

Sarah Flower:

It's been several years in the making, but Manna Durango has a lot to celebrate. At yesterday's ribbon-cutting ceremony, dozens came out to see Manna's newly renovated garden event pavilion and to check out their latest resource center. To see this vision come to light is overwhelming for executive director of Manna Ann Morse.

Ann Morse:

"Definitely getting emotional because it's been a lot of hard work for Manna staff, the board, the community to get here. But just to see our participants come through that door every day and receive services and take those next steps to their goals and self-sufficiency just makes it worthwhile every day."

Sarah Flower:

The upgraded garden is covered with microgreens, squash, lettuce, and several other vegetables that will eventually be utilized in the kitchen to create meals for healthy grab-and-go options. In March of last year, Manna opened their resource center, community kitchen, and food market. The resource center does so much more than just help with food insecurity. Marissa Hunt is the deputy director of Manna and says she saw a great need for other resources for the clients she works with, including the need for Togo meals, showers, prescription medication and Snap assistance, and other services like bus tokens, laundry vouchers, and computer access. She says since opening the resource center, they have served over 2100 people.

Marissa Hunt

"And while Manna always has always will focus on food, it's been really incredible to be able to add so many supportive services to the lineup of what we're able to offer. We can help people with housing, employment, transportation, and really all of the foundational pieces that lead you to even attain those things."

Sarah Flower:

In addition to their backpack and culinary program, Moore says Manna serves nearly 7000 meals a month and donates hundreds of thousands of pounds of food annually. Reporting for KSUT Tribal Radio, I'm Sarah Flower.