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9 News

International students stuck in Aspen with no income

Three students were laid off earlier this year, leaving them without an income and stuck in quarantine together.

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ASPEN, Colo. — International students in Colorado are stuck without an income or a way back home. They are finding help and hope in a faith-based non-profit.

Ajay Kumar Panigrahy, Ekant Anil Punde and Amit Wani didn't know each other before they came to Colorado for an internship at an Aspen hotel.

All three graduated with a hospitality degree and were supposed to be working here until December 2020, but COVID-19 changed those plans.

They were laid off earlier this year, leaving them without an income and stuck in quarantine together. The hotel is helping provide a place to stay but Sewa International, a Hindu faith-based organization, is helping with meals and travel arrangements back home.

Atul Saini, Colorado Lead for Sewa International, has been helping more international students with housing, food and arranging their travel back home.

"We are enjoying helping the people," he said. Aside from helping international students, Sewa International has donated more than 300,000 masks and 4,000 meals per week.

The Sewa team has more than 2,500 volunteers and working with 80+ organizations.

"We are talking to the people to just cool down, stay calm, be positive, don't worry too much," said Saini.

That's their biggest message – to stay positive – that this too shall pass and we all can get back to enjoying our beautiful state again.

"Now we're waiting for this storm to pass because we have many other things on our list to go over here or go over there," said Kumar Panigrahy.