

Chaffee's Got Heart Community Spotlight: Pastor Melinda Roberts/Salida United Methodist Church

The Chaffee's Got Heart Committee is extremely proud of local businesses and individuals that have gone above and beyond by doing extraordinary things during these uncertain times.

From innovating ways to thrive despite trying circumstances to showering struggling members of our community with generosity to prioritizing the health and safety of our most vulnerable, these businesses and individuals, who have been nominated for this honor by fellow community members, have shown what it really means when we say: **Chaffee's Got HEART.**

Today, we sat down with **Pastor Melinda Roberts of the Salida United Methodist Church** to find out how the pandemic changed worship for her community and to learn more about how she approached the challenge of the pandemic.

How did COVID cause you to change the way you did things?

When we shut down in-person worship services, we went completely online, which meant us learning a lot about technology very quickly. In summer and fall, we also added a hike church – a modified church service while a group of people went hiking. That was really fun and was a great way to safely see each other while still providing fellowship.

The ministry services we offered also had to change to meet some needs within the community. After the showers at the pool and Presbyterian Church shut down, we were asked to open ours up twice a week. We've done that and will continue to do that. We also opened our doors to the women's shelter and will continue to house it here as needed.



Why did you decide to go above & beyond to contribute to our community?

There was nothing else that we could do. I couldn't sit here with our doors closed and not help so we just looked for ways we could do things differently, ways we could think outside of the box to help the community. And, we were grateful we had support from the congregation to make those changes.

Where do you see examples of the idea that ‘Chaffee’s Got Heart’?

I saw it in how our ministry changed; we used to be able to assist 4 families a week with gift cards to Safeway, but because folks were so generous, we are now able to help 10 to 15 families a week. In the past, each person was eligible for 4 cards a year, but because people saw a need and were so generous in response, each person is now eligible for 10 cards per year.

Also, have seen it through donations for the shelter, our shower ministry, and our Samaritan fund from within our congregation and from people outside of our church who heard what were doing. People from all over the community, even those without any connection to our church have given and shown it is a group effort to get all of us through this.

No one person or organization can say we’ve done it all because it’s been a city wide and county wide effort to help.

What’s your biggest takeaway from the past year?

We can change, and change quickly if we need to. Churches and other institutions are known for being slow to change, but we needed to change quickly and we did it. This is true of other organizations, institutions and people; they can change to help their community.

Cool Tidbits:

Salida United Methodist Church is always accepting donations for its Samaritan Fund, which provides Safeway gift cards to families in need. Drop a check in the mail to PO Box 945, Salida, 81201 or learn more with a visit to: <http://www.salidaumc.org/>

Interested in volunteering? The Church is in need of volunteers to manage their shower ministry on Mondays and Thursdays. To learn more or volunteer, email office@salidaumc.org

To support the shelter, please visit: <https://www.chaffeecountyhospitalityinc.org/>

Stories of Chaffee County individuals and businesses rising to the challenge abound.

We will be shining a light on those doing extraordinary things for the community throughout the upcoming months. Visit our websites ([Chaffee’s Got Heart](#) or [CCPH](#)) or follow us on [Facebook \(@COVID19ChaffeeCounty\)](#) to see more.

Know a potential candidate, or are you one yourself? Send nomination ideas to: health@chaffeecounty.org.