MOBILE FOOD PANTRY MARKS ONE YEAR OF OPERATION
BY LUKE ELZINGA, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

This July, DMARC celebrated the one-year anniversary of the launch of our Mobile Food Pantry. This past year has been an especially busy one for DMARC’s Mobile Food Pantry Manager Joe Dolack.

“The over the last year we have had the opportunity reach areas of the community that have been under-served for some time,” said Dolack. “The mobile pantry being close by provides hope to the people we serve and their communities. It shows that we care about them.”

The success of the Mobile Food Pantry this past year lies in collaboration with numerous individuals and organizations.

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DMARC has a long history of innovation, going back decades to the idea of food pantries working together as a network rather than as isolated good thoughts. Other examples include the creation of the Red Barrel program with the help of local Kiwanis groups in 1990, the switch to healthy food guidelines in 2009, management of the system using a database in 2011, and the move to “choice” pantries beginning in 2013.

This summer we’re celebrating the first anniversary of another innovation, the DMARC Mobile Food Pantry (see cover story). One result of the Mobile Food Pantry has been a significant increase in the number of older adults who are being served. Network-wide, about 19% of our clients are older adults (age 55+), but about 35% of our clients at the Mobile Food Pantry are older adults.

We’ve also started a program called Mobile Express that serves older adults at two low-income housing facilities by personally placing and delivering orders directly rather than spending time in the parking lot.

One of our biggest current innovations is the Food Pantry 2.0 project (you may recall that Food Pantry 2.0 was the winner of the Ignite Community Innovation Award in 2016), through which we hope to incentivize the choice of healthier foods by providing more food as clients make healthier choices.

Partnering with the food pantry at West Des Moines Human Services, we started collecting baseline data on June 1 and will start the incentive process September 1. This has involved collecting bar code data for all the products we provide. Using the database, we’ll be able to track clients’ actual choices, which we hope one day to be able to connect to their health outcomes.

We’ve also spent the summer experimenting with Foodies in Training, a nutrition education program for young children who are visiting a pantry with their parent or other adult.

Foodies in Training is a fun new way for us to teach children about eating healthy involving games, stories, snacks and a take-home prize every week!

And while we are working on innovative new ways to nourish our neighbors, we’re also exploring new ways of funding and building support for our mission.

Earlier this summer, we were excited to add Leslie Garman to our staff as Director of Development and Outreach. Leslie is already hard at work with our development team, and you can read more about her vision on the adjacent page.

In August, we’ll be welcoming another new addition to our staff, Director of Interfaith Engagement, Sarah Trone Garriott. Sarah will be working on interfaith programs to encourage dialogue and engagement in our community, but she will also be serving as a congregational liason for DMARC to continue to build on our relations with those who have been the foundation of our support for decades.

DMARC is constantly looking for innovating ways to improve our services. Our goal is to serve our clients in the very best way that we can. If you have a good idea, contact me at srice@dmarcunited.org!

Rev. Sarai Schnucker Rice
Executive Director
As you already know, DMARC is special. Born out of a spirit of collaboration among Des Moines’ faith communities, DMARC was a “best practice” before the term ever became part of a well-run nonprofit organization’s glossary.

Although only having been on staff a short time, I am already inspired; inspired by passionate donors, staff and DMARC’s volunteer leadership; by their razor sharp mission focus and the judicious stewardship of each and every contribution; and by DMARC’s continued groundbreaking innovation to those who use our services receive the most nutritious food possible.

DMARC’s long tradition of collaboration truly does set it apart. Founded outside of any government program, DMARC began as a collaboration of faith traditions that knew they could do more to make a positive difference together than they ever could apart. And this tradition of collaboration continues to this day.

As DMARC’s new Director of Development and Outreach I am proud to join you in this tradition as well, as we work together to connect those who can help with those who need that help in our community. And collaboration is the key to success. Although true, many might think as Development as sales, and thereby the Development Director as the “Sales Director”, in truth we are really relationship managers.

