

MY

Who faces hunger in Arizona?

STORY



Dennis Stewart
McNeal, Arizona

My wife and I were missionaries. We first came to Arizona to work on the Navajo Nation's communication system, working on transmitters. Our work later took us to Navojoa in Sonora, Mexico. That's when my wife got sick. She told me that she thought she had broken her back. I found a doctor who was able to give her pain medications so that we could make the 14-hour drive back to Tucson.

When we arrived at the Tucson Medical Center, my wife's pain was overwhelming. Sure enough, she had two broken vertebrae. But her condition was much worse than we ever imagined. She was diagnosed with cancer.

We eventually settled in McNeal, a small community of about 250 people in Cochise County. My wife has since passed. We had a good life—adopted eight children through the years, with a 17-year-old son still at home. My 23-year-old recently left home to live in Douglas, in a group home. He has Down syndrome, and is working at a job he loves.

I applied for SNAP two months ago. After my son moved to Douglas, our household income dropped, because we weren't getting his social security disability anymore. We get \$24 a month in SNAP; it's a great benefit to our family. Although there are no grocery stores around, we can use it at the gas station or the dollar store. When I have enough gas, we can drive into Douglas for groceries. I also get a food box, maybe once a month when I need it.

I wish I could get a job, but at 70 years old, it's hard to find anything. We make do with what we have though, and we're grateful.