



*DMARC President Chuck Kuba cuts the ribbon at the Grand Opening on June 10. Photo by William J. Gentsch.*

## **DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY WELCOMES DMARC TO NEW HOME**

BY LUKE ELZINGA, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

The Des Moines Area Religious Council's new home was abuzz with activity. Guests streamed through the door at 1435 Mulberry Street. For DMARC and the greater Des Moines community, a momentous day had finally arrived.

The Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was held on June 10 at 4:00 p.m. Remarks were made by city and county officials, corporate partners, board members and others before cutting the ribbon to the new facility at 1435 Mulberry Street in downtown Des Moines.

"Let's all support this effort," said Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie, "and let's continue to do everything we can to help those who can least help themselves."

Andrew Allen from The Principal Financial Group and Shane Zimmerman from Wells Fargo Bank expressed their enthusiasm of support and welcomed DMARC as neighbors in the downtown community.

Following remarks, Executive Director Sarai Rice dedicated the facility to people of all faiths in greater Des Moines, those served in DMARC food pantries, and to partners who made the 1435 Mulberry Capital Campaign possible.

"We believe that our closest people are the people we eat with," said Rice, "And we are committed to making Des Moines be the community- the place in this country- where everybody eats together."

The ribbon was cut by DMARC's President, Chuck Kuba. DMARC was presented with a membership plaque to the Des Moines Downtown Chamber.

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## BIG NEWS FOR DMARC FOOD PANTRY CONSUMERS

BY REV. SARAI SCHNUCKER RICE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On September 29, DMARC will once again provide five days of food to pantry clients! As many of you will remember, the amount of food supplied to food pantry families was reduced to a three-day supply in late 2011. We were able to add back one day of food in late 2012 and will finally return to pre-recession levels this fall.

As we add more food to the food boxes, we are adding foods that we know our clients want rather than simply adding another day of all-of-the-servings-of-all-of-the-kinds-of-food-on-the-USDA's-My-Plate. The additional food will still be healthy, but will include frozen meat (chicken, beef, or venison), snack items such as nuts, popcorn, and raisins, an additional fresh vegetable, and more rice or pasta.

We're also happy to report that six of our twelve food pantries are now "choice" pantries, which means that, within our healthy food categories, families can pick the kinds of fruits, vegetables, starches, and other items that they prefer. So far, we've discovered that families still choose canned green beans and corn, do not like canned carrots, and do like canned spinach! We've also discovered that families value being able to choose what they receive- Bidwell Riverside, our biggest pantry, reports that families will wait in line for up to an hour to choose their own food rather than being handed immediately the typical pre-choice box of food.



Rev. Sarai Schnucker Rice  
Executive Director



### A NOTE REGARDING SNAP

One of our Red Barrel grocery stores recently shared with us a list of the foods most frequently purchased using SNAP benefits. The top items on the list were milk, meat (chicken drumsticks/wings and ground beef), and bananas. Of the top 100 items, 47 were meat/fish of some kind, 15 were fruits and vegetables, and 12 were dairy or egg products. Only 12 items were either soda or snack items.

**“FAMILIES WILL WAIT IN LINE FOR UP TO AN HOUR  
TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN FOOD.”**

- SARAI RICE

## **DMARC FOOD PANTRIES RESPOND TO GROWING NEED**

### **Pantries Face 20% Increase in Use Since November**

*BY KRISTINE FRAKES, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR*

Over the past nine months, DMARC food pantries have experienced extraordinary growth in client usage. Since cuts to federal SNAP benefits last November, the number of participants is up nearly 20%, and consumers are accessing the food pantry system about 5.5 times per year compared to 3.5 visits previously.

Yet, even for DMARC and our many collaborative partners who work day in and day out to ensure that everyone in our community has enough nutritious food, it can be difficult to grasp the enormity of the task. The following examples help illustrate the scale of hunger across Polk County.

#### **Imagine 114 school buses lined end-to-end, each filled with 50 students.**

Then consider that the buses represent over 5,700 children and youth assisted through the DMARC Food Pantry Network *each month*.

#### **Did you recently catch a show at The Civic Center?**

Sadly, even with 2,700+ seats, The Des Moines Civic Center would not have capacity for everyone who receives emergency food through DMARC pantries *each week*.

#### **Have you attended a ball game at The Principal Park when it was filled to capacity?**

If so, it may be hard to believe that the 11,500-seat stadium would not hold all Polk County residents who need help in meeting their basic food needs *each month*.

#### **Were you on hand for a Menace Soccer Club home game this summer?**

Does it make sense that the team's 8,000-seat home field would need to be four times bigger to hold the 36,000 non-duplicated individuals who receive help through DMARC *each year*?

