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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

BY LUKE ELZINGA, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

One of the most valuable things a student can bring with them to school is a full stomach.

Studies have shown that missing meals and experiencing hunger can harm a child's development and school performance. Hunger can affect a student's cognition, attention-span, and their ability to learn. Undernourished children are also more likely to get sick and miss school.

We also know, however, that a good breakfast and a diet of plenty of fruits and vegetables can have a positive impact on a student's academic performance.

Last year, DMARC provided food for 15,000 children in Greater Des Moines who did not have enough to eat. Their families received nutritionally-balanced food from a local food pantry. Our vision is to not just fill stomachs, but nourish them as well.

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HOPES AND DREAMS

BY REV. SARAI SCHNUCKER RICE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For some of us, the start of a new year is no big deal – just the next new day. For others, it's the time each year when we resolve to do better (and sometimes succeed.) For a few of us, it's also a time to think about our hopes and dreams. I have several hopes and dreams for this year, and as I thought about them, I realized that they all have to do with bringing people and things closer together.

- I hope that 2016 will be a year when DMARC congregations and supporters renew their commitment to bringing faith traditions closer together. We've become complacent about the hard work involved in religious diversity, but now religious

intolerance is being preached and practiced everywhere. We need to work on reaching out to the people of other faith traditions who are literally on our doorstep.

- I hope that 2016 will be a year when those of us who never have to worry about our next meal come closer to understanding the circumstances of our neighbors who have to worry all the time. "We" tend to think that "they" just make bad decisions. We need to listen more closely to the circumstances of their lives.

- I hope that 2016 will be the "Year of the Mobile Pantry," DMARC's next step in bringing food closer to all the people who need it. We know that our current pantries are not close enough to everyone who needs food, especially on Des Moines' far south side, east side, and northeast. We're working with Polk County to equip a truck and trailer, and in the next few months we hope to identify partners in underserved areas who will let us set up in their parking lots on a regular basis to reach people not currently being served.

- And, of course, I hope that 2016 will be a year when our resources come closer to meeting the needs of our neighbors. Even though people can get food at our pantries every day, the monthly box of balanced, healthy food is currently only enough for all the servings of all the kinds of food on the USDA's My Plate for every member of the family for three days. We want to get back to four days of food or even the original, pre-recession five days of food, but it will take more resources to do so.

Most of us are very "beak-down" about getting through each day. But occasionally it's good to lift our heads and name our dreams.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarai Schnucker Rice". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Sarai Schnucker Rice
Executive Director

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The consequence of hunger is not limited to poor academic performance. It is also tied to behavioral issues at school. Children from hungry households are seven times as likely to get in a fight, and twelve times as likely to steal as their peers who do not face hunger.

For the past five years, DMARC has partnered with Des Moines Public Schools' Casady Alternative Center and Scavo Alternative Middle School to establish a school food pantry for some of our community's most at-risk students.

Students there may receive healthy snack items from the DMARC pantry on a regular basis. We also provide food that is sent home on Fridays, Thanksgiving dinners, and healthy snacks that are distributed during standardized testing.

Iowa has a proud history of educational excellence. That point of pride is threatened when so many of our schools' children do not have the energy and focus required of them.

We are not in this fight alone. Countless individuals, congregations, businesses and organizations have partnered with DMARC to help make childhood hunger in Polk County a thing of the past.

If the ladder out of poverty is education, hunger is a broken rung. Let's fix it, together.

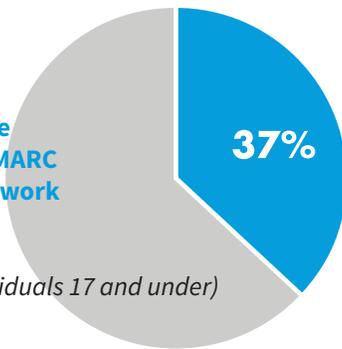
To learn how your gifts can have even more impact in March and April, read about the 2016 Douglas M. Woods Challenge Hunger effort on page 7.

