



MY DAY WITH THE DMARC MOBILE FOOD PANTRY

GUEST EDITORIAL AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY BRIANNA DRESSEL, DRAKE UNIVERSITY STUDENT

Ida is 64 years old and works at Bidwell Riverside Center in Des Moines. What those who utilize Bidwell's food pantry may not realize is that Ida relies on food assistance, too.

Her dad died when she was just 15 years old, so she worked three jobs. Ida assumed that eventually when she retired she would be set for the rest of her life. She was not expecting to lose her job at age 62 and suffer great losses to her Social Security.

Ida was unable to find steady work after that and lost her home. Despite the fact that she is a self-diagnosed penny pincher and has low-rent housing opportunities and SNAP assistance available to her, she is unable to make ends meet.

"I can't make it as a senior," Ida says reluctantly, "trying to get a job at 62 years old... people just don't want to pay for experience."



Who should we blame for Ida being in this position? Should we stand by and watch her go hungry because she should have worked harder? Or, should we blame the government for not covering Ida's living expenses?

No matter who or what you personally believe is the root cause of Ida's suffering, there still remains the undeniable fact that she is hungry.

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DMARC STAFF AND SUPPORTERS GET CREATIVE WITH THEIR IDEAS

BY REV. SARAI SCHNUCKER RICE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sometimes it seems as if all the Food Pantry Network does is hand out beans and rice and peanut butter and fresh produce, day after day after day!

But today I want to share with you some really creative ideas from staff and supporters!



Kathy Olah, a DMARC supporter for many years, created a game about the Des Moines area – Double Take: Des Moines – that was distributed through retailers around town this Christmas. It's a classic matching game like the old Concentration TV show that I can remember from my childhood, but with pictures of Des Moines landmarks. As a result of game sales, DMARC receives \$2 for every copy sold.

DMARC's Development Team has created coin banks in the shape of both a DMARC semi-truck and mini Red Barrel for kids of all ages to assemble and fill with loose change! Collecting change for DMARC is a perfect way for young children to get involved in food pantry work, so let us know if you want a DMARC change truck or Red Barrel!



DMARC recently won the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines' Ignite Community Innovation Challenge for our Food Pantry 2.0 concept. Key elements of the reimagined pantry include:

- incentivizing healthier food choices by assigning point values to our foods and providing more food if clients make healthier choices
- Using an EBT-style card to keep track of clients' food choices so that they can pick up their food in smaller amounts more frequently than once a month

Do you have a creative idea or two for how we can make everyone's DMARC experience more exciting and rewarding? We would love to get your input!



Sarai Schnucker Rice

Rev. Sarai Schnucker Rice
Executive Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS TRANSITIONS

DMARC would like to thank the following individuals for completing their second three-year commitment of service to our Board of Directors: Tom Fischer, Linda Harvey, Robert W. Nye, Dennis Roupe and Robert D. Shaw, M.D.

DMARC would also like to welcome incoming board members Doug Fick of The Principal Financial Group and Tom Chapman of the Iowa Catholic Conference.

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Obviously, Ida is not the only one in need of direct, immediate food assistance. In fact, 1 in 6 people in America face food insecurity. The USDA defines food insecurity as lack of access, at times, to enough food for all members of a household. 15.8 million households in America were food insecure in 2015.

In 2014, the bus line that allowed many clients to reach Bidwell Riverside Center, a DMARC partner pantry located on the south side of Des Moines, was shut down. Where were the people who were marginalized by this closure supposed to go? They were still hungry. There was food available. There was just no way for them to get to the available food.



Identifying this issue, DMARC began plans for a mobile food pantry that would travel between different sites to be more accessible to people in need.

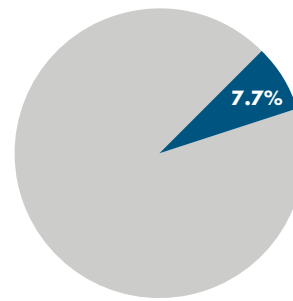
In July of 2016, with the help of the Polk County Board of Supervisors and the Partnership for a Hunger-Free Polk County, the DMARC Mobile Food Pantry began operation.

One of the stops of the Mobile Food Pantry is the South Suburban YMCA on Army Post Road. I accompanied Joe Dolack, the Mobile Food Pantry Manager, on his trip to this stop to get the experience of “A Day in the Life of the Mobile Food Pantry.” This is how I met Ida.

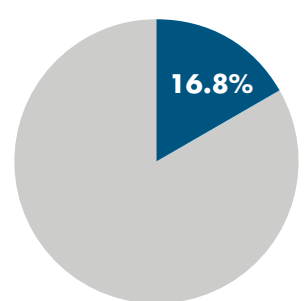
Reflecting on my day with Joe, I realized a couple of things.

