Peggy was desperately seeking safe, affordable housing for herself and her special needs son. As a Registered Nurse she had the education, training and drive to work, but without a home and a school for her son, she was in an impossible situation. She applied to Bringing School Home, a collaborative program between EFAA and Boulder Housing Partners for families with children ages 0-5, and now she is once again back in nursing and her son is thriving in school.

“I knew we needed a stable place to live before we could focus on anything else,” said Peggy. “When I saw the Bringing School Home program I knew it was a match for us. Now, we have a place to call home, which has been especially important for my son while he made such a big adjustment to start kindergarten. Immediately after we moved in I got a job and was finally able to start working again. I couldn’t be happier. Once housing opened up for us other things moved forward so much more easily.”

Peggy is just one example of the hardworking parents enrolled in Bringing School Home, which provides permanently affordable housing and parenting support to families with very young children. The goal of this program is to help children become school and life ready by providing educational enrichment as early as possible, and connecting parents to resources they need to cultivate a home environment that supports learning and school success.

Bringing School Home is at capacity with more than 20 families enrolled. Because the program provides important opportunities to break the cycle of poverty and put families on a path toward long-term success, it has become quite sought after, with referrals coming from other nonprofit organizations throughout Boulder.
On behalf of EFAA’s dedicated staff, Board of Directors, volunteers and the people we serve, I want to wish everyone a peaceful and prosperous 2017. Thank you for your sustained support of our work.

2016 ended with strong donor commitment to EFAA’s objective of helping families survive and thrive. It’s been 99 years since our community came together to create EFAA, and it is inspiring to see the tradition of neighbors helping neighbors still continuing to this day. The bulk of our funding comes from local private sources, including individuals, businesses, the faith-based community and civic organizations who believe that a strong, locally-based safety net builds our resilience as a community.

Because of support from people like you, last year EFAA was able to expand our efforts in working with participants to become more self-sufficient over time, and helping children, particularly those experiencing episodes of homelessness, to become prepared for a brighter future, with the goal of breaking the cycle of poverty over generations. I am pleased to report that the pilot programs we initiated at the beginning of 2016 have borne fruit:

- More than twenty families with young children 0-5 years old have secured permanently affordable housing, better educational resources for children and case management to help parents become more economically secure through our partnership with Boulder Housing Partners on the Bringing School Home program.
- Ten families have entered our Internships to Careers for Motivated Parents program, which twins workforce training with family support to help single parents move out of low-wage jobs and into higher paying jobs with long-term career potential.
- Because of our expanded Children’s Program, nearly all families in our housing have received referrals to child care and parenting resources. Medical, dental and eyeglass coverage for children increased significantly during the family’s stay in EFAA housing, and eighty-nine percent of families with children 0-3 years old received early education materials.

With your support, in 2017 we will continue to expand our diligent work in the community to prevent family homelessness, better tailor our programming to respond to family needs and aspirations, and increase our longer-term impacts that empower families and our community to thrive.

Thank you for being a partner in our efforts,

Julie Van Domelen
Executive Director
With the redesign of EFAA’s furniture program to better meet the needs of clients, Urban Mattress stepped up their corporate support to ensure that our 54 short-term and transitional housing units were outfitted with clean, safe mattresses.

Urban Mattress is steeped in our local community. Not only do they manufacture, source, hire and sell locally, the company also works hard to buoy the charitable organizations that make our community stronger, including EFAA.

“We appreciate the unique role EFAA plays here, especially improving the lives of homeless families with children,” says Ken Miller, Community Engagement Director for Urban Mattress. “Their cause and mission are aligned with our value of community. The organization and its leadership are very well trusted. EFAA’s been around for a long time and we are proud to work together.”

Community engagement and connection runs through everything Ken does. In addition to the work he does with local nonprofits, he connects local businesses with each other to build a more vibrant business community.

“In my role of face-to-face marketing, I proactively connect with other local businesses to find ways we can support each other and our community as a whole,” says Ken. “We want to keep dollars local; we are constantly seeking new ways to support our local economy.”

Beyond his direct work with Urban Mattress, Ken has served on the board of a dozen nonprofits over the years, currently serves on the Boulder County 10-year Plan to End Homelessness, and created his own non-profit to help marginalized populations.

To contact Ken email him at ken@projectrevive.com. To learn more about how to become an EFAA Corporate Partner, contact Sara Joss at saraj@efaa.org or 303-951-7676.

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“Make History! This is your time to share. EFAA will be turning 100 years old in 2018 and we are looking for people to share their EFAA stories and history with us. Have you been a donor or volunteer for decades? Did EFAA help you or someone you know way back when? Do you, your parents or grandparents have an EFAA story from the past? We’d like to hear! As we compile a century of stories, what you know can make history. Contact Shenna at shenna@efaa.org or 303-951-7677.
LOOKING AHEAD: EFAA BECOMING A FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Last year, to better meet the needs of our community, EFAA’s strategic priority focused on closing gaps in services. This year, our strategic priority will be coming into alignment with the Family Resource Center framework.

Family Resource Centers (FRC) provide a safe, accessible place for families to connect with comprehensive, coordinated services that help them become stronger and more self-reliant. FRCs are tailored to the culture, resources and needs of the communities they serve.

Given EFAA’s mission, our programs and services, the people we serve, the needs of our community, and the directives of our Strategic Plan, EFAA has applied to become a member of the Family Resource Center Association (FRCA). Organizations that become FRCA members adopt the FRC model, strive to be family centered, are aligned with strengthening families using the FRC approach, and meet a rigorous and lengthy Standards of Quality. Becoming a member is an on-going process of self-evaluation tools set against evidence-based practices. EFAA will be continually assessing what more can be offered, and adding appropriate programs and services where possible.

To learn more about FRCs you can visit cofamilycenters.org. We will keep you updated with news as we work toward aligning our work under this exciting new framework.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE GRANT AWARDED TO EXPAND MOUNTAIN SERVICES

EFAA, working as part of the Mountain Human Services Collaborative, recently began offering critical human services directly in mountain communities to remove geographic barriers to access. Kristi Venditti was hired as the Mountain Resources Liaison to meet the unique needs of low-income residents in these rural areas.

Foothills United Way has awarded the Mountain Human Services Collaborative a Community Resilience Grant to increase the hours and impact the Mountain Resources Liaison can have in our mountain communities. With the grant, Venditti will be able to double her time and do more outreach education so that families in need know about available services.

Since April 2016, about 35 families have been helped, and the need is still great. Of those served, 44% were families with children, 33% seniors and 41% people living with a disability. Venditti has connected them with needed resources, provided eyeglasses, assistance with utility bills to keep the heat and power on, and rent or deposit to prevent family homelessness. Affordable housing is a growing need that especially impacts families with children and seniors living on a fixed income.

Low-income mountain residents are the county’s most isolated and geographically vulnerable. Many services are not available in these areas, which creates a barrier to access. With limited bus service, many people may have to travel up to 25 miles to reach a city where services are provided. By bringing services to residents in these communities, critical needs like food, housing, transportation and healthcare can be met.