

Community Room Resources

Summit Elementary School

Aurora, CO



When a survey revealed the need for food and clothing resources in their community, Summit Elementary School jumped on the opportunity to provide a pantry and closet for the very first time in their Community Room.

The Principal, Assistant Principal, Community Liaison, and front office were the foundation in making this possible. The Community Liaison and the School Support Para renovated and organized designated spaces in the Community Room for the pantry and community closet. The district played a vital role in providing shelving for the pantry, which was essential for organizing the donated food, and the Office Manager was able to find funds to purchase shelving for the closet. Summit partnered with Eastern Hills Community Church to establish the pantry and the ARC thrift store provided vouchers to help fill the closet. Summit has also received donations from local organizations such as ViBE and We Don't Waste that help keep the pantry and closet stocked.



Since launching the pantry and closet, Summit has successfully provided families with food boxes for every break during the school year and daily snacks for students in need. Over the holidays, ViBE helped make food boxes for our families. Students have also volunteered in the community room and helped put boxes together for families. The school also brought in the program “Blessings in a Bag,” designed to provide non-perishable food every week for kids to take home over the weekend. Summit has worked closely with the district pantry and has been a part of a weekly grocery donation through a church that donates to the Cherry Creek School District. Generous donations from staff and the community have poured in throughout the year.

The initial survey helped identify which families in the Summit community could benefit from these added resources. The pantry and closet in the Community Room is available for all students and families to utilize, if they need. The Summit Community Room has been a relief and comfort for families receiving the added support and resources. One parent sent a message to Summit saying, “Thank you for always looking out for people like me and my kids! Just know your support and caring attention will forever be appreciated. God bless you.”

Although the new resources have been successful at Summit Elementary, they also presented some challenges. These included insufficient culturally appropriate food, proper delivery of food for families without transportation, receiving expired food, and running low on weather-specific clothing.

Advice to replicate a program like this is to connect and build relationships among community members and partners. These relationships will create a deeper understanding of what is needed and how to accomplish meeting those needs for students and families.