

She helps people their beloved pets!



Last year, Colorado Pet Pantry gave away 6.9 million meals to feed 115,000 dogs and cats



◀ Along with food, the pantry provides other pet necessities, like collars, leashes and kitty litter

When Eileen Lambert started volunteering at an animal shelter and saw far too many pets being relinquished because their owners couldn't afford to feed them, she followed her heart—and has kept thousands of animals with the families who love them!

As she was about to turn 40, Eileen Lambert found herself asking, *What am I doing with my life?* She and her husband, Matt, had been trying to have a baby for years, but she'd suffered two miscarriages. She enjoyed working in marketing but longed to do something more meaningful.

Eileen had always loved animals. She had recently started volunteering at an animal shelter. But even there, she wished she could do more. Too often, people surrendered animals that they clearly loved.

The staff told Eileen the top reasons people gave up their pets had to do with financial challenges: housing, veterinary care and pet food. Eileen's heart ached. But then she heard about a pet food bank in Atlanta that offered free pet food, collars, leashes and other supplies to anyone in need. And inspiration struck.

Oh my gosh, I can do this here! she thought.

Heartfelt mission

In 2013, Eileen quit her job and founded the nonprofit Colorado Pet Pantry (ColoradoPetPantry.org) in Boulder, Colorado—and promptly found out she was pregnant. That exciting news made her wonder if she should try to get her job back, but her heart was too invested in her pet project. That year, Eileen grew her organization and nurtured her baby.

Eileen thought she would have to rent a building to house her pantry, but, by luck, she met the executive director of a local food bank, who loved what she was doing. He explained that food stamps can't be used to buy pet food, so people facing financial challenges or experiencing homelessness often give human food to pets before feeding themselves. And he had an idea.

in need feed

He suggested Colorado Pet Pantry set up a mobile pet food bank in the parking lot of his facility so that when people came to pick up food for their families, they could also get food for their beloved pets.

Agreeing that was a wonderful idea, Eileen reached out to friends and family, asking for donations and volunteers. They placed donation bins in pet stores and animal hospitals, and asked pet food distributors for donations.

Soon, they were hosting monthly pet-food giveaways. Seeing the gratitude in people's eyes, Eileen knew: *This is what I am meant to do!*

Full bellies, happy hearts

Colorado Pet Pantry quickly began growing, and now partners with more than 100 food banks, senior living centers and organizations like Meals on Wheels to distribute free pet food and other necessities across the Centennial State. The clients are extremely grateful, sometimes sending photos of their dogs and cats along with their thanks.

This is Tucker, my mom's dog you helped me take care of one month while both my parents were in the hospital, read one message.

I have stage 3 stomach cancer and I can no longer work. The pantry has been so helpful for me and my beautiful dogs, a woman shared.

You guys give me such hope that maybe one day, when I'm in a better financial situation, I'd love to be a part of the donation and volunteer services, enthused another client.

As a disabled individual, getting extra help in feeding my babies has been a blessing, a Denver resident offered.

Such gratitude is shared by tens of thousands of people. In 2022 alone—with the help of 750 volunteers—Colorado Pet Pantry distributed 6.9 million meals to feed 115,000 dogs and cats, helping them stay with nearly 40,000 families.

The nonprofit also responds to emergencies and gave away 2,000 pet beds to Coloradans displaced by the Marshall Fire in Boulder County in the final days of 2021.

Eileen is deeply grateful to all the generous people and companies who support her nonprofit. She's passionate about continuing to grow Colorado Pet Pantry while enjoying life with Matt, their son, Mitchell, and dogs Lily and Jaxson.

"Pets and people need each other the most when times are hard. Keeping animals in families allows these families to have joy," says Eileen. "I figured if I wasn't going to have a baby, then I was going to have work in my life that really made me fulfilled. Now I have both!" —*Jen Reeder*

"This is my passion. Pets and people need each other the most when times are hard"



3 other ways to help pet owners in need!

1 Offer your skills!

Do you have skills as a grant writer or public relations or marketing specialist? Visit Paws4ACure.org and click "Volunteer," then fill out the application to volunteer your time and help the organization assist pet owner across the U.S. who cannot afford care. Your corporate skills could make a difference in helping save furry family members—and those who love them most.

2 Give supplies!

The Brown Dog Foundation bridges the gap between the cost of medical care and saving pets. But they are in need of more than just money. Go to BrownDogFoundation.org and click "Support Us," then "Wishlist" to donate items like paper, envelopes, stamps, treats and gift cards.

3 Start a fundraiser!

Raising funds is a primary way to support the Help-A-Pet organization, which offers assistance to pet owners. Go to Help-A-Pet.org and click "Volunteer" to find ways to host a fundraiser—like a bake sale, pancake breakfast or walkathon—or place fundraising brochures in busy areas in your community to spread awareness. Any funds raised can be mailed to P.O. Box 244, Hinsdale, IL 60522.

A \$5 donation feeds a pet for a month



Pets boost spirits and hope



Founder Eileen with her own beloved dogs



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