1435 Mulberry Campaign Positions DMARC to Respond to Growing Needs

By Kristine Frakes, Development Director

Tuesdays with Tommy

For 8-year-old “Tommy”*, Tuesdays are special. It’s not because he looks forward to a regular play date. It’s not soccer practice. It’s not spending time with his grandmother.

No. Each Tuesday afternoon, Tommy eagerly escorts his mother to retrieve out-dated meat items from the dumpster behind the grocery store a few blocks from home. In the cramped, sparsely furnished apartment that Tommy shares with his mom and two brothers, Tuesday is the one evening of the week when the family meal nearly always includes meat.

Hands down – for Tommy’s family, Tuesdays are best.

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Since January 2014, the number of families using the DMARC Food Pantry Network has grown by 15%. Currently, emergency food assistance is provided for 4,300 families each month.
Campaign Positions DMARC

DMARC Responds
While the DMARC Food Pantry Network continues to grow, we know there are too many families like Tommy’s with limited means and mobility or transportation barriers who find it difficult to visit a food pantry.

We understand that the cost of fresh meat, dairy, and produce items are increasingly out of reach for many low-income households, even those who receive food assistance benefits.

So, over the coming months, the Des Moines Area Religious Council will continue to focus on service priorities to provide more food for more families like Tommy’s.

* The child’s age and name have been changed to ensure confidentiality.

Save the Date: DMARC’s Grand Opening

The Des Moines Area Religious Council will be holding its ribbon cutting ceremony and grand opening of the new facility at 1435 Mulberry Street on June 10, at 4:00 p.m. Watch for more details on this event to be announced soon.

Key DMARC strategies for 2014 include:

- **Provide More Meals** (distribute 25% more food)
- **Assist More People** (16,500 families compared to 15,000)
- **Serve in More Places** (add 3 new pantry sites)

DMARC is on track to achieve these improved outcomes with virtually the same resources. This is due to increased storage in the new 6,000 square foot warehouse and capacity to receive palletized deliveries, owning vs. leasing, and more efficient and mechanized operations that were not possible in DMARC’s previous site.

How You Can Help
We recognize that the support of the community and our many partners, volunteers, and donors remains critical to DMARC’s efforts to respond to the continued high need for food assistance. Please consider how your congregation or group can participate:

- **Help DMARC identify potential partners for 3 new pantry sites** (contact Becky at rwhitlow@dmreligious.org).
- **Sponsor a food or fund drive to fill the shelves of the Food Pantry Network warehouse** (contact John at jrobinson@dmreligious.org).
- **Volunteer at the warehouse** (contact Daniel at dbeck@dmreligious.org).
- **Provide a donation to the 1435 Mulberry Campaign or other program** (www.dmreligious.org/donate).

Thank you for your continued support!
Mapping Food Resources Online

Eat Greater Des Moines has interactive online maps and directories available to connect you with your food system. Visitors to eatgreaterdesmoines.org can enter their location to find the closest local community gardens, farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) pick-up locations, farm stands and free meal sites. Users can even search for specific produce to connect with local farms that grow the produce, as well as farm stands that sell it.

If you represent a farm, school, community or faith-based garden, farm stand, or CSA program, make sure your information is on eatgreaterdesmoines.org and up to date. If it isn’t, you can visit the site to create a profile and join the network of food resources Eat Greater Des Moines provides.

Feinstein and Woods Grant Updates

Thank You DMARC friends, family and donors who gave so generously to the Douglas M. Woods Hunger Challenge and Feinstein Challenge this year!

In March alone, individuals, congregations, groups and businesses provided over 300 cash and in-kind challenge gifts totaling $53,153. These donations are helping DMARC stock the new food pantry warehouse and leverage matching funds for food.

We are very grateful for your continued support as we work together to help our neighbors in need.

Final March-April results from each challenge will be posted soon at www.dmreligious.org.

Summer Warehouse Hours

DMARC will be expanding its warehouse hours for the summer. By opening earlier on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as well as an hour on Saturdays, we hope to increase availability for the donation of fresh produce.

Monday and Wednesday: 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM
Tuesday and Thursday: 7:00 AM – 4:30 PM
Friday: 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM
Saturday 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Food for Fun

During every Iowa Cubs Sunday home game this summer, DMARC / Move the Food will be accepting three food items as a donation in exchange for one general admission ticket. Dates of the Sunday home games are listed below. Visit our website to find which food items are in the greatest demand to ensure your donation has maximum impact.

May – 11, 18
June – 8, 22
July – 13, 27
August – 17, 31

Volunteer opportunities are still available for those interested in helping to collect food items during the Iowa Cubs games.

If you would like more information on volunteering, please contact Daniel Beck at dbeck@dmreligious.org or (515) 282-2026.

Volunteers Needed

Volunteer opportunities are available this summer with DMARC’s stand at the Des Moines Art Festival. The annual festival of arts and culture will be held June 27-29. For information on volunteering, contact John Robinson at 515-282-2026 or jrobinson@dmreligious.org.
Visit DMARC at the Des Moines Downtown Farmers’ Market

DMARC will be hosting special events at the Des Moines Downtown Farmers’ Market this summer on the third Saturday of each month.

Join us for our first event, Container Gardening with David Hance, on May 17. Mr. Hance will be demonstrating how to start a container garden at both 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. He will show examples, give tips, provide resources, and answer questions.

The event, and all future DMARC events at the Farmers’ Market, will be held at the Meals from the Market stand at 2nd and Court Ave.

Watch in future e-newsletters and alerts on Facebook and Twitter for other upcoming summer events.

On June 15, 2013, David Hance from Hope from the Hungry gave a presentation on raised container gardens.