



GETTING PREPARED FOR GARDEN PRODUCE

Outside, trees are blooming and the temperature is rising. Spring is in the air. Inside the DMARC warehouse, we are getting prepared for produce season. We've created a list of three best practices to help you as you gather the produce you've grown to donate to DMARC.

Always harvest your produce before peak ripeness—we'll need at least 24 hours to get it out into a food pantry.

Properly clean and package your garden produce when it makes sense to do so—it saves our warehouse staff time.

Be sure you yourself would eat the food you're donating—blemishes are okay, produce ripe past usefulness is not.

Thank you to all the community gardens, corporate giving gardens, faith gardens and home gardens that donate to the DMARC Food Pantry Network. Your donations of healthy fresh fruits and vegetables are greatly appreciated.

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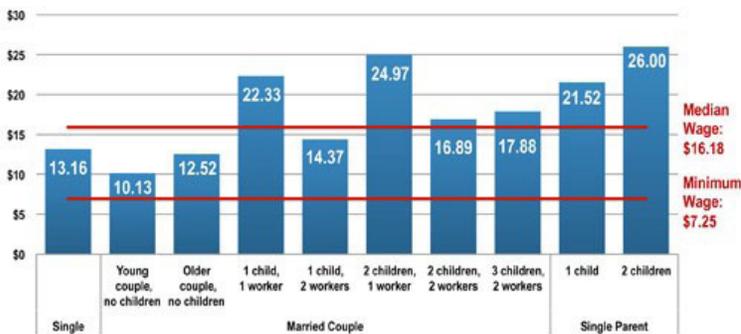
OUR NUMBERS TELL A STORY

BY JODY MEAD, PRESIDENT

I love numbers! Maybe that's why I work in banking. Beyond the facts they convey, numbers tell us a story. They show us what's going well and what needs to improve. Numbers make us ask why. And numbers demand a solution!

DMARC's numbers have been telling us a story about growing need in our community. Despite the low unemployment rate and soaring stock market, families are coming to DMARC for assistance in record numbers. Why? The unemployment rate only tells part of the story. It doesn't tell the story of the families who are working jobs below a living wage. The stock market rallies don't tell the story of families who spend their entire income on rent and utilities. It doesn't tell the story of the elderly woman next door who is living off of social security and can't make it to the end of the month before running out of money.

The Iowa Policy Project has great information on how much it really costs to live and thrive in Iowa. Just take a look at one of their graphs below. For me it was shocking to see how much income you need in Iowa just to meet basic living expenses – this doesn't include any emergency savings or money for extras (such as student loans or car payments).



The solution isn't simple. But the board and staff at DMARC are committed to ending hunger in our community. And the only way we can do that is by partnering with you and others in our community to make that happen. We need your support to continue meeting the growing needs of the people we serve through our Food Pantry Network!



Growth can come in a lot of ways. I'd ask you to consider how you can help us meet the growing need.

- Financial support (back to the numbers again). Increased financial support helps us increase the number of pantries in our network and increase the amount of food we're able to give families.
- Consider starting a garden to help supply fresh produce to families in need.
- Donate some time to a pantry or our warehouse to help sort food.
- Do you or someone you know own a business? How could DMARC partner with that organization to bring more awareness to hunger issues?
- Advocate and educate your legislators, city council, friends and family on issues relating to hunger.

On behalf of the board and staff at DMARC, I thank you for your continued support! Together, we can help meet the growing need in our community and ensure that no one goes hungry.

Jody Mead, *President*

SERVICE TRULY IS A GIFT

BY JOHN WHALIN, INTERIM DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

I joined the DMARC Board of Directors several years ago after learning about how DMARC was alleviating hunger and improving the health of our community. DMARC seeks to fight hunger with healthy food, whenever possible, to ensure those living in food insecurity have the best possible health outcomes and a chance to care for themselves and their families effectively.

Serving on the board allowed me to get to know leaders from across the Des Moines area business and faith communities and to better understand the problem of food insecurity. Most valuable of all, it provided me with an initial vehicle to participate in alleviating hunger in the greater Des Moines area.

