



# Help & Hope Center Castle Rock

Each month, Louie Lee of The Lee team uses this space to shine the spotlight on a nonprofit organization that's making our community a better place to be in with the hope of generating support from the people who live here. Louie is proud to highlight the Help & Hope Center this month. If you have a nonprofit you would like highlighted in Making a Difference, please contact Louie.

For over four decades, the **Help & Hope Center in Castle Rock** has been a beacon of support for financially distressed people in Douglas and Elbert counties.

What began in 1981 as a small pantry operating out of a Castle Rock resident's garage has blossomed into a community resource, providing for immediate needs and a path to stability. "That mission has been at the heart of everything for us

forever," said Joe Lima, development coordinator for Help & Hope. "The idea behind this is that we provide people with some immediate needs. They can get back on their feet. It's not that we're a cure for any financial ills, but we help them make it through a tough time." As Douglas County has grown, so has the demand for assistance. The Help & Hope Center has seen the number of people seeking help increase at double the rate of the county's population growth, Lima said. When normalized for inflation, the organization is providing four times the assistance it did when the pantry first started. The Help & Hope Center relies heavily on community support to continue its mission. Monetary donations are crucial, with many local people and businesses providing regular contributions. Beyond financial gifts, the center also accepts

donations of clothing and food for its client pantry. "Our clients can shop in the pantry for the goods they need — everything from dry goods to meats, fruits and vegetables, which we largely get from local grocery store donations," Lima said. While the list of specific needs changes weekly, high-demand items include canned vegetables, condiments and cereals. In addition to food and clothing, the center accepts household goods and items like games, puzzles and toys. Donations are vetted for quality before being offered for sale in the Help & Hope Center's thrift store, which is located in the same building but operates as a separate entity.

**Treasures Thriftique** is open to the public, and proceeds are channeled back into the organization's core services to fund rent and utility assistance programs for its clients. "It's a very successful and well-known thrift store," Lima said. Dedicated volunteers, many who have been with the organization for decades, are one of the keys to the center's success. They do everything from sorting books to checking puzzle pieces and ensure Barbie dolls are clean and complete before they're sold. Pantry volunteers unload large donations, like a recent 7,000-pound delivery from the Latter Day Saints and then stocking the shelves and assisting clients with their shopping. "The volunteers are at the heart of what makes us successful," Lima said. Last year, the Help & Hope Center assisted more than 31,000 clients and provided over \$3 million in assistance, including food, clothing and household items. The organization prides itself on its fiscal responsibility, with 91 cents of every dollar donated going directly to clients.

The Help & Hope Center is holding a drive where people can drop off food and clothes at the fire station at Happy Canyon Road. At the same time, it's running a campaign, with fund matching. A QR code on the fire station door will provide a convenient way to make monetary donations! For major donors, the center hosts quarterly appreciation events, with the next one being scheduled in September at ProVision in Castle Rock.

To learn more about the Help & Hope Center, to donate or to volunteer, please visit [www.helpandhopecenter.org/](http://www.helpandhopecenter.org/) or contact Joe Lima directly at [joe@helpandhopecenter.org](mailto:joe@helpandhopecenter.org).



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LUXURY REAL ESTATE EXPERT & LONGTIME RESIDENT

Louie Lee | 303-549-6925  
[LeeTeamRealtors.com](http://LeeTeamRealtors.com) | [LeeTeamMakingaDifference.com](http://LeeTeamMakingaDifference.com)