



# FIVE YEARS ON MULBERRY

**BY LUKE ELZINGA,**  
COMMUNICATIONS &  
ADVOCACY MANAGER

*Regular Tuesday morning volunteer Gary Thull unloads a grocery cart of Red Barrel hunger sacks to sort.*

This January, DMARC celebrated five years in our office and warehouse located at 1435 Mulberry Street in downtown Des Moines.

In the past five years, we have seen some big changes in the number of people we are assisting, the size of our Food Pantry Network, and what the experience of visiting a food pantry looks like.

And throughout it all, we've seen a steady increase in the number of people facing food

insecurity who are turning to the DMARC Food Pantry Network to help make ends meet.

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## TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS GROW PARTNERSHIPS

BY REV. SARAI SCHNUCKER RICE,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Over the past few years, DMARC has taken on projects to improve how our food pantry system interacts with technology. And from these technology projects, we have seen some amazing new partnerships and opportunities form.

In December 2016, DMARC was awarded the Ignite Community Innovation Challenge Award's first prize of \$30,000 for our "Food Pantry 2.0" concept. After developing and fine-tuning the system at West Des Moines Human Services' food pantry, we are now working to expand Food Pantry 2.0 to two additional DMARC partner food pantries by July. From our initial data, we can show that the new system has increased the quantity of fresh fruits and vegetables distributed by the food pantry.

The Food Pantry 2.0 concept has also led to a new partnership with St. Vincent de Paul of Des Moines. In the coming months, both food pantries operated by St. Vincent de Paul will implement a point system similar to Food Pantry 2.0.

While not part of the DMARC Food Pantry Network, St. Vincent de Paul is a data partner of DMARC—meaning they are utilizing our intake system for their food pantry and sharing their data with us. We continue to pursue additional data partnerships to expand our understanding of food insecurity in Iowa. It's just one more way we are growing our partnerships through technology.

And with the help of former board chair Tom Fischer, we've developed a data visualization dashboard to visually map out the data we gather at our pantries. This tool has opened doors with local business leaders, politicians, funders, and others, and has opened their eyes to the reality of food insecurity in our community. The data visualization dashboard has also led to a significant investment from the United Way of Central Iowa to support this important work.

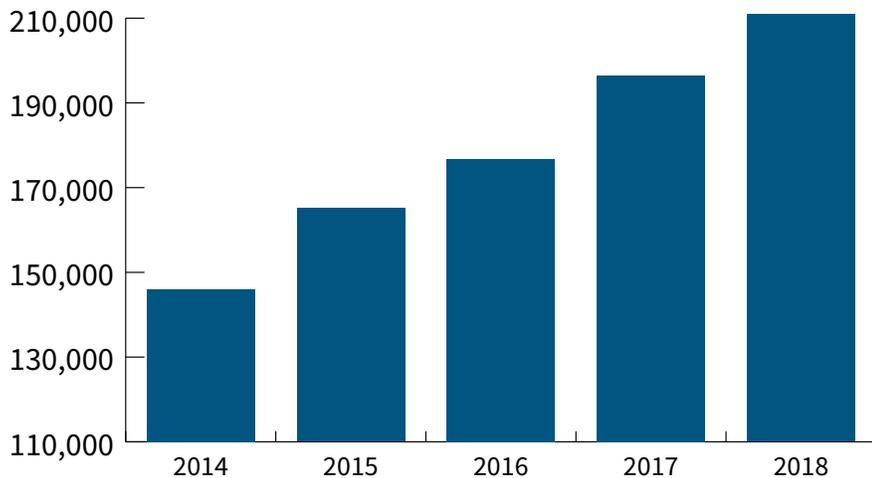
The United Way of Central Iowa has also provided funding to help us gauge the impact of our work on the health of the people we assist by providing free biometric health screenings at the West Des Moines Human Services food pantry. In addition, we are working with a number of academic research groups to evaluate the Food Pantry 2.0 point system and its effects on consumer choices.

The purpose of these technology projects is not to show off the newest and flashiest thing to our supporters. It's about improving access to healthy food for the people we assist, and eventually, we hope, improve their health outcomes as a result.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarai Schnucker Rice". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rev. Sarai Schnucker Rice  
Executive Director

## TOTAL VISITS TO THE DMARC FOOD PANTRY NETWORK



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Since we moved in five years ago, DMARC has seen a 44% increase in use throughout our Food Pantry Network. We assisted 5,500 more individuals per month on average in 2018 than in 2014.

### ***In the past five years, the DMARC Food Pantry Network has seen a 44% increase in use.***

One reason for this large increase is our focus on expanding access to food pantries in our community. Since moving in at 1435 Mulberry, we've expanded from 250 to over 430 open food pantry hours per week (an increase of 73%). Our Mobile Food Pantries are now on-site at more than 20 locations across Greater Des Moines, and we continue to broaden our reach with new partnerships.

The experience of visiting a DMARC partner food pantry has also changed dramatically in the past five years. At the start of 2014, less than half of all DMARC partner food pantries were operating under a "choice pantry" model. Most pantries were still handing out a pre-determined box of food to visitors. Today, every single partner pantry in the DMARC Food Pantry Network operates under a "choice pantry" model.

