

# MY

Who faces hunger in Arizona?

# STORY

I came to Tucson about a year ago from Las Vegas. I'm 23, and I've moved around a lot since I graduated high school. I lived in Utah for a while, to help take care of my grandparents.



**Isaac Reyes**  
Tucson, Arizona

Moving around, I struggled to get enough to eat. I often had to ask friends and family for help. Then I applied for SNAP, so I didn't have to depend on others. I didn't have stable housing and SNAP helped me to become independent. SNAP also helped me to get on track with paying my bills and making sure that I had money for transportation, so I could work.

I heard about *Caridad* through my sister.\* She thought I would be a great candidate, so I applied and was accepted. I like that I get to help feed seniors, homeless people, and others in need. I was very recently in their place, and it's a blessing to be able to help. Also, preparing food for senior citizens reminds me of my own grandparents, and the care they might need someday.

The *Caridad* program makes me feel good about myself. I'm really trying to do something with my life, and the program helps me learn new skills. I also get to meet so many new people. The people who've succeeded and come back to work here full-time, I really look up to them. When I graduate from *Caridad*, I want to work in the restaurant industry at a higher level than just entry.

I use the skills I've learned here to cook healthy meals at home. And to shop better, so I can stretch my SNAP benefits (\$192 a month) farther—paying attention to net weights and the value of off-brand products.

\* *Caridad Community Kitchen* is a 12-week culinary training program at the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona in Tucson. It is a SNAP Employment and Training service provider.