

# The Pueblo Chieftain

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## NEWS

# Puebloans hand out 10,000 pounds of food, clean up downtown on MLK Day



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Volunteers throughout Pueblo honored the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. Monday by giving food to those in need, picking up trash and preparing garden beds for a large community garden.

Rocky Mountain Service, Employment & Redevelopment/Jobs for Progress, located at 330 Lake Ave., hosted a food distribution with volunteers from multiple partnering organizations including the local chapter of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Servicios de la Raza, the Project Protect Promotora Network, the Eastside Action Support Team, GlobalEd Solutions and the city of Pueblo.

**Martin Luther King Jr. Drive:** Pueblo coalition wants to honor MLK by renaming Pueblo Boulevard in his honor

NAACP Pueblo and the city also hosted a volunteer clean up of downtown following the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day "CommUnity March." The march drew community members of all ages and backgrounds — including students from both Pueblo school districts and Colorado State University Pueblo athletes, said Roxana Mack, NAACP Pueblo president. About 40 volunteers stayed after the march to pick up trash.

"It was just a wonderful time of unifying and being together for one cause," Mack said.

Starting at 10 a.m. Monday, about 60 volunteers at the RMSER event stuffed "food bags" with cans of tuna, granola bars, cups of fruit, oranges, water bottles, soup cans, crackers and toothbrushes. More than 500 food bags — each weighing about 20 pounds — were assembled in two hours.

"Ultimately, when you work together, you get a lot further than you would siloed," said Brandi Adakai, director of the RMSER Empowerment Center.

Volunteers spent the afternoon handing out food to individuals in need, including those experiencing homelessness. Food bags were distributed in Downtown Pueblo near El Pueblo History Museum, to the Pueblo Rescue Mission, in the Bessemer neighborhood and on the East Side. Additional food bags will be distributed at the RMSEF Food Pantry, open on Wednesdays and Fridays from 4-6 p.m.

In addition to distributing food throughout Pueblo, RMSEF volunteers prepared growing beds for the Community Garden Sustainability Project's new garden space located near the corner of Pitkin and Madison avenues.

The clean-up event began around 1:45 p.m. Volunteers picked up litter around the Pueblo Ice Arena, Pueblo Transit Center, El Pueblo History Museum and Central Plaza. While volunteers didn't quite fill an entire dumpster, Downtown property owners took notice of the clean-up and expressed gratitude, Pueblo Public Works Director Andrew Hayes said.

**MLK Day of Service:** Annual MLK Day march and service opportunities planned for Monday in Pueblo

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is the only federal holiday designated as a "National Day of Service," according to AmeriCorps.

"We all can make a difference in the betterment of the whole community," Mack said. "It's about inclusiveness and being able to participate."

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