Recently, I began working with DMARC in a new capacity. DMARC had a need after an employee left to pursue another opportunity, and I had a need after being laid-off from my job. I changed roles from a board governance position to Interim Development Director. I am still new to the role, but what a blessing it has been to see things from this side of the organization's effort.

I was in the for-profit business world for over two decades with different companies across the country. This experience allowed me to see how multiple organizations operate and relate to their customers, how their employees were engaged in those efforts as well as a range leadership strategies and cultures.

At DMARC I have found the leadership to be organized, intelligent and purposeful, highly experienced and effective and the employees to be bright, dedicated, highly engaged problem solvers with a sense of purpose that comes through in their enthusiasm and drive to help the food insecure.

The volunteers and people that I have met that work in the food pantries have been warm, friendly and enthusiastic about helping others and are very good at what they do. I have also been honored to get to know many of the donors that support DMARC and to hear directly from them on why they support our Food Pantry Network.

Most of all, what I have gained from my various DMARC experiences is how inspiring it is to collaborate with a very diverse group of people from the secular world and a wide array of faith traditions with a common purpose to make their community a better place and help those in need.

Seeing people put the compassion in their hearts and the loyalty and care for their community ahead of any differences that they may have to help those in need has been uplifting. Thank you to everyone involved for giving that gift to me while I have been with DMARC.

Note: John Whalin will be concluding his Interim role on May 5 and has accepted the position of Vice President, Head of Product Management at Ameriprise Auto and Home. He will subsequently be re-joining the DMARC Board of Directors. Best of luck to you in your new position, John!

Hugh Stone (left) of the Des Moines Hunger Hike with John Whalin (right) at this years' Hunger Hike awards dinner.



TWO PERSPECTIVES ON SNAP WORK REQUIREMENTS

BY REV. SARAI SCHNUCKER RICE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In March, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Jodey Arrington (R-Tex.), quoted 2 Thessalonians 3:10 – “if a man will not work, he shall not eat” – as an argument for cutting some adults’ SNAP benefits, thinking perhaps that if SNAP recipients can work but choose not to, they should not be supported by the SNAP program.

Because DMARC is an *interfaith* organization and thus not specifically Christian, I don’t typically speak from a Christian perspective, but as an ordained minister, I want to address Rep. Arrington’s comment using both statistics and the words of Jesus.

THE STATISTICS

It is not the case that most SNAP recipients choose not to work. According to the Department of Agriculture, nearly two-thirds of SNAP recipients nationally are children, seniors, and people with disabilities. Only 14% of all SNAP recipients work less than 30 hours per week or are unemployed.

In Iowa’s 3rd Congressional District, which includes Polk County, roughly the same percentage of families receiving SNAP have no workers in the family over the past 12 months (10.4%) as families not receiving SNAP (11%).

The group of SNAP recipients who don’t work includes stay-at-home parents (many of whom would pay more in child-care expenses than they are able to earn), adults who have recently been released from jail, people with undiagnosed mental illness, teenagers aging out of the foster care system, and adults who lack the skills or education needed to obtain work in their particular community.

In other words, some don’t work because they can’t afford the expense of doing so, some are not able to find jobs that fit their skills, some may struggle to keep jobs for a variety of health-related reasons, and some may decide that their children are better off with a parent at home. And there are probably a few who can work but choose not to do so.



THE BIBLE

It is true that the writer of 2 Thessalonians, *apparently addressing a specific group of fellow believers who had abandoned many aspects of their former lives because they believed the apocalypse was imminent*, chastised those believers for being idle in the meantime.

But Jesus himself, in Matthew 25:31ff, makes it clear that those who do not feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, and visit those in prison are cursed and told to “depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

In Matthew 7:1-3, Jesus also makes it clear that we are not to judge, or we will ourselves be judged. “Why,” Jesus says, “do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eyes?”

As my son the Biblical scholar always reminds me, the Bible is a huge book compiled from many sources over generations and containing all kinds of contradictory statements. If we try hard enough, we can find all our most cherished opinions seemingly justified by some text.

