

## ENR Mountain States web site



Courtesy of Metro CareRing/Rendering by Barker Rinker Seacat Architecture

This view of the new Hunger Relief Center is from the northwest, looking toward the entry at East 18th Avenue and Downing Street.

## GH Phipps Will Build New Metro CareRing Hunger Relief Center

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GH Phipps Construction Cos., Greenwood Village, will build a new Hunger Relief Center for Metro CareRing, which is based in Denver but serves the seven-county metro area.

GH Phipps is intent on helping Metro CareRing as it works toward a new home that can accommodate the growing number of people in metro Denver who need help. This is part of Phipps's commitment to community philanthropy, a key component of the company's culture that continues as Phipps marks its 60th anniversary this year.

Metro CareRing, founded in 1974, operates out of a 1950s era building that is deteriorating and not configured to serve the organization's diverse programs and growing clientele. Between one-on-one counseling, receiving and storing shipments of fresh food, operating a free "market," and improvising classroom space, Metro Care Ring is bursting at the seams.

The small staff and 160 volunteers have seen a four-fold increase in clients served since 2007. In 2012, Metro CareRing is on track to provide more than 153,000 critical services—up from the 22,000 people served in 1999, when the organization bought a building that is now falling apart around it.

The group estimates that 24% of the families in Denver are food insecure, and one of four children in Denver is going hungry. Each day the center distributes 5,000 pounds of food—62% of it fresh and 96% of it donated. Selecting fresh food and education are part of Metro CareRing's holistic approach to nutrition, along with help paying utility bills while requiring financial management classes, aid acquiring ID's necessary to secure employment and housing, and job readiness training.

"Why should a child go to bed or to school hungry, today, in Denver, Colorado?" asks Executive Director Lynne Butler. "Yet, the demand has become so great, we have to turn away customers. There are many people for whom the month is just a few days too long." Butler notes that Metro CareRing is not a food pantry. "We have a free shopping market, supportive services, and training opportunities to assist participants on their journey toward self-sufficiency."

This intense activity combining education and philanthropy has prompted Metro CareRing to take a bold step: raise \$5.5 million to fund construction of a new 15,000-sq-ft Hunger Relief Center in the heart of Denver. So far, Metro CareRing has raised more than 60% of the funds it needs for construction.

The new center, designed by Denver's Barker Rinker Seacat Architecture, will be built on the existing site at East 18th Avenue and Downing Street. During construction, Metro CareRing will move its operation to a location farther north on Downing that keeps it on major bus lines serving every neighborhood.

The new building will provide adequate space for a host of services: a free shopping market, wrap-around health/benefits and case management for self-sufficiency, warehouse and loading dock, food preparation area, nutrition education center, classrooms, gardens, and recycling and composting facilities. Sustainable strategies and practices will conserve water and energy, with the potential for a photovoltaic system. Parking spaces will more than triple.