

Current volunteer opportunities:

We need a variety of skills to get everything done. We are always on the lookout for folks who have skills with people, business, computers, art, writing, photography, special events, social work, public speaking or public relations, and food service. Mostly we are looking for folks who come with an open mind and flexibility to do what needs to be done. Many of our volunteers work in two of the programs below:

1) Emergency Shelter Program: In 2010 La Puente provided over 9,500 nights of emergency shelter to 650 people, including over 75 families. The case manager establishes plans with guests and uses La Puente and community resources to facilitate guests reaching their goals. As well as taking responsibility for meals and volunteer coordination at the shelter.

2) Adelante: Adelante is La Puente's long-term transitional housing program serving homeless families. Case manager AmeriCorps members are responsible for make sure the families complete the five requirements of the program. Families have five requirements: 1) education and skill development, 2) developing family budget and finance skills, 3) completion of parenting curriculum, 4) completion of life-skills curriculum, and 5) full family participation in counseling. This transitional housing program targets Valley families who are homeless and motivated to increase their self-sufficiency.

3) PALS (Positive Activities Lift the Spirit), is a licensed after school and summer program. PALS children come from two different community sources - first, we serve children whose families are enrolled in the Adelante program. Second, we accept referrals from the Alamosa County Department of Human Services. The volunteers and staff work closely with parents, teachers, caseworkers, and other service providers in an effort to assist each child to move forward. The positive, supportive environment allows every child to gain confidence and self respect. In 2010 the PALS program served 52 children in the community.

4) The Food Bank Network of the San Luis Valley: La Puente provides the management and support for thirteen food pantries throughout the San Luis Valley. The Food Bank Network distributes a three-day supply of nutritionally sound food to needy families and Individuals. Our members support the collection and distribution of food items that serve 34,000 people including over 14,000 children with emergency food packages. Distribution sights are located in Alamosa, Monte Vista, Fort Garland, San Luis, La Jara, Antonito, Center, Saguache, Moffat, Crestone, Del Norte and Creede. The food bank volunteers/members also manage the Gleaning Project uses volunteers from schools, churches, and the community to recover produce left behind in the fields after harvest. Food is distributed to low-income families. In 2011, we anticipate recovering and distributing over 40,000 pounds of fresh produce.

5) Community Outreach Program: La Puente outreach team serves communities throughout the San Luis Valley, working with high-risk families and individuals. The goal of Outreach is to stabilize people in crisis to prevent homelessness. The members serving in Outreach do the following: Situation assessment, utility assistance, rent assistance, landlord and employer mediation, enrolling people into the appropriate service network, assistance with applications, aid with translations and material provisions including clothing and furniture. The Community Outreach Program also sponsors special Christmas outreach activities.

6) Rainbow's End: Rainbow's End is La Puente's Community Thrift Store and center for the distribution of material goods. The Alamosa and Monte Vista stores work to raise funds for La Puente and serve local

agencies that refer clients in need of clothing, bedding, and other material goods. We have placements this year at Rainbow's End in Monte Vista and Alamosa where members are working hard to share our mission through special events and visual representations.

7) Milagros Coffee Shop is a partial menu cafe, coffee specialty shop and used bookstore. Milagros works to raise awareness for La Puente while providing valuable jobs to the community. Milagros volunteers/members work to create community space to share the vision of La Puente and administer special events and open mic nights.

8) Volunteer Program: La Puente's Volunteer Engagement Program provides opportunities for individuals and groups to participate and assist our services to the people of the San Luis Valley. Members are responsible for promoting and scheduling and training of community volunteers and work groups.

9) Community Education: La Puente works hard to educate our community and Colorado on the issues of homelessness and hunger, particularly rural homelessness. Community Education members give presentations at local schools and churches to raise awareness, and also travel across Colorado to share our story.