But to me, Jesus’ entire ministry – his healings and exorcisms, his promise to the poor, his challenge to the rich, his breaking of the religious laws of the time, his table fellowship with outcasts and sinners – calls his followers into a new and surprising way of life. Those of us who are disciples are now expected to do what he did – to feed, to heal, to liberate, and to announce the Good News. And we are called to do so with each other – eating together, drinking together, talking together, and experiencing God’s presence in each other’s company.

Nowhere, by word or deed, does Jesus suggest that it is right or faithful to distance ourselves from the poor by pronouncing them too lazy to be fed.

THE CASE FOR FEDERAL FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

BY LUKE ELZINGA, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

While we here at DMARC strive daily to end hunger in our community, we recognize that we are not alone in this fight. Numerous organizations and agencies are involved in this collaborative effort. What you may not realize, however, is that the single largest source of food assistance in the United States comes in the form of SNAP.

SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, is the program formerly known as food stamps. SNAP benefits are distributed each month to EBT (electronic benefits transfer) cards, which work like debit cards for select items.

Federal nutrition programs, SNAP being the largest of these, distributed \$102.5 billion of food benefits in 2013. That same year, \$5.2 billion of food was distributed by private charities. That means that SNAP and other federal nutrition assistance programs contributed nearly 20 times the amount of food assistance as did private charities.

What this means on a practical level is that any time there is a reduction in SNAP benefits by the federal government—take November 2013, for example—DMARC sees increased use across our Food Pantry Network. That November, a five-year temporary boost of SNAP that was implemented as part of the 2009 Recovery Act came to its scheduled end. For the following year across the DMARC Food Pantry Network, we saw a 20% increase in use at our partner food pantries. Families were turning to DMARC more frequently to meet the gap in their food budget.

Whatever your politics may be, it's important to recognize the large role that SNAP and other federal nutrition programs play in our nation's food assistance system. While DMARC's Food Pantry Network receives no federal funding, when cuts to these programs are made, shock waves are sent throughout the entire system.

We believe SNAP to be a vital program that benefits many of the people that we serve. When our Food Pantry Network was established in 1976, the five-day supply of food we distributed was meant to fill in the gap for emergency food not covered by food stamps. Today, as DMARC has scaled down to providing a three-day supply of food (out of financial necessity) and rumors of cutting or block-granting dollars to SNAP are heard on the horizon, we encourage you to educate yourself on the issue and share this article with your friends, neighbors and elected officials.



Putting Healthy Food
Within Reach

\$3.62

AVERAGE SNAP BENEFIT PER DAY IN IOWA - FY2015

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, *Average Monthly Food Stamp Benefits Per Person*, kff.org/state-indicator/avg-monthly-food-stamp-benefits/

63,549

SNAP PARTICIPANTS IN POLK COUNTY, IA - 2011

The United State Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, *2011 Total SNAP Participants*, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap-data-system/>

72%

OF ALL U.S. FOOD ASSISTANCE WAS SNAP IN 2013

Bread for the World, *Where Hungry Get Food*, <https://www.bread.org>

1.7x

THE ECONOMIC MULTIPLIER OF SNAP IN IOWA

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *Iowa Food Assistance Program*, iowacan.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/SNAP-Iowa-Info.pdf

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

DMARC'S MISSION:

Working Together to Meet
Basic Human Needs.

STAFF:

REV. SARAI SCHNUCKER RICE,

Executive Director

DANIEL BECK
DON CRAWFORD, JR.
JOE DOLACK
LUKE ELZINGA
PAM LARSON
PATRICK MINOR
DREW ROBERTSON
JOHN E. ROBINSON
LINDA VANDER HART
REBECCA WHITLOW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017-2018:

JODY MEAD,
President

JOHN WHALIN,
President-Elect

RABBI DAVID KAUFMAN,
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THOMAS CROSS,
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DOUG VENTLING,
Past President

THOMAS AHART
DALE BENTLAGE
TOM CHAPMAN
KATIE DAWSON
DOUG FICK
DEBRA TOWNSEND LIND
MATT STRAWN
CATHERINE SWOBODA
EMILY VAN OOSBREE
RON BEANE (Advisory)
FRANCES COLSTON (Advisory)

DMARC HONORED AS PUBLIC HEALTH LEADER



The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) recognized leaders in nutrition and physical activity at a ceremony held April 11, 2017, at the 2017 Iowa Governor's Conference on Public Health in Des Moines. The Des Moines Area Religious Council was awarded the Nutrition Seasoned Leader award for "ensuring that Iowans have the opportunity to live a healthy lifestyle by providing education and resources, building partnerships and supporting communities."

