

ON THE GROUND

YOUR GENEROSITY IN ACTION

CWS Blankets and Hygiene Kits meet needs in rugged, rural Colorado

For 35 years, the nonprofit organization La Puente has provided vital resources and services to people in crisis in Colorado's San Luis Valley. Since opening their doors in 1982, the organization has learned that the needs of the people they serve are complex, and their programs and services have evolved from assisting stranded travelers and the temporarily displaced to include a homeless shelter

and daily meal program, food bank network, community gardens, case management and veteran's assistance, homeless prevention, family and children's programs and the newly added Rural Outreach Initiative.



Photo: courtesy La Puente

In 2016, La Puente received a shipment of CWS Blankets and CWS Hygiene Kits. Beginning last Fall, those resources were distributed at La Puente's Homeless Shelter, where families and individuals – including migrant farmworkers – are welcomed, as well as through their Rural Outreach Initiative.

Residents in the San Luis Valley who live in the area known as “the flats” often choose the location because they are seeking a sense of independence and freedom. They frequently patch together whatever they can find to

establish a home. Many times though, those homes have no running water or electricity. As winter weather sets in, the hundreds of miles of unimproved roads that run through the region can become impassable, isolating the residents from the critical services they may need to survive and throwing their lives into crisis.

“...we are grateful for the support of Church World Service as we could not do what we do without your continued generosity and belief in our mission. Thank you...”

-La Puente Staff and Volunteers

As part of La Puente's outreach to the people living in these precarious conditions, Robert Lockwood, the Rural

Outreach Initiative's Case Manager, travels the flats, meeting the people who live there. He provides much needed resources where he can, as well as essential information and contacts for them to access services they may need. Since the program began in 2015, Robert has been able to contact 50 households and 104 individuals (including 32 veterans) in the flats, finding that many of the homes he has visited have one thing in common, they use firewood as their main heat source. In the high-altitude of the San Juan Mountains, where the flats are located, temperatures can drop to life-threatening lows and firewood can run out before winter ends. Towards the end of 2016, he was able to give out all of the warm, wool Church World Service blankets and Hygiene Kits he had on hand.

CWS congregations provide thousands of CWS Blankets or Kits each year. These blankets and kits can be a vital resource for someone needing a little support, warmth and encouragement. Your donations have helped to provide blankets this winter to people living in the “flats” of the San Luis Valley.