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'It takes a village to take care of a community:' Nonprofit helps provide resources to homeless



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homeless people in the state, many of whom can't get the resources they need on a daily basis.

It's why Lu Funk created a nonprofit that brings the resources to them.

"In 2021, I lost a really dear friend...who was living in the encampments in Bisbee." said Funk, executive director of Cochise Harm Reduction.

Cochise Harm Reduction (CHR) serves about 250 people a week. Wednesday is its busiest day because they serve about 80 people.

The CHR team uses a van to take supplies and meals to those who need them most, like Odel Stewart's mother, who's has Stage 4 lung cancer.

"It's less stressful for my mother (and) I don't have to track them down," Stewart said

The nonprofit started in Bisbee and has grown to serve people in 16 zip codes across Cochise County, including: Benson, Sierra Vista, Bisbee, Douglas and Wilcox.

"I was not expecting this (growth)," Funk said. "When I got into it, it was about supporting a few people in the community that I care about."

Three times a week, the team delivers food, hygiene supplies, camping gear, first aid kits and more to people who have contacted them and asked for help.

"At least when you see their truck you know you'll get a meal," Katrina Callaway said.

On a recent delivery run, CHR gave out more than 100 meals. Funk said food is the first thing to run out in the truck, but the rise in food costs has affected how many meals they can provide.

"What they give to people is actually so much more...they also put in their hearts," Callaway said.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration says 26% of homeless people in the U.S. abuse drugs, which is why CHR hands out NARCAN, needles and drug testing kits.

"Instead of pretending drug use doesn't exist or pretending injection drug use doesn't exist, harm reduction is we're going to provide these services and these supplies to you to stay safe, because want you to stay alive," Funk said.

Last year, CHR engaged in over 6,100 harm reduction services and are on track to surpass that this year. Funk says the growth they've had shows the need for mobile resource units.

"Part of me is outraged that people don't have more (access)," Funk said. "That they feel that me and CHR are all they have. It shouldn't really be that way.

"It takes a village to take care of a community."

Alexis Ramanjulu is [a reporter in Cochise County for KGUN 9](#). She began her journalism career reporting for the Herald/Review in Sierra Vista, which she also calls home. Share your story ideas with Alexis by emailing alexis.ramanjulu@kgun9.com or by connecting on [Facebook](#).