As you pause to reflect on these staggering figures, be assured that no matter the level of need, the DMARC Food Pantry Network will continue to work diligently to provide emergency food for hundreds of our neighbors each day.

We thank you for your ongoing commitment and support!



## CHOICE OPTIONS AT BIDWELL RIVERSIDE

BY LUKE ELZINGA

Bidwell Riverside Center's food pantry re-opened its doors on May 5, after making renovations to become a choice pantry. The transition allows clients to choose their food items each month, making trips to the pantry more enjoyable and cutting waste.

"People seem much happier with this system," said Anne Bacon, Executive Director of Bidwell Riverside Center. "Sometimes they'll come in and see people waiting and feel overwhelmed, but by the time they leave, they're smiling and happy and glad."

Bidwell's choice pantry model is a high touch approach. Receiving food from the pantry is now a three step process.

First, clients wait to meet with an intake staff member. Upon arrival, they are added to a virtual queue until their name is called. Once called, they meet with an intake staff member and then wait for a volunteer guide.

The volunteer guides them through the choice pantry, showing them how many products of each type they are eligible to receive, providing suggestions, and retrieving items that are refrigerated or frozen. Volunteers help bring the completed food boxes out to the clients' vehicles, and they're on their way.

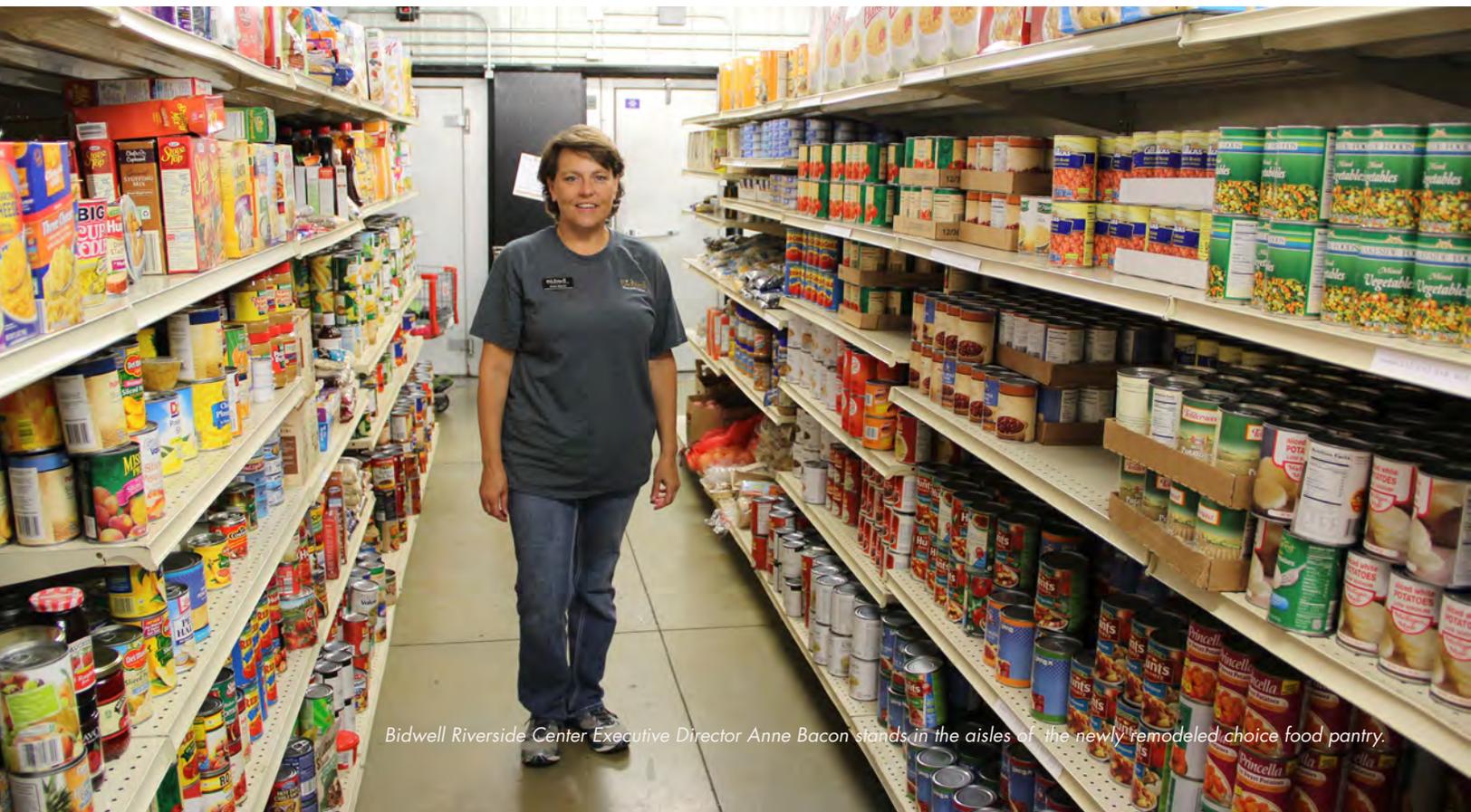
Bidwell Riverside Center's food pantry is the largest of 12 pantries in DMARC's Food Pantry Network, in terms of the volume of people served.

