

Staying Self-Sufficient

Agency: Community Outreach

Program: Community Outreach

Service: Provides one-time financial assistance for rent, utilities, and transportation for families who have exhausted all other resources.

Need: The population of the working poor is on the rise. Currently only 4.6% of Sioux Empire citizens are unemployed; yet 12% of all families with children under 5 are living in poverty and 40% of single mothers with children under 5 are living in poverty. Last year, more than 1100 families received one-time assistance from Community Outreach and over 1200 families were turned away because of lack of funding assistance.

Impact: This one time assistance and resource/information referrals keep families in their homes with utilities on, helps homeless families get into a home, and helps individuals stay working by assisting with transportation.

A young blonde woman holding a baby on her hip quietly opens a glass door. Her eyes are diverted down as she approaches the front desk. You can feel her disappointment as she enters the room.

“Can I help you with something,” asks the front desk associate at Community Outreach with a smile.

“Yes, I need help with my rent. I’ve been working two jobs and my daughter was sick and we had to take her to the emergency room,” the woman says so quickly she barely breathes while talking. “I had to miss work and then the doctor’s bill – our insurance just didn’t cut it. And now I’m \$200 short for rent and I don’t know where else to go.”

“That’s what we’re here for. Let’s sit down and talk about your current situation, how we can help, and how we can prevent this from happening again,” responds the associate reassuringly.

This is a situation that many families are going through on a daily basis. They may be working two or three jobs, but earning minimum wage and any everyday interruption; sickness, a car breakdown, a child who is ill; can cause a major setback in their daily lives and paying for things like rent, utilities, and food. In fact, 40% of single mothers with children under 5 in the Sioux Empire are living in poverty conditions.

Thanks to the funding from Sioux Empire United Way, Community Outreach is able to assist families with one-time assistance with rent, utilities, and transportation. Additionally, Community Outreach provides information and referrals to these families to connect them with services that can help them provide a safe and loving home life as well prevent future use of social services.

The programs gives families a place to turn, “I don’t know what we would have done without Community Outreach, it was our last resort and the only way to help us stay self-sufficient and get back to our normal lives.”