These past five years have seen a significant amount of expansion to and improvement of the DMARC Food Pantry Network. We are now assisting more people in more places than ever before, and our warehouse seems to get a littler smaller every day as we move more and more food throughout the system.

Through all of these changes, our mission of meeting basic human needs for the greater Des Moines community has persevered. Thank you for your steadfast support.

## FIVE YEARS OF PROGRESS

**January, 2014**—DMARC moves into its current home at 1435 Mulberry Street.

**March, 2015**—Polk County River Place Food Pantry opens as part of the DMARC Food Pantry Network.

**January, 2016**—DMARC adds warehouse space on Scott Street with support from the Partnership for a Hunger-Free Polk County.

**July, 2016**—The DMARC Mobile Food Pantry begins operations in Greater Des Moines.

**December, 2016**—DMARC receives the Ignite Community Innovation Challenge Award's first place prize of \$30,000 to develop the "Food Pantry 2.0" concept to incentivize healthy choices at food pantries.

**April, 2017**—Drake Community Press publishes "A Spectrum of Faith: Religions of the World in America's Heartland," with all book sale proceeds benefiting the DMARC Food Pantry Network.

**July, 2017**—The Comparison Project at Drake University and DMARC host the first annual Interfaith Youth Leadership Camp.

**March, 2018**—DMARC celebrates 10 years under the leadership of Rev. Sarai Schnucker Rice, and the "Fresh Fund" is launched in her honor.

**October, 2018**—Two additional Mobile Food Pantries are added to DMARC's fleet of vehicles.

# STAMP OUT HUNGER®

BY SHOSHANA SALOWITZ, COMMUNITY  
OUTREACH & VOLUNTEER MANAGER



The connection between your postal carrier and local food insecurity might not readily come to mind. But thanks to the former, DMARC has been able to provide thousands of meals to families facing the latter throughout Greater Des Moines.

For more than a quarter century, Stamp Out Hunger®, the country's largest coordinated food drive hosted by the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), has mobilized communities to help those in need through contributions of food and volunteer service.

On Saturday, May 11, DMARC will be the recipient of over 100,000 donations collected by local letter



carriers from doorsteps to front porches across the metro as part of the 27<sup>th</sup> annual event. To offer a bit of perspective on that number: this drive will bring in the equivalent of three months of donated food in a single afternoon!

In order to manage such an enormous quantity of items, we rely on hundreds of people over the course of the following week to count, quality-check, date-check, sort, and package donations for distribution throughout our Food Pantry Network. In 2018, almost 500 volunteers, including workplace groups, students, groups from diverse faith communities, families, and individuals, helped process 63,402 pounds of food—over 100 full watermelon bins!



With an expectation of surpassing the overwhelming success of last year's drive, we invite you to join us for a volunteer shift or two; your help will make a tangible difference in the lives of those we assist, and we guarantee you will find the experience rewarding.

If you would also like to donate to this worthy effort, we encourage you to consider selecting items that are low in sugar, salt, and fat and high in fiber and protein; peanut butter, whole grain cereal, and fruit canned in 100% juice are excellent options.

**For more information and to register online, please visit: [dmarcunited.org/volunteer](https://dmarcunited.org/volunteer)**

And remember to thank your letter carrier for helping to Stamp Out Hunger®!

# INTRODUCING DMARC'S "JUST ONE" SOCIETY

BY LESLIE L. GARMAN, CFRE,  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & OUTREACH

If you're a donor to DMARC, it's a fact: your gifts have made a difference in our community.

Thanks to you, DMARC has and continues to provide healthy food to people in need. Food that doesn't just *fill stomachs*, but that actually nourishes bodies and lives.

We all know that life holds many surprises. This is especially true for the people assisted by DMARC's Food Pantry Network. But did you know that it is also true for DMARC as an organization?

This past year has been incredible for many reasons. Who could have predicted price increases on core food purchases, including fruits, vegetables, tuna, and cereal due to tariffs, fires in California, or hurricanes and flooding in Texas?

Or that DMARC would have provided emergency food services in response to flash flooding and tornadoes right here in our community? Or even that DMARC would have another record year in terms of number of pantry visits to DMARC's partner food pantries?

No one. Life is often that way. And just as DMARC has provided a safety net for our community, we ask you to consider doing the same for DMARC. By leaving a legacy.



Your legacy to DMARC can safeguard us being here to help far into the future. Whether through a will, a beneficiary within your life insurance policy, a charitable gift annuity, or other giving vehicle—you can make a difference for years to come.

What does the future hold? Probably even more challenges. But the difference? It could be you.

This year DMARC is launching a legacy society to support two important programs:

## **DMARC's Food Pantry Network**

Funding will help support DMARC's largest program, the Food Pantry Network, ensuring that healthy food choices are available for low-income individuals and families far into the future.

## **DMARC's Fresh Fund**

Funding will help DMARC to continue to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to some of our most vulnerable community members—children.

We invite you to join DMARC through our "Just One" Society, whose name was inspired by the quote from Mother Teresa, "if you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one."

