

GARDEN DONATIONS PROVIDE HEALTHY FOOD

BY LUKE ELZINGA, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Vincent Heller helps harvest zucchini during last year's Plant a Mile event at Rinehart's Family Farm. Rinehart's donated 6,000 pounds of sweet corn, zucchini, tomatoes and onions to the DMARC Food Pantry Network. Photo by Luke Elzinga/DMARC.

Did you know your own back yard could serve as a powerful resource to feed your neighbors in Greater Des Moines?

DMARC partners with personal, community, corporate and faith gardens to provide fresh produce throughout our Food Pantry Network. Together, we aim to ensure access to healthy and nutritious food for everyone living in Greater Des Moines.

“Donations of garden produce allow families to experience fresh, healthy food items that they may otherwise not have available in their diets,” said DMARC Food Pantry Network Director Rebecca Whitlow.

Last year, almost 25,000 pounds of fresh produce were donated to the DMARC Food Pantry Network by local gardeners. We have a goal of distributing 30,000 pounds of locally grown produce this year, and we need your help!

Are you planning on tending a garden this year?

Consider planting an extra row to donate to the DMARC Food Pantry Network. Keep in mind when donating garden produce that food should not be donated at its peak ripeness and a few days are needed for distribution.

Produce donations can be dropped off at our Food Pantry Network Warehouse, 1435 Mulberry Street in Des Moines. If you need to arrange a drop-off outside our regular hours, contact the warehouse at 515-282-2026. **Thank you!**

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Photo by Luke Elzinga/DMARC.

AN EXCITING YEAR AHEAD

BY TOM FISCHER, PRESIDENT

It is a great honor for me to take over as President of the Des Moines Area Religious Council. I've had the privilege of serving on the Board of Directors since 2010 and working with very dedicated staff and board members. DMARC has had great support from our community of donors that has allowed us to make a significant difference in the lives of so many in the greater Des Moines area.

The past year or so has been a very exciting time to be a part of DMARC. Over that time, DMARC purchased and renovated a new office and warehouse that allows DMARC to be more efficient with your donated dollars and stretch them to provide even more meals to our clients. The savings from the new space is estimated to be close to \$250,000 a year. That savings is helping to provide more meals at a time when demand continues to grow. We couldn't have done it without the support of everyone who has contributed to our capital campaign, which has successfully raised over \$1.1 million dollars toward the building, renovation and food. Thank you!

Over the last year, DMARC has gone from serving an average of 42,000 meals a month to 48,700 meals—and the trend continues to show that number is growing. This growth in need is going to be a significant challenge in the year ahead. In addition to facing the challenge of addressing the increased nutritional needs of our clients, DMARC is studying the need for additional food pantries and possibly a mobile food pantry to extend our reach and make it possible for those in the food “deserts” of Greater Des Moines to have access to nutritious food.

DMARC is more than just the Food Pantry Network, though. DMARC continues to work with community leaders and other non-profits to better understand and serve the unmet needs of Greater Des Moines. Whether that is providing support to families who are in danger of losing their homes, helping clients with utilities or providing child care assistance, DMARC is here to help.

This is going to be an exciting and challenging year for DMARC as community needs increase steadily. I'm looking forward to working with the staff and board of DMARC to help make a difference in the lives of those we touch. Thank you very much for your past and future support.

Thomas R. Fischer, Jr.
DMARC President, 2015-2016

DMARC BATTLES HOMELESSNESS, OFFERS HOPE

BY KRISTINE FRAKES, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

DMARC HOUSING STABILITY FUND

Homelessness kills. And sometimes the victim is an innocent child.

In a small Midwest town earlier this year, the coroner ruled that 6 year-old Jamie* died from a chronic gastrointestinal condition. Yet, one of the factors in his death seems to be that recently he had been homeless.

Like thousands of single-parent households, Jamie's family was "doubled-up" with friends. They were living in an unfinished basement when the family was reported as homeless and he was removed from his mother's care.

Jamie was soon placed with family members who knew of his health condition and given the medication to keep it under control.

But, during a visit with his mother just weeks before he died, Jamie was whimpering and holding his tummy. He had not been given his medicine and he was in pain. Mom quickly got the prescription filled and stressed to the child's caregivers the urgency of managing his condition.

On the day this young boy died, he was found unresponsive on the bathroom floor of his temporary home. Autopsy findings suggest that he suffered unbearable pain, and that his death was directly related to not receiving the medicine he needed for his chronic condition.



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Could this tragedy have been prevented if Jamie's family had not been "doubled up"? Would he have survived if there was room at a family shelter for Jamie and his mother? What if the family were able to stay in their own apartment?

More than a roof and shelter, a reliable place to call home offers the stability needed to hold a job, go to school, or care for a sick child. Yet, we know safe, affordable housing is a challenge for as many as 40 percent of DMARC participants.

With support from a generous community, and in cooperation with Polk County Community, Family and Youth Services, the DMARC Housing Stability Fund provides emergency rent and utility assistance to prevent families from becoming homeless.

Of course, the need is great and requests for assistance always exceed the funds available.

How can you help? Your recurring gift of \$10 *each month* can keep a child in their home. A *weekly* donation of \$6.65 can help stabilize a family. It is quite possible that your gift may also save a life.

Thank You for Your Support!

**Name and age have been changed to ensure privacy*

Learn more about hidden homelessness in Polk County:

dmarcunited.org/hidden-homelessness



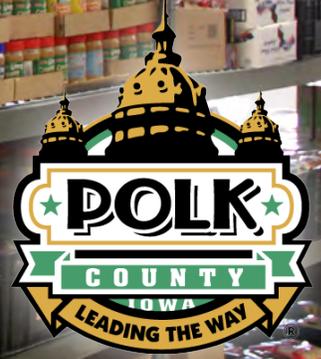
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Mommy works hard to take care of me...

Girls and boys experiencing homelessness are sick four times more often than other children.

People in homelessness have a mortality rate three to four times that of the general population.

On average, just \$123 helps keep an individual stably housed. For a family, the amount is just \$346.



POLK COUNTY PARTNERS WITH DMARC TO MEET EMERGENCY FOOD NEEDS

BY LUKE ELZINGA, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

“DMARC has identified this neighborhood as needing a food pantry. Would the County consider partnering with us to open a site here?”

That question, posed by DMARC Development Director Kristine Frakes to Doug Stodgel, Program Administrator with Polk County Department of Community, Family & Youth Services, eventually led to the opening of Polk County River Place Food Pantry. The pantry is located at 2309 Euclid Ave. in Des Moines, in the Polk County River Place building.

“For the past couple of years, the County has been an incredible partner in our Housing Stability work, and coordinated services have been instrumental to this success,” said DMARC Development Director Kristine Frakes.

Polk County River Place Food Pantry opened their doors on Monday, March 9, 2015. In the month of March, the pantry served almost 500 families. The amount of people seeking assistance at Polk County River Place Food Pantry continues to rise steadily, and it is quickly becoming one of the most heavily used partner pantries in the DMARC Food Pantry Network.

A large portion of the first month’s pantry traffic was referred there by the General Assistance Program and Commodity Supplemental Foods, two other programs that are also administered by Polk County Community, Family & Youth Services and housed at Polk County River Place.

“Polk County River Place Food Pantry fits in well with our mission,” said Stodgel, who administers the pantry site. “We serve a lot of individuals and families in need of assistance.”

“Ultimately, the goal of both agencies is to more efficiently and effectively respond to families in crisis,” said Frakes. “We are very grateful to Polk County Supervisors who support this collaboration. We are especially thankful for the caring front-line staff and administrators who are stepping up every day to make life a little better for families in Polk County.”

Polk County River Place Food Pantry has more open hours per week than any other location in the DMARC Food Pantry Network. The pantry is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. More hours means more accessibility for clients who are trying to work around a busy schedule.

“Polk County River Place Food Pantry is a wonderful addition to the DMARC Food Pantry Network with its convenient location and extended hours,” said DMARC Food Pantry Network Director Rebecca Whitlow.

With the expanded hours and access provided by Polk County River Place Food Pantry, the Epworth Center for Social Ministry (CSM) Food Pantry, just down Euclid Avenue from River Place and only open 5.5 hours per week, began sending their clients to Polk County River Place Food Pantry, and closed the food pantry doors at the end of March.

DMARC would like to thank the Center for Social Ministry and Epworth United Methodist Church for their outstanding years of service in the DMARC Food Pantry Network!

Many volunteers from Epworth CSM Food Pantry have continued to volunteer their time with Polk County River Place Food Pantry.

Although it has only been open for less than two months, Polk County River Place Food Pantry has already become the fourth largest pantry in the DMARC Food Pantry Network in terms of food provided and families served.

“The volunteers who came from Epworth got me through the first month,” said Program Aide Kelly Travé, “they definitely deserve a hats off. I rely on the volunteers, I really do. They’re very giving, wonderful people who just want to be of service.”

The addition of Polk County River Place Food Pantry comes at a time when the need for food assistance continues to increase in Greater Des Moines. For some individuals, a DMARC partner pantry may be the only place they can find the food they need to fill their family’s stomachs.

“People that can’t get food from other places, or their SNAP benefits are only \$16 a month, or they are over income guidelines, we are able to provide food for them here,” said Travé. “I’ve had people so relieved to get the food that they were in tears.”

In the future, Polk County River Place Food Pantry plans to work with Ethnic Minorities of Burma Advocacy and Resource Center (EMBARC) to offer special pantry hours and food items for the Burmese refugee community.

“We were aware that there was a great need for food assistance in that area of the community, but never anticipated we would serve so many people so rapidly,” said Whitlow. “It has led to an additional strain on the Food Pantry Network warehouse and our inventory with the increased need for food.”

DMARC was well aware that Polk County River Place Food Pantry would assist an under-served area of the community, but unfortunately it isn’t the only one in Des Moines. We will continue to seek and pursue areas in Greater Des Moines which have unmet food assistance needs in our goal to make sure everyone in Des Moines has something to eat.

Doug Stodgel and Kelly Travé work with the Polk County River Place Food Pantry. Photo by Luke Elzinga/DMARC.



EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

DMARC'S MISSION:

Religious Communities Working Together
to Meet Basic Human Needs.

STAFF:

REV. SARAI SCHNUCKER RICE,

Executive Director

DANIEL BECK

JOE DOLACK

LUKE ELZINGA

KRISTINE FRAKES, CFRE

ANNIE FULLAS

PAM LARSON

DREW ROBERTSON

JOHN E. ROBINSON

LINDA VANDER HART

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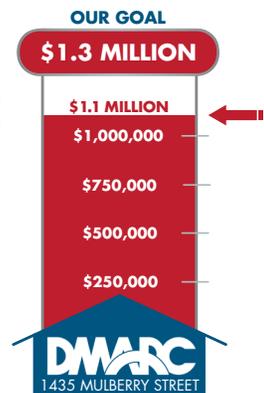
DMARC SUMMER HOURS:

Monday - Thursday: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

We are grateful for the generosity of donors who have committed \$1,154,714. Learn more about the capital campaign or make an online donation at dmarcunited.org/campaign, or contact Kristine Frakes at kfrakes@dmarcunited.org or 515-277-6969.



IOWA CUBS SUNDAY HOME GAMES

At every Iowa Cubs Sunday home game this summer, DMARC will be accepting three food items as a donation in exchange for one general admission ticket. Fans can also pay \$5 to upgrade to a Grand Stand seat.

Find a full list of the Iowa Cubs Sunday Home Games on our community calendar, located online at dmarcunited.org/events.

We are still in need of a few volunteers to assist gathering donations at Iowa Cubs Sunday home game. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Daniel Beck, dbeck@dmarcunited.org or 515-282-2026.

MEALS FROM THE MARKET

Each Saturday morning during the summer, the Meals from the Market program collects produce donations from vendors at the Des Moines Downtown Farmers' Market.

DMARC is currently seeking volunteers to collect produce donations during the Downtown Farmer's Market. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Daniel Beck, dbeck@dmarcunited.org or 515-282-2026.



David Bear

MEMORIAL INTERFAITH LECTURE SERIES



YAAKOV ARIEL

SAVE THE DATE: DAVID BEAR LECTURE

The 5th Annual David Bear Memorial Interfaith Lecture Series will be held on October 13, 2015. Joining us this year will be Yaakov Ariel, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Dr. Ariel is the author of *An Unusual Relationship: Evangelical Christians and Jews*.

Help sustain interfaith engagement with a contribution to the David Bear Memorial Interfaith Lecture Series!

Donate online at dmarcunited.org/donate, or contact Kristine Frakes for more information: 515-277-6969 or kfrakes@dmarcunited.org.

HAPPY 25TH BIRTHDAY, RED BARREL PROGRAM!

A HISTORY OF THE RED BARREL PROGRAM

BY JOHN ROBINSON, RED BARREL/FOOD DRIVE COORDINATOR

Although DMARC's first food pantry initiative began in 1976, it wasn't until 1982 that the Food Pantry became a full-scale department of the Des Moines Area Religious Council. Many local Kiwanis club members joined with concerned faith communities to keep the pantry operating efficiently during its rapid early growth.

In 1986, it was evident that distributing food from temporary locations was not adequate to meet the need. Duke Holst, Will Dubes, Merle Campbell, and other area Kiwanis leaders convinced the club members in Division 11 of the urgent need for a permanent facility. The Kiwanis Clubs came through with \$30,000 to build a warehouse behind DMARC's headquarters at 3816 36th Street north of Douglas in Des Moines.

1990 saw the start of the Red Barrel Program. Will Dubes of the Northwest Kiwanis Club introduced the idea after seeing a similar initiative being done by the Houston Food Bank. Its purpose was to give Des Moines area residents the opportunity to donate food at supermarkets, as well as their congregations. The program officially began with an opening ceremony on April 18, 1990 at 10:00 a.m. Along with "Stop Hunger in Our City" signs, barrels were placed in 40 Dahl's, Hy-Vee, Super Valu, Food 4 Less, Food Saver, Save U-More, Easters and Fareway Stores. Donations were collected by members of the 12 local Kiwanis clubs and transported to the DMARC pantry for sorting and distribution.

Since then, the program has changed quite a bit. About 25 Hy-Vee, Price Chopper, Cash Saver, and Fareway Stores continue to host the Red Barrels at their sites. Kiwanis clubs participate in the collection of items, including the Downtown, Urbandale, Johnston, Golden K, West Des Moines, Northwest and Ankeny clubs. Other volunteers have joined the ranks as well, including Link Associates, a community-based nonprofit organization that aids individuals with intellectual disabilities.

What hasn't changed is the community need for food assistance. Over 100,000 food items are collected through the program each year. Learn more about how you can get involved in hosting a food drive or volunteering for a Sack Saturday event on our website, or contact John Robinson at jrobinson@dmarcunited.org or 515-277-6969.



YOU'RE INVITED!

RED BARREL PROGRAM



DMARC invites volunteers and partners to help celebrate the 25th Birthday of the Red Barrel Program! Join us on Thursday, May 14, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., to celebrate the success of the Red Barrel Program and show our appreciation for all our volunteers. Brief remarks will be made at 5:15 p.m. The event will be held at DMARC, 1435 Mulberry Street in downtown Des Moines.



Food, beverages and a birthday cake for the event are all being donated by local Hy-Vee stores. **Thank you, Hy-Vee!**

Planning to attend? Please RSVP to Luke Elzinga, lelzinga@dmarcunited.org or 515-277-6969.

2,460,579

TOTAL FOOD ITEMS COLLECTED SINCE 1990



UNITED TO MEET THE NEED

Non-Profit Organization
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Permit No. 2934

Des Moines Area Religious Council

1435 Mulberry Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

515.277.6969
dmarcunited.org

Warehouse: 515.282.2026
Fax: 515.274.8389
Email: info@dmarcunited.org

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

FY 2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT NOW ONLINE



An annual report for fiscal year 2013-2014 is now available online with program overviews, accomplishments, financials and a full honor roll of donors.

dmarcunited.org/annual-report

THE VOICE



UNITED TO MEET THE NEED