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.



SET UP A PLANNED GIFT TO DMARC TODAY

Planned gifts come in different forms, but they share a common trait: they are all contemplated by an individual during their lifetime to take effect at or after their passing. There are many types of planned gifts, with the most common example being a simple bequest in a will, trust or within an estate plan.

As we look to our future and the needs of our community, it's imperative that we work with donors who are looking to leave a legacy that will benefit DMARC, and more importantly, our clients, for years to come.



We believe...

www.dmarcunited.org/planned-giving/

Note: in all cases it is recommended you consult with your lawyer and financial planner for counsel and advice.



POLK COUNTY NORTHSIDE FOOD PANTRY JOINS DMARC NETWORK

BY LUKE ELZINGA, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

This April, Polk County opened its second food pantry at the newly located Northside Senior Center, 3010 6th Avenue in Des Moines. The Polk County Northside Food Pantry, as it is called, comes two years after the opening of the Polk County River Place Food Pantry in March 2015.

“The Northside Food Pantry is a direct result of the Partnership for a Hunger-Free Polk County,” said Polk County Supervisor John Mauro. “Our initial research showed that this area was identified as having inadequate access to food assistance. We want to make food pantry hours convenient and accessible as we continue to create a better network for families who struggle with hunger.”

The food pantry is just one aspect of the Northside Community Center, which among other services provides classes to the community and serves as a senior meal site.

“The Northside Community Center is a key component in the County’s commitment to the revitalization of the 6th Avenue Corridor,” said Polk County Supervisor Tom Hockensmith. “This new community center will be a focal point as well as a hub of community activity in the neighborhood.”

An open house and ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the Polk County Northside Food Pantry on April 26, 2017. The food pantry is open Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

The opening of the Polk County Northside Food Pantry expands DMARC’s Food Pantry Network to include 13 food pantries. For a full list of locations and hours, please visit www.dmarcunited.org/food/pantry-locations/.

DMARC thanks the Polk County Board of Supervisors and the Partnership for a Hunger-Free Polk County for their support.



Polk County Northside Food Pantry
3010 6th Avenue | Des Moines, IA 50313
515-286-2220 | www.polkcountyiowa.gov/cfys
Pantry open Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.



UNITED TO MEET THE NEED

Des Moines Area Religious Council

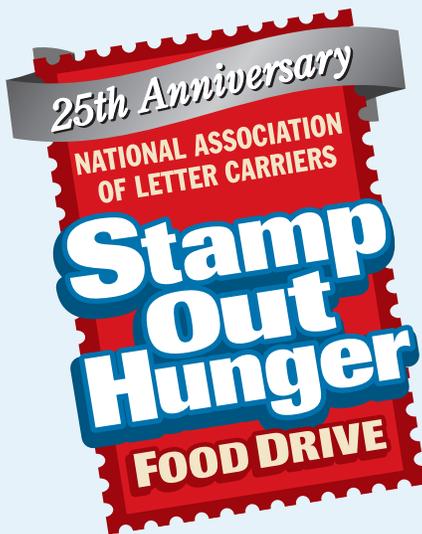
1435 Mulberry Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

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



**Saturday,
May 13**

**+ 30 HOUR
COUNT-A-THON,
MAY 13-14**

It's time once again for the National Association of Letter Carriers' (NALC) 25th annual Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive, held on Saturday, May 13, 2017.

Last year, the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive brought in 83,000 food items to the DMARC Food Pantry Network warehouse. This year, we'll be hosting a 30 hour count-a-thon directly after the food drive, with volunteer shifts beginning at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 13, continuing through the night and on to Sunday evening. For more information, contact John Robinson at jrobinson@dmarcunited.org or 515-277-6969 x18.

THE VOICE



UNITED TO MEET THE NEED