One thing that stuck out to me was that many of the visitors to the Mobile Food Pantry I saw that day were elderly. I asked a couple of the clients if this was their experience every time they used the pantry. They agreed, saying that many of the people who they had seen utilize the Mobile Food Pantry at this stop are elderly.

FOOD PANTRY NETWORK

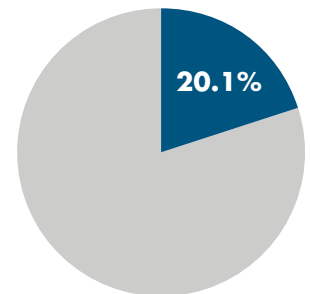


SOUTH SUBURBAN YMCA



The DMARC Mobile Food Pantry serves 2-3 times the amount of seniors than the 12 area food pantries that comprise the DMARC Food Pantry Network.

ALL MOBILE SITES



Seniors (65+)

All others (<65)

When I asked a client how they had found out about the food assistance DMARC offers, they responded that they would not have known anything about it if their friend had not told them. Funding is necessary to address issues of lack of publicity/awareness.

In order to purchase more food, and therefore, feed more people, DMARC depends on the generosity of donors. Put your money somewhere it will make a difference now. Your donation can be the difference between Ida withering or flourishing.

Brianna Dressel is a freshman student at Drake University studying Psychology and Sociology. She hopes to one day enter the field of Social Work. Brianna is passionate about helping people, photography and travelling the world.



Brianna is a member of Drake University's Engaged Citizen Corps, an intentionally designed curriculum and service-learning internship experience for entering first year students that exposes members to issues of social justice while providing them hands on experience to impact the Des Moines community.



A SPECTRUM OF FAITH

Religions of the World in America's Heartland

STORY BY LUKE ELZINGA

PHOTOS BY BOB BLANCHARD

This April, the Drake Community Press will publish a book highlighting 15 religious communities of the greater Des Moines area, *A Spectrum of Faith: Religions of the World in America's Heartland*. The book is the result of a years-long collaboration between Drake Community Press, The Comparison Project, photographer Bob Blanchard, and the Des Moines Area Religious Council.

The project all started with an October 2014 op-ed in the Des Moines Register by Drake University Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion and director of The Comparison Project Timothy Knepper. A 30-foot statue of the bodhisattva of compassion, Quan Am (pictured above), was being dedicated at the Vietnamese Buddhist temple Tu Vien Hong Duc, and Knepper wanted to spread the word to residents of Des Moines.

One reader of the op-ed was Bob Blanchard, an urban planner, photographer and recent arrival to the Des Moines area. Blanchard attended the dedication ceremony, taking three hours' worth of photos. Afterward, he followed up with Prof. Knepper to share the photographs.

"I had always wanted to write a book about religion in Des Moines, but didn't have enough words to fill the pages," said Knepper. "Bob reached out to me asking for introductions to other religious communities he could photograph. I said, let's do better. Let's write a book."

Soon, the two began gathering photographs and stories from other religious communities in the area.

When Carol Spaulding-Kruse, director of Drake Community Press, caught wind of the book project, it seemed like a natural fit for the press' community focus.

"I run a Writing Internship program at Drake, and The Comparison Project had applied for an intern," said Spaulding-Kruse. "In conversation I had with Torina Gedler, the intern, she described the work she was doing for The Comparison Project, and the idea began to dawn on all of us, gradually that semester, that Tim's writing project might be suitable for Drake Community Press. When I finally approached Tim and Bob about the possibility, they had already been thinking of getting in touch with us!"



Drake Community Press is a two-year curriculum-based publishing laboratory that partners with Iowa organizations that have a compelling story to tell in order to promote positive interaction and community betterment. Drake Community Press provides students with hands-on experience in book editing, design and production with a cross-disciplinary and collaborative focus.

Dozens of Drake University students have been involved in the book project over multiple semesters, working as researchers, editors, documentarians, designers, and event organizers. Students who authored book chapters on religious communities spent time embedded with the communities they wrote about.

Working alongside the students through the entire process was Blanchard, who cherished the hospitality and acceptance of the faith communities he photographed.



“When I first moved to Des Moines, finding out how truly diverse we are as a community was totally unexpected,” said Blanchard. “My hope is that the book shows not only the local community, but a larger audience, how welcoming Iowa is to those from other cultures and instills a sense of pride in our diversity.”