CHILDHOOD HUNGER IN OUR COMMUNITY

VISUAL BREAKDOWN

37% of all people served by the DMARC Food Pantry Network are children.

(includes all individuals 17 and under)



One in five children in America experiences hunger.



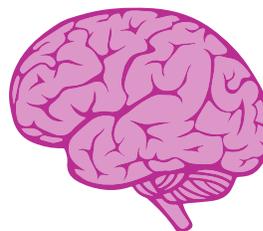
Two-thirds of Des Moines Public School District elementary schools offer **free breakfast and lunch to all students.**

15,552

children were served by the DMARC Food Pantry Network in 2015.



Over 5,000 children age 5 and under were served by the DMARC Food Pantry Network in 2015.



90% of a child's brain develops in the **first five years of life.**

Hungry students show poorer **focus**, more **behavioral issues**, and lower **academic performance** than their peers who get enough to eat.

HUNGRY CHILDREN CANNOT WAIT...

Since 1976, volunteers, supporters, and community organizations have been at the core of DMARC's emergency food efforts. Read on to hear from board members and pantry partners about the difference you continue to make in the lives of countless families each year.

Robert D. Shaw, M.D., DMARC Board Member and DMARC Foundation Past President

DMARC brings together our entire community to put food into the hands of hungry people. The DMARC pantries provide food that is nutritionally healthy. Food is distributed in a systematic, non-judgmental way. No one receives all that they need but all receive a portion.

Hungry children in our community cannot wait for us to address the basic components of poverty - housing, jobs, and a living wage for their parents. DMARC addresses their most immediate need for food. This is why I contribute to DMARC and commit to encourage others to do the same.



Susie Tierney, DMARC Board Member and Past President

All of my involvement with DMARC is rooted in a desire to ensure that people in our community do not have to go hungry or without basic human necessities. With the support of a caring community, DMARC models local collaboration done well to meet basic human needs.

I consider it a privilege to be connected with so many passionate DMARC supporters and volunteers doing work that is absolutely crucial to the well-being of our community.

Jody Mead, DMARC Vice President

“To whom much is given much is expected.”

I got involved with DMARC because I have been so blessed and we are meant to share those blessings. Sharing my time, talent and treasure with DMARC helps ensure those who are struggling to feed their families have a place to turn to for help. DMARC is dedicated to helping anyone in need. I'm proud to be part of this organization, filled with so many who give willingly of themselves for the benefit of others with only kindness and love in their heart.





If you are willing to share why you support DMARC, simply visit our Facebook page at facebook.com/DesMoinesARC and post a comment to “Why I Support DMARC...”

Kelly Travé, Program Aid, Polk County River Place Food Pantry

When families receive food, I see a sense of relief in their faces. They are grateful and appreciative. Sometimes they are so filled with emotion they cry or hug volunteers.

Without the food pantry they most certainly would go hungry. [The DMARC Food Pantry Network] is a much needed service in the community. I get to see how much it really makes a difference, first hand.



THANK YOU, ONE AND ALL, FOR YOUR GENEROUS COMPASSION AND COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE!



Robert (Rob) W. Nye, DMARC Treasurer

I appreciate the religious foundation of DMARC. I enjoy people of various faiths coming together to help people in need, and seeing belief exercised in the action of love.

Life can be very hard. When I spend time in the homes of families without the necessary resources to meet the challenges of life, my heart is filled with compassion. These folks need support, not judgment. I appreciate DMARC for providing the opportunity to help our many neighbors who do not have sufficient food, and am grateful to be of service.

Eileen Boggess, Executive Director, Urbandale Food Pantry

When [we] opened in 2008, many people didn't believe there was a need for a food pantry in Urbandale. Yet, the suburbs were among the areas hit hardest by the recession. In the past year, over four hundred families utilized our pantry each month.