Your planned gift will help us continue to meet the need far into the future. Want to learn more? Please contact Leslie L. Garman, CFRE, Director of Development & Outreach at [lgarman@dmarcunited.org](mailto:lgarman@dmarcunited.org) or (515) 277-6969 x 13.

At DMARC, we believe that anyone can be a force for positive change in their community! Make a difference today! Plan your legacy with DMARC.



## EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### DMARC'S MISSION:

Working Together to Meet  
Basic Human Needs.

### STAFF:

**REV. SARAI SCHNUCKER RICE,**  
Executive Director

**LESLIE L. GARMAN, CFRE,**  
Director of Development & Outreach

**REBECCA WHITLOW,**  
Food Pantry Network Director

**DANIEL BECK**  
**MONICA CURL**

**JOE DOLACK**  
**LUKE ELZINGA**

**ANDREW FIRESTINE**

**REV. SARAH TRONE GARRIOTT**

**JOHN McPHEE**

**PATRICK MINOR**

**DAVID MOORE**

**BELINDA ROBINSON**  
**SHOSHANA SALOWITZ**

**LINDA VANDER HART**

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2018-2019:

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President

**RABBI DAVID KAUFMAN,**  
Secretary

**THOMAS CROSS,**  
Treasurer

**JODY MEAD,**  
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**DALE BENTLAGE**

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**MATT STRAWN**

**CATHERINE SWOBODA**

**DOUG VENTLING**

**EMILY WEBB**

**IHSAN YASEEN**

**DIANE ALTON** (Advisory)

**RON BEANE** (Advisory)

# SPRING GREENS

DMARC'S INAUGURAL SIGNATURE EVENT

Save the date and join us at DMARC's inaugural signature event, Spring Greens, on **Thursday, May 23, 5:00-8:30pm** at the Iowa State Historical Museum. Get a fresh twist on spring along with the help of some of Des Moines' favorite restaurateurs and mixologists who will provide small bites and samples at the event. For more details, please contact Leslie Garman, (515) 277-6969 x13 or [lgarman@dmarcunited.org](mailto:lgarman@dmarcunited.org).

## 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](http://dmarcunited.org/events).

## SPRING DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

DMARC's Spring Delegate Assembly will be held on Tuesday, March 12, at 7:00pm at West Des Moines Christian Church, 4501 Mills Civic Parkway in West Des Moines. Please RSVP by March 8 to Rev. Sarah Trone Garriott, [stronegarriott@dmarcunited.org](mailto:stronegarriott@dmarcunited.org) or (515) 277-6969 x19.

## BECOME A DMARC ADVOCATE

Are you passionate about food policy and advocating for people living with food insecurity? Become a volunteer DMARC advocate and help us educate and advocate around the issue of food insecurity in Greater Des Moines. If interested, please contact DMARC's Communications and Advocacy Manager Luke Elzinga at [lelzinga@dmarcunited.org](mailto:lelzinga@dmarcunited.org) or (515) 277-6969 x10 to learn more about how you can get involved.

## DIFFERENT USERS, SAME RESULTS

BY ROBERT ROBERSON,  
STORYTELLING & ADVOCACY INTERN

Near the end of 2017, the food pantry at West Des Moines Human Services implemented a new “Food Pantry 2.0” system. Rather than a set number of food items families may receive per month, pantry visitors at West Des Moines Human Services are given a number of points to spend on their items.

Healthy food choices are given lower point values, providing the opportunity for people to get more food if they select healthier options. The new system also allows visitors to come multiple times throughout the month to use their pantry points.

Jenn Danielson, Vicky Arroyo, Dawt Zi, Kristan Honts and Briana Jenkins all have something in common. They each go to West Des Moines Human Services to use the food pantry service to help provide meals for their families.

They each have their own stories, and own personal backgrounds. Danielson had to go on disability due to a surgery. She has visited the pantry about four or five times, and made note of the change in the way things work at West Des Moines Human Services.

“I appreciate that it’s available, especially the vegetables, because I don’t eat meat,” Danielson said. “Before the vegetables were canned and now it’s nice to have choices.”

Danielson had also expressed appreciation of the volunteers that work at the food pantry, and noted the positive impact the pantry has had on her standard of living.

Arroyo said that she has been visiting the pantry every month since 2008. She says that the point system that has been introduced in DMARC’s Food Pantry 2.0 system is better than the previous.



“It’s made a difference, now we can actually get some fresh vegetables and fruit. I always get things and make dishes based off my background,” Arroyo said.

Zi has been coming to West Des Moines Human Services for two years every month, once or twice each month. Zi doesn’t know how to cook American meals, so the introduction of fruits and vegetables has helped her a lot.

“I’m eating more traditional Asian food,” said Zi, “the fruit is fresh and better.”

Honts is taking care of her grandmother and has been visiting the food pantry for a couple years. She helps make sure her grandmother’s house is clean, that she receives her medicine and meals.

“[Without the food pantry we] probably wouldn’t eat a lot of our meals. [It supplements] two out of three of our meals,” Honts said.

Jenkins, a Chicago native that has moved