When a Development Director is successful it is because she has helped to grow and/or expand a culture that allows the collaboration between the organization, its staff and donors or other stakeholders that is able to flourish. It’s this culture that also allows innovation to succeed, marrying ideas with the resources which allow them to come to fruition.

To borrow an analogy, Development is a contact sport. When we work together, we succeed.

So your help and input is essential to our success! Do you know of an opportunity for a new food drive at your faith community, place of work or school? Can you help secure a new business or faith partner? Do you work at an organization that might be looking for a nonprofit partner? Together we can make a difference. I welcome your support as we move forward to meet the needs of our community.

Please feel free to reach out to me anytime! I may be reached at lgarman@dmarcunited.org or at (515) 277-6969.

Leslie L. Garman, CFRE
Director of Development and Outreach

Leslie has over 25 years of fundraising and development experience and received her CFRE Certified Fund Raising Executive certification in 2013. She has served several nonprofit organizations in the greater Des Moines area.
INTRODUCING THE IOWA HUNGER COALITION
GUEST ARTICLE BY MATT UNGER, IOWA HUNGER COALITION BOARD MEMBER

There are well over 1,000 organizations in the state of Iowa engaged in the fight to end hunger. Unfortunately, until now, there has not been a central hub through which these organizations can communicate, coordinate, and advocate.

The Iowa Hunger Coalition began as a semi-formal meeting of a number of organizations involved in the fight to end hunger, with an aim toward a more collective and broader advocacy effort on behalf of the citizens of Iowa who face hunger. The first meeting was held in the fall of 2016 and the organization was formally incorporated on May 31, 2017.

The Iowa Hunger Coalition was incorporated with the intent of operating as a 501(c)(4) organization to educate on issues surrounding hunger and advocate for policies and regulations conducive to ensuring sufficient food is available for all Iowans.

It is a membership-based organization made up of organizational, voting members (such as food banks, pantry networks, community action agencies, etc.) and individual, non-voting, supporting members from the general public who wish to join the collective voice of our advocacy efforts.

The Iowa Hunger Coalition will have an annual meeting where member organizations will vote on legislative priorities. This meeting has not yet taken place and thus, our legislative priorities are yet to be determined.

The collective voice of those of us working together to meet these challenges is far more powerful than if we all go it alone. We are stronger together.

To learn how you can get involved with the Iowa Hunger Coalition, please contact Luke Elzinga at 515-277-6969 x10 or lelzinga@dmarcunited.org.

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As of August, the DMARC Mobile Food Pantry is partnering with 12 organizations to provide mobile pantry sites. These are a mix of nonprofit, educational, residential, and faith-based organizations who are all concerned with the issue of food insecurity in their community.

One of the first organizations that partnered with the Mobile Food Pantry was the YMCA of Greater Des Moines, at both the John R. Grubb and South Suburban YMCA locations.

“The DMARC Mobile Pantry has served hundreds of individuals through the South Suburban Y’s Host Site,” said Tyler Weig, Executive Director of the South Suburban YMCA. “We’re so proud of this partnership’s ability to serve people within our community. Every individual deserves the opportunity to live a healthy, happy and productive life. DMARC has afforded this opportunity to so many—we are thankful.”

By partnering with organizations that are already serving low-income populations, the goal of the Mobile Food Pantry is to meet people where they already are.

“Some of the communities we serve are in food deserts,” said Dolack. “We are an oasis on wheels for them.”

The USDA defines a food desert as a “low-income community without ready access to healthy and affordable food.” These are exactly the communities the Mobile Food Pantry was created to reach.

And there’s evidence to show that we have been doing just that—serving people in need who previously did not have access to a food pantry, often to their pleasant surprise.

“People are taken back by the amount of food and selection we can provide in such a small space,” said Dolack. “A lot of people are skeptical until they walk in the door and see what we have to offer.”

Over half of all Mobile Food Pantry visitors in the first three months of operation were new to our system, with others choosing to utilize the Mobile Food Pantry rather than a physical pantry that may be more difficult to access.