The final product of this collaboration is *A Spectrum of Faith: Religions of the World in America’s Heartland*. The book will be released on April 6, 2017.

The proceeds of the book sales will benefit the Des Moines Area Religious Council and our mission of working together to meet basic human needs in Greater Des Moines.

A Spectrum of Faith is now available for pre-order at dmarcunited.org/book. The price of the book is \$30, with an additional \$5 charge for shipping and processing.



SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 6-8, 2017



The second annual Iowa Interfaith Exchange will be held this year from Thursday, April 6 to Saturday, April 8. The event will begin with a book launch for *A Spectrum of Faith* on Thursday evening, followed by a two-day interfaith conference featuring Eboo Patel and Interfaith Youth Core.

www.iowainterfaithexchange.org



EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



DMARC'S MISSION:

Working Together to Meet
Basic Human Needs.

STAFF:

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Executive Director

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DON CRAWFORD, JR.

JOE DOLACK

LUKE ELZINGA

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DREW ROBERTSON

JOHN E. ROBINSON

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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 26 to March 4, 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!

DISCOVERING CHARITABLE TREASURES

DMARC, Immanuel United Methodist Church, and the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines are coming together for a presentation on planned giving, *Discovering Charitable Treasures: Supporting our work for generations to come*, to be held on Sunday, February 26, from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. in the Faith Hall at Immanuel United Methodist Church, 2900 49th Street, Des Moines, IA 50310.

Join us for an educational presentation by our friends from the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines to learn more about how proper planning and inspiring generosity can come together to achieve a common goal.

This short presentation will be followed by a question and answer session to provide you with a general overview of planned giving and how you might consider incorporating this strategy into your personal philanthropic goals.

Please RSVP to Katie Dawson, katied@IUMC.org.

SPRING DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

The DMARC spring delegate assembly will be held on Tuesday, March 14 at 7:00 p.m. 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 games. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Daniel Beck, dbeck@dmarcunited.org or 515-282-2026 x15.



WILL I OR WON'T I?

BY MIKE SCHNEIDER, DONOR DEVELOPMENT & OUTREACH STRATEGIST

"I won't." Believe it or not, this is the most common response by Americans to the question "Will I prepare a will?" According to a 2015 Rocket Lawyer estate-planning survey by Harris Poll, 64% of Americans don't have a will, and the number one reason they don't have a will is because they haven't gotten around to it.

I procrastinate with the best of them, and until the birth of our first child, I was one of the 64%. But a life-changing event like the birth of a child gets one to thinking— and that's certainly what it did for my wife and I. Setting about making a will jumped to the top of our to-do list.

Thanks to a dear friend who is a lawyer by trade, and now with a will in hand, we felt some comfort that certain protections were in place for child number one, and we let loose with a collective sigh of relief. Said sigh was short lived as blessing number two entered the picture 22 months later. With him came some unexpected challenges, or more appropriately put, opportunities!

Fast-forward 19 years and we are uber-proud parents of two amazing young men, the youngest with "undiagnosed special needs." During these past two decades we have been introduced to special needs trusts (also known as supplemental needs trusts), POAs (power of attorney) and legal guardianship...of our own child! Who knew? Not us, until we carefully stepped through the very necessary process of creating wills so that both of our children would be protected upon our inevitable passing.

I would like to encourage each of you who might be reading these words to either revisit the will and/or estate plan that you have in place to ensure they're current given your life circumstances OR begin the process to create a plan that will offer you peace and comfort as it did for my family.



To learn more about how to get started please consult with your family lawyer, financial planner, or accountant.

For some quick reference material visit the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines' website at desmoinesfoundation.myplannedgift.org/wills-and-living-trusts/.



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

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

DES MOINES, IOWA

Permit No. 2934

THE VOICE



UNITED TO MEET THE NEED



DOUGLAS M. WOODS
**CHALLENGE
HUNGER**
C A M P A I G N

MARCH 1 - APRIL 30, 2017

Since 2013, the Douglas M. Woods Challenge Hunger Campaign has been matching gifts to the DMARC Food Pantry Network 50 cents to the dollar, thanks to benefactor and retired West Des Moines police officer Doug Woods.

Now in its fifth year, the Douglas M. Woods Challenge Hunger Campaign offers \$10,000 of matching funds and has raised over \$200,000 to date for DMARC.

This March and April, your gift has extra impact. During the Challenge, a \$10 gift will help DMARC provide 25 meals! Donate online at dmarcunited.org/donate and select 'Challenge Hunger' from the drop down selection, or mail your check, with 'Challenge Hunger' in the memo line, to the DMARC office.

dmarcunited.org/donate