"We've seen an increase [in the number of clients served] every month since 2009," said Bacon. "From 2008 to 2013, we've doubled the number of people we've served."

The biggest obstacle in the transition to a choice pantry model? Space.

"Everyone thought we wouldn't have enough space, and we ended up with even more space [than before]," said Bacon. "It's been remarkable. You can feel the reduction in anxiety of the clients and staff, because you don't have everyone on top of each other."

The choice food pantry has an open, inviting aura to it. For the residents of Des Moines that Bidwell Riverside Center serves, it provides dignity and hope in their struggle with hunger.



Bidwell Riverside Center Executive Director Anne Bacon stands in the aisles of the newly remodeled choice food pantry.



*Business Administrator Bob Webb III and Church Secretary Dorothy Sheley in front of Corinthian Baptist Church, located on 814 School Street in Des Moines.*

## THE FRIENDLY CHURCH ON THE HILL

BY LUKE ELZINGA

Corinthian Baptist Church is known as “The Friendly Church on the Hill,” and there’s little wonder why. With over 40 different ministries, Corinthian Baptist Church is alive with outreach and compassion toward its community.

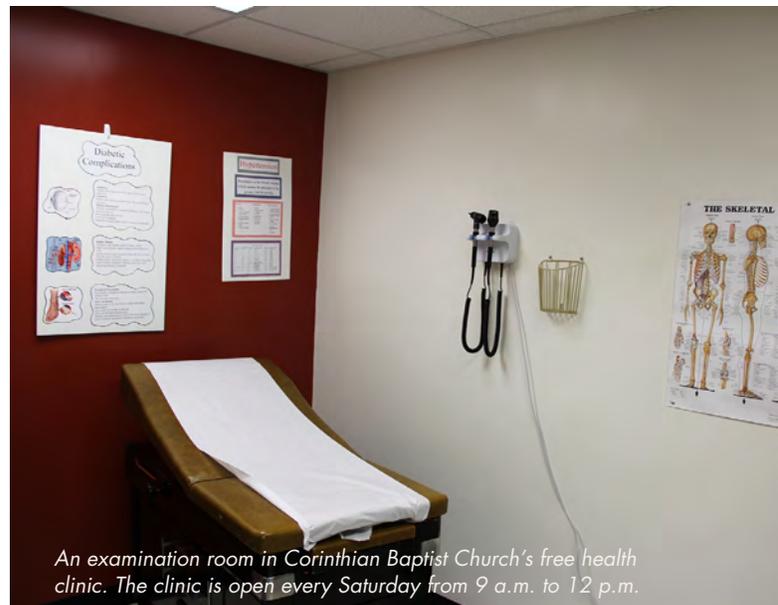
Established as Des Moines’ very first Baptist congregation in 1898, Corinthian Baptist Church has always strived toward ministries that impact their congregation, community and world. They have certainly adhered to this vision. The full list of their ministries is too long to list here in its entirety. Perhaps some of their most impactful programs are their prison ministry, young adult ministry (YAM) and health ministry, which provides a free health clinic.

The free health clinic is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. It’s staffed by volunteer doctors and nurses, many of them interns at Methodist and Mercy Hospitals. The clinic offers illness and minor injury care, physical examinations, chronic disease management, and a variety of medical tests.

“It’s just like you’re going to the doctor’s office,” said Church Secretary and Deaconess Dorothy Sheley. After seeing the clinic, one would have to agree with her. It’s easy to forget you’re in the middle of a church while at the health clinic, which was recently renovated with the help of a grant.

Despite its huge successes, the church has seen challenges too. In 2012, then-pastor Reverend Michael C. Burton passed away unexpectedly at the age of 41. The congregation still grieves this loss, but is determined to press forward.

After searching for over a year and a half, Rev. Jonathan Whitfield was called to Corinthian Baptist Church, and will be installed this August. If this congregation’s future is anything like its past, expect great things from them.



*An examination room in Corinthian Baptist Church’s free health clinic. The clinic is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### DMARC'S MISSION:

Religious Communities Working Together  
to Meet Basic Human Needs.

### STAFF:

#### REV. SARAI SCHNUCKER RICE,

Executive Director

#### AUBREY ALVAREZ, MPA

DANIEL BECK

JOE DOLACK

LUKE ELZINGA

KRISTINE FRAKES, CFRE

LINDA GOBBERDIEL, RD, LD

PAM LARSON

DREW ROBERTSON

JOHN E. ROBINSON

LINDA VANDER HART

REBECCA WHITLOW

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## DMARC AT THE IOWA CUBS

Only two more chances remain to get free admission into Iowa Cubs games! Bring three food items to the DMARC booth at the stadium to receive one general admission ticket. The Iowa Cubs home games will be played on August 17 and 31.



## HY-VEE COLOSSAL COOKIE SALE

Hy-Vee will once again be holding its Colossal Cookie Sale this year from September 9-22. Last year, Hy-Vee stores in the Des Moines area sold 552,617 cookies to benefit DMARC. Since the Colossal Cookie Sale began in 2003, Hy-Vee has sold over 8.5 million cookies and has donated over \$85,000 in food products to the DMARC Food Pantry Network. We thank Hy-Vee for this partnership and hope 2014's Colossal Cookie Sale is the most successful one yet!

## FARMERS MARKET ACTIVITIES

DMARC will be at the Des Moines Downtown Farmers' Market the third Saturday of each month at the Meals from the Market booth. On August 16, September 20, and October 18, join us for activities the whole family can enjoy.

## 4TH ANNUAL DAVID BEAR LECTURE



The Des Moines Area Religious Council is excited to announce its speaker for the 4th Annual David Bear Memorial Interfaith Lecture Series.

Rabbi Gershom Sizomu is the leader of the Abayudaya Jews of Uganda. The Abayudaya's tribal name means "people of Judah," and are a growing community of over 2,000 Jews in Eastern Uganda. Rabbi Sizomu is the first black rabbi from sub-Saharan Africa to be ordained at an American rabbinic school.

The 4th Annual David Bear Lecture will be held on Tuesday, November 11 at Tifereth Israel Synagogue. Stay up to date with DMARC for more details as the event approaches.

## **DMARC HOUSING STABILITY FUND**

### **A Coordinated Service Model for Homelessness Prevention in Polk County**

*BY KRISTINE FRAKES, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR*

Bonnie\* is a widowed 67 year-old who was on a waiting list for permanent supportive housing in Des Moines for six months when she was notified that a unit was available. Bonnie was thrilled! She shared the news with her daughter, with whom she had lived since losing her husband last year.

But, when Bonnie’s final credit report came back showing past-due utility bills in her name, she learned she would not qualify for the unit until the debt was paid.

Bonnie was beside herself, as her dream of self-sufficiency began to fade.

Fortunately, Bonnie was referred to the DMARC Housing Stability Fund. Formerly known as Compassion in Action, the DMARC HSF is a coordinated services model launched in cooperation with Polk County - Community, Family & Youth Services in August 2013 that provides short-term homelessness prevention assistance.

By responding with the level and type of assistance Bonnie needed, DMARC helped ensure that Bonnie can live independently in permanent housing and receive supportive services well into the future.

Thank you to the generous donors who support the DMARC Housing Stability Fund! To learn more, visit [www.dmreligious.org/Pages/Housing-Stability-Fund.aspx](http://www.dmreligious.org/Pages/Housing-Stability-Fund.aspx).

\*Name has been changed to ensure confidentiality.

## **BY THE NUMBERS**

TOTAL DIRECT ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

**\$114,000**

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS ASSISTED\*

**938**

AVERAGE ASSISTANCE PER HOUSEHOLD

**\$346**

*\*Total individuals assisted from August 2013-May 2014.*



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**Des Moines Area Religious Council**

1435 Mulberry Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

515.277.6969  
[dmreligious.org](http://dmreligious.org)

Warehouse: 515.282.2026  
Fax: 515.274.8389  
Email: [info@dmreligious.org](mailto:info@dmreligious.org)

 **Des Moines Area Religious Council**  
 **@dmreligious**

## DMARC HONORED WITH GENEROUS BEQUEST GIFT

In 2000, Vera B. Bacon was awarded the Des Moines Area Religious Council Interfaith Service Award for her service to DMARC and the greater community.

On the sad occasion of Vera's passing in early 2014, family and friends recalled Vera's many kindnesses, compassion and intellect, as well as her tenacity and generosity.

Shortly thereafter, DMARC learned that Vera had provided for an unexpected and generous bequest gift that was ultimately designated to help stock the new Food Pantry Network warehouse, and to support the Housing Stability Fund.

DMARC is deeply grateful for Vera's wisdom and generosity that continue to make a difference for families in need.

To request more information about establishing a bequest gift, contact Kristine Frakes, Development Director, at [kfrakes@dmreligious.org](mailto:kfrakes@dmreligious.org).



*Vera B. Bacon was a long-time DMARC food pantry warehouse volunteer and a resident advocate for care for the elderly.*

THE VOICE