At the South Suburban YMCA Mobile Food Pantry site, one visitor, who is disabled and cannot drive, expressed her appreciation for the Mobile Food Pantry. She lives 3.5 miles from Bidwell Riverside Center, the nearest DMARC food pantry, but only three blocks away from the mobile site.

The biggest challenge to deal with in the Mobile Food Pantry’s first year of operation? The weather.

“We never know what mother nature is going to push our way,” said Dolack. “We have had to deal with the coldest of cold and the hottest of hot.”

But, poor weather won’t distract Dolack from our mission.

“No matter what, my main goal is to provide food to the communities in need,” said Dolack. “Knowing that we are making a difference in their lives and health is humbling.”

The DMARC Mobile Food Pantry was made possible by the Polk County Board of Supervisors, the Partnership for a Hunger-Free Polk County and two individual bequests.

Catholic Charities volunteer Rose Marie Cunion assists a family select and pack their groceries from the DMARC Mobile Food Pantry. Photo by Luke Elzinga/DMARC.
**DMARC’S MISSION:**
Working Together to Meet Basic Human Needs.

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**EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**SAVE THE DATE: FALL DELEGATE ASSEMBLY**

The DMARC fall delegate assembly will be held on Tuesday, October 17 at 7:00 p.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 4114 Allison Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50310. We will be joined by DMARC’s new Director of Interfaith Engagement, Sarah Trone Garriott. Please RSVP by October 10 to Linda Vander Hart, lvanderhart@dmarcunited.org or 515-277-6969 x20.

**DOUGLAS M. WOODS CAMPAIGN RESULTS**

Thank you to all who contributed to the Douglas M. Woods Challenge Hunger Campaign this year! Together, we raised $74,687.61—a record amount of funds! DMARC would like to thank Doug Woods for his continued support of the DMARC Food Pantry Network.

**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.

**SAVE THE DATE: HARVEST CONCERT 2017**

The Harvest Concert is back in 2017! This year the concert will be held on Sunday, November 5, 4:00 p.m. at St. Paul Presbyterian Church in Johnston. There will be a free will donation offering to support the DMARC Food Pantry Network. More details will be announced as they are confirmed.
Since our founding in 1952, DMARC has been committed to working together to meet basic human needs in our community. Through our member congregations, partner organizations, corporate donors, and individuals like you, we’re all committed to making sure that in Greater Des Moines, no one goes hungry.

Maybe you’ve been looking for ways to get more involved with DMARC. The following provides a few ways that we can help you...

**Host a Food Drive**
We can provide you or your group with informational materials about DMARC, a list of our most needed items, donation receptacles and promotional assistance. For more information, visit dmarcunited.org/food/host-a-drive/, or contact Food Drive/Red Barrel Coordinator John Robinson at 515-277-6969 x18 or jrobinson@dmarcunited.org.

**Host a Fundraiser for DMARC**
Whether you’re planning a special event, ongoing service work, or a charity project for children, we can help make your fundraiser for DMARC a success. Our two coin bank templates (see back cover) are great for engaging folks of all ages in the fight against hunger right here in central Iowa! To learn more about hosting a fundraiser for DMARC, contact Leslie L. Garman, CFRE at lgarman@dmarcunited.org or 515-277-6969 x13.

**Organize a Volunteer Group**
Let us work with you to find the perfect volunteer opportunity for your group! Whether you are volunteering with a work team, youth group, club or organization, we can find a fit for your team of volunteers, dependent on size of group, schedule and time commitment. To speak with us about options for your group, contact us at 515-282-2026 or info@dmarcunited.org.

**Request a Speaker**
Looking to invite someone from DMARC to speak on the topic of hunger, poverty or the religious communities of Des Moines? Our speakers bureau is here to help! Visit our page at dmarcunited.org/contact-us/request-a-speaker/ to submit an online form with the details of your request.
When it comes to ending hunger, every penny counts.

Learn how you can make your own coin banks by visiting dmarcunited.org/resources.

DMARC is able to purchase up to six times the amount of food than the average consumer.

www.dmarcunited.org/resources