

MY

Who faces hunger in Arizona?

STORY

I grew up in New Jersey. I've lived in Arizona for fourteen years though, most of them in the Verde Valley area. Today, I live in Cornville with my three children who are twelve, nine, and one.

Most of the people I know on SNAP are hardworking people. In my opinion, they're food insecure because there are few jobs with a living wage in our community. Also rent is high, and the availability of affordable housing is scarce, especially as more and more people use their rental homes for tourism. It's hard to make ends meet. My partner and I stagger our bills, just to make sure we get through the month. We've paid half the rent so far and will pay the rest soon.

My son has special needs, and it's important for me to be home with him. So, for now, I'm a stay-at-home mom. Eventually I will go back to work. That's my goal, at least.

I had to figure out a way to make sure my family had enough to eat, and I thank God for SNAP. I have food allergies and so do my kids, so we can't eat dairy, wheat, and other things; if we do, we'll get sick. So SNAP allows us to purchase the right foods for us. These foods are often expensive and not available in a food box. We would be living on beans and vegetables if we had to rely only on food boxes.

I never imagined this situation when I was younger. I didn't ever consider that I would have children and be on SNAP. Who imagines that? It just happens.



Nicole Karluk
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