

MY

Who faces hunger in Arizona?

STORY

For most of my life, I worked in the restaurant business. My family owned restaurants. In 2000, we moved to Arizona and started a cleaning and landscaping business in Prescott. Everything was going well until last year, when I got sick. I was on complete bed rest for nearly ten months. I didn't have insurance, and we paid \$8,000 out-of-pocket for medical expenses.

We lost everything, and I'm no longer with my husband. I ended up in a shelter, where they immediately enrolled me in SNAP. I receive \$197 in SNAP each month, which is plenty for me. They don't provide meals at the shelter, but I store the food I purchase with SNAP in the community refrigerator.

I want people to know that just because you are in a shelter doesn't mean you don't have expenses. I pay \$3 a night to stay here, and fortunately I have a car so I also pay gas and insurance. I have been using money I saved up and was able to pay for a whole month at the shelter. But today, I have less than a dollar to my name.

I recently broke my arm, and at 54 years old, that really hurt! I'll be in a cast for about two months. If SNAP work requirements got stricter, right now, I don't know what I would do. I've been taking classes for peer support training, and I also volunteer here at the Coalition for Compassion & Justice (CCJ).

I am not too worried about food insecurity because there are a lot of sites that offer hot meals each day in Prescott. I do feel blessed. Being at CCJ has brought me peace. I'm free of a troubled relationship where I was being emotionally abused, and I'm starting a new life.



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