.*

So the third pillar of the center's work is focused on treatment.

The center's clinical team includes 10 therapists who focus on working with kids and families who have experienced trauma. About 60 percent of therapy clients are kids, Christensen said, while 40 percent are over the age of 18. Therapists use evidence-based techniques and personalize their treatment to help people best access and process their trauma.

"Anyone has a hard time talking about trauma, and the way trauma is remembered and stored in our brains is different," Christensen said.

For young kids, play therapy seems to be the most effective. Play therapy takes place in warm, inviting and comfortable rooms. Kids have access to toys, papers and crayons and other tools that can help them tell and process their story.

"People gravitate toward wholeness and help and healing," Christensen said. "Kids know what

they need to work on and they will gravitate toward what they need to help them process."

She recounted the story of a 3-year-old whose parents were in the middle of a contentious divorce. As a way of articulating what was going on, the child built a river out of rocks with two toy crocodiles on either bank arguing over who got what.

Or there was the 5-year-old processing the death of her father, who passed away while he was on vacation. On her first day of play therapy, she built a family of dinosaurs. A T-Rex came and killed the dad and the story was over. But each week the story evolved and changed. Eventually, the story ended with the mom dinosaur stepping up and taking care of the family.

"It took witnessing that for her, holding space for her, for her to be able to process those emotions," Christensen said.

The play therapy at the Family

Support and Treatment Center is so impressive it caught the eye of Ken Garff Auto Group's new community outreach program We're Hear for You. In February of this year, the program partnered with the Family Support and Treatment Center to redo three play therapy rooms with new cabinets, counters, sinks and paint.

"We were just really blown away by the Family Support and Treatment Center and the incredible resource they are to the community. The work they are doing is so important we felt like they deserved a better space to do it in," said Kate Terry, marketing manager for community events at Ken Garff. "The work is heavy but important, and they are working for the future. For our future, really."

The We're Hear for You program is designed to be more than just

**CONTINUED page 10**

## FAMILY SUPPORT AND TREATMENT CENTER

### success stories

*"When I first came through your doors in 2001, I was broken, scared, alone and suffering in an abusive, manipulative relationship. At that time, I could have never envisioned myself walking through your doors 20 years later a whole, happy, responsible, professional woman! You helped me become vertical, believe in myself and overcome the devastating results of abuse. Thank you!"*

*"We were referred to the Family Support and Treatment Center at a time when my 5-year-old son was experiencing debilitating anxiety. As a mother, I felt like I was completely drowning. Despite my best efforts I could not seem to help my son. It was an awful situation for the entire family. Before entering play therapy, a nightly ritual had developed of me trying to quell my son's fears while my little guy would sob and shake and I would fail at attempts to explain away his fears. Therapy taught me how to hear what my son was trying to tell me. Therapy brought out in me a potential I did not know I had to be a better mother to both my children."*

*"In 2010, I found myself alone with two young daughters. After only two years of marriage I discovered my then-husband was living a double life. He struggled with a sexual addiction, frequented adult establishments and was unfaithful. Although my first spouse did not choose recovery, I did. The Family Support and Treatment Center played a crucial role in my recovery. They provided a safe space for my children to play while I attended 12 steps, counseling and later went on to meet with lawyers to finalize my divorce. Five years later, I am remarried and now have four beautiful children."*

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donating money to worthy causes, Terry said. Employees get hands-on with the program's community outreach. At the Family Support and Treatment Center, they have been demolishing old spaces, painting new ones, and more.

"Our employees just love being



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& TREATMENT CENTER**

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involved and getting into the community," Terry said.

Ken Garff was inspired to start the We're Hear for You program by the serious community needs that emerged during the pandemic, Terry said. The company sees it as the most important work they do, and it is paying off in revenue and more.

"We're putting a bunch of good energy into the universe and it's coming back to us 10-fold," she said. "What goes around comes around and we are just trying to maintain the Ken Garff mission of treating people right and it's helped us maintain growth in unprecedented times."

Growth is also on the mind of the Family Support and Treatment Center, Christensen said. Among all the programs they offer, the center usually serves around 19,600 clients a year. During COVID that number went down to 14,000. Christensen hopes it rebounds and then some.

Population growth in the state is exponential, and that population is also young. For example, the average age of residents in Eagle Mountain is 17 years old. More and more families will need the services the Family Support and Treatment Center provides, Christensen said.

"Parenting is hard for everyone and it doesn't make you any less of a good parent to get help," she said. "It's hard to have happy, healthy families and we are here to help every family in our community meet that goal. We are not just here for 'those families.' We are here for every family."



*Through the Crisis Respite Nursery, parents can access safe and high-quality child care 24/7, and within 30 minutes of making the request. There are no eligibility requirements to use the respite nursery and child care is provided free of cost. Photo courtesy of the Family Support and Treatment Center.*



*Through its We're Hear For You program, Ken Garff Automotive Group is renovating several play therapy rooms at the Family Support and Treatment Center. Ken Garff employees have been working hands-on doing demolition, painting and more. Photo courtesy of the Family Support and Treatment Center.*



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The needs of communities in Utah have changed over the years but one thing has remained the same: Catholic Community Services of Utah has been there to help meet them.

Catholic Community Services (CCS) first opened its doors in Salt Lake City in 1945, providing mostly adoption services and poverty assistance. In the 1980s, the organization opened a branch in Northern Utah, where the mission was — and continues to be — addressing hunger and food insecurity.

“The mission is feeding mouths,” said Damian Aguilera, volunteer coordinator at CCS of Northern Utah. “We want to get food into bellies, especially of the little ones.”

This mission became more critical than ever as the COVID-19 pandemic drove more Utah families into food insecurity. While the organization’s food pantry — the Joyce Hansen Hall Food Bank — usually has eligibility requirements based on household income, family size and other factors, the pantry doors have been open to anyone for the past year and counting.

“With COVID, all of those requirements went out the window,” Aguilera said. “We didn’t turn down

anyone. Anyone and everyone got food.”

While the pantry usually serves between 90,000 and 100,000 clients a year, that number went up exponentially in 2020, Aguilera said. Luckily, the generosity of the community and donations to the pantry went up expo-

nentially as well.

“COVID brought a lot more awareness to the issue of hunger,” he said.

During the annual Feed Utah food drive earlier this year, more than 150,000 pounds of dry food was collected in Weber County alone. Catholic

Community Services of Northern Utah had to enlist the help of the National Guard and an army of volunteers to help collect it.

“That was honestly nothing that we were prepared for,” Aguilera said. “We were expecting a lot, but that was more than we ever expected.”

Kimberly Morris has been a volunteer at the pantry for the past three years and said she has never seen anything like the most recent food drive. While COVID has necessitated contactless food pick-up, meeting clients as they come in for food has always been Morris’ favorite part of the job.

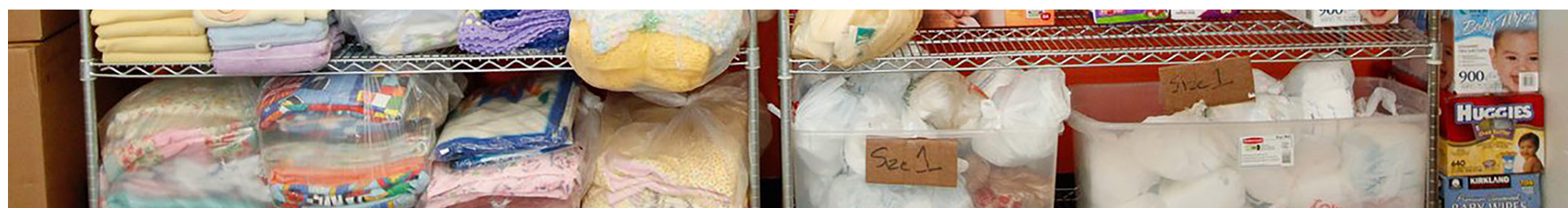
Clients are always so grateful to receive the assistance and many who donate food may be surprised to learn it is going to their friends and neighbors.

“They are people like you and me,” she said. “You may be the person who gives out the food one day, and you may be the person who needs the food the next day. You just never know. But whoever is in need, they understand that people have sacrificed



*During the COVID-19 pandemic, CCS of Northern Utah removed all eligibility requirement from their food pantry and gave assistance to anyone and everyone in need. Rather than clients coming to the warehouse to choose their food, CCS prepared pantry boxes that were distributed through contactless pick-up. Photo courtesy of Catholic Community Services of Northern Utah.*

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# UTAH FOOD BANK

## 1 in 5 Utah Kids Face Hunger



**GIVE FOOD**



**GIVE TIME**



**GIVE MONEY**

[UtahFoodBank.org](http://UtahFoodBank.org)

## Our children's strongest advocate.



People who work to help our children are investing in the future of our community. It's why we support programs that focus on helping local kids reach their full potential. We recognize those who prepare them to achieve their goals through a good education in a nurturing environment.

KeyBank thanks Utah Food Bank for making a difference.



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to meet their need and they are so grateful.”

Clients of the food pantry also qualify for other supportive services through CCS of Northern Utah, Aguilera said, including housing and employment assistance and referrals to other agencies. CCS of Northern Utah provides these services with three full-time staff members, more than 300 volunteers and an annual budget of between \$500,000 and \$800,000.

In 2010, Catholic Community Services of Northern Utah launched Bridging the Gap, a second program to address hunger, particularly child hunger. Through this program, Catholic Community Services of Northern Utah works with eight or nine local elementary schools to distribute food to children in need.

During COVID, only three schools have allowed in-person deliveries, Aguilera said. For the rest, CCS of Northern Utah has prepared pantry



Items for new moms are packaged in a basket or reusable bag by the volunteers with the St. Martha's Baby Project. "As a new mom, you go through a lot, so anything extra helps them feel loved and remembered," said volunteer Vicki Mager. "If you work there and serve there, you understand that these are very hard-working people and they just need a little extra help." Photo courtesy of Catholic Community Services of Northern Utah.

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Hunger is a much larger issue in Utah than people realize, said CCS of Northern Utah volunteer coordinator Damian Aguilera. The Bridging the Gap Program distributes approximately 5,000 pantry packs every month. Photo courtesy of Catholic Community Services of Northern Utah.



Catholic Community Services of Utah provides food assistance to schools through the Bridging the Gap program. Children in need receive pantry items once a month. Photo courtesy of Catholic Community Services of Northern Utah.



Every bundle distributed by the St. Martha's Project includes a brand-new quilt or fleece blanket. The program distributes 60 to 70 bundles a month. Photo courtesy of Catholic Community Services of Northern Utah.

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packs, Ziploc bags filled with pantry items that food insecure children can take home to help cover the time when they are not in school. CCS distributes about 5,000 pantry packs a month.

"It's really fun and rewarding to see the kids light up," Aguilera said. "As we drive to the school, the kids act like they've seen an ice cream truck. They are so ecstatic, waving and chasing us. To see their gratitude makes it all worth it."

CCS of Northern Utah also holds a Backpack Bonanza every summer, during which they distribute backpacks filled with school supplies to children in need.

Helping children in need has long been a dream for Aguilera, he said. As a member of the United States Navy, Aguilera completed multiple deployments overseas and was particularly struck by the issues of child hunger he saw. When he returned to the U.S., he realized the same issues existed here and he committed to working to help resolve them.

"Right under our own nose and in our own country, people have no awareness of the magnitude of the hunger issue here in the U.S.," he said. "Coming here to CCS, working

with kids and helping with child hunger and child welfare is what I really wanted to do. It hits home for me."

The third major program administered by CCS of Northern Utah is the St. Martha's Baby Project, which provides layettes, diapers, blankets and other essentials to expectant mothers in need. Vicki Mager has been volunteering with the program for the past 10 years.

"It is the perfect job at CCS," Mager said. "It's the best room in the building."

All the items distributed by the St. Martha's project are donated, packaged in a reusable bag and distributed at hospitals and through local health departments and other nonprofits. CCS distributes between 60 and 70 kits a month.

"As a new mom, you go through a lot so anything extra helps them feel loved and remembered," Mager said. "If you work there and serve there, you understand that these are very hard-working people and they just need a little extra help."

Perhaps the biggest misconception about the people CCS serves, Aguilera said, is that they are just looking for a handout, that they aren't interested in working for what they need.

"We have people who are trying their absolute best to get back on their feet and provide for their families, but they need help while they are working on it," he said.

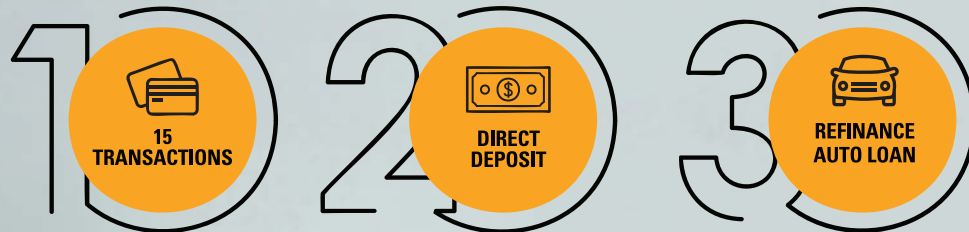


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seen an ice cream truck. They are so ecstatic, waving and chasing us. To see their gratitude makes it all worth it." Photo courtesy of Catholic Community Services of Northern Utah.

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