Even in these tough economic times, our pantry has been able to help feed every person who entered our doors the past seven years. I am so grateful for each and every person who gives their time, talent, and financial support to make sure DMARC pantries can continue to reach out with dignity and compassion to our neighbors in need.



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

PAM LARSON

DREW ROBERTSON

JOHN E. ROBINSON

LINDA VANDER HART

REBECCA WHITLOW

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SUSIE TIERNEY

LEANNE VALENTINE

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PEANUT BUTTER LOVER'S DAY AT HY-VEE

March 1 is National Peanut Butter Lover's Day, and Hy-Vee and Skippy are teaming up to support the DMARC Food Pantry Network. From February 28 to March 3, for every three pounds of Skippy peanut butter sold at Des Moines area Hy-Vee stores, the team will donate a pound of peanut butter to the Food Pantry Network. Thank you, Hy-Vee and Skippy, for your continued support through this promotion!

SPRING DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

The DMARC spring delegate assembly will be held on Tuesday, March 15 at 7:00 p.m. at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 1025 28th Street in West Des Moines. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Linda Vander Hart, lvanderhart@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 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.



HARVEST SERVICE A HUGE SUCCESS

The Harvest Service 2015 was held on Sunday, October 25, 2015, at Union Park United Methodist Church. Singers from the We Got Male and We Got Female choirs performed, along with other group and solo musical acts. In all, \$13,402 was raised, with all of the money going directly to food for the DMARC Food Pantry Network!

DMARC would like to thank Jennifer Shide, all musicians, Union Park United Methodist Church, and the countless donors and others who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make the Harvest Service 2015 such a success.

2016 Douglas M. Woods

\$10,000 CHALLENGE HUNGER GIFT

March 1 - April 30, 2016

Increase Your Gift of Hope and Help by 50%



THE GOAL: 50,000 Nutritious Meals for Polk County Families

For the fourth year, DMARC supporter and philanthropist Douglas M. Woods has committed to provide 50 cents for every dollar donated to the DMARC Food Pantry Network for food, up to the first \$20,000 in donations. As part of this springtime Challenge, your \$10 becomes \$15, \$50 equals \$75, and so on. **During the “Challenge Hunger” offer, your \$10 gift will help provide 25 emergency meals!**

We are so grateful for Doug’s renewed generosity, and for the incredible outpouring of support from the community during past Challenge Hunger campaigns.

How Can You Help?

Organize a fund drive with family, faith friends or co-workers in early March or April. For tips and guidelines, download How to Host a Fund Drive and a Challenge Hunger flyer to post from the DMARC website.

How to Submit a Gift

- Write the phrase “Challenge Hunger” on your check or donation card and mail your gift to: DMARC, 1435 Mulberry Street, Des Moines, IA 50309.
- Donate on the secure DMARC website at www.dmarcunited.org/donate/donate/donate-online and choose “Challenge Hunger” from the ‘Donation Allocation’ drop-down menu.
- Scan the QR code at the bottom of this page.

For more information, contact info@dmarcunited.org.

Read Doug’s inspirational story online at: www.dmarcunited.org/205/03/challenge-hunger/.

We rely on the Challenge to help boost awareness that Hunger is a year-round issue for the 15,000 central Iowans who visit DMARC pantries each month.

dmarcunited.org/donate

Be sure to select “Challenge Hunger” for your donation allocation!



Thank You for Your Generous Support!



UNITED TO MEET THE NEED

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**

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THE VOICE



SPRING
into
ACTION

APRIL 10-17, 2016

Join us for a week of hunger action! **Spring into Action** aims to increase awareness that hunger is a year-round issue, as well as raise food and funds for the DMARC Food Pantry Network! For a full schedule of events that week, visit dmarcunited.org/spring-into-action/.

Want to get your organization or business involved? Contact DMARC Red Barrel/Food Drive Coordinator John Robinson at jrobinson@dmarcunited.org or 515-277-6969 x18.



UNITED TO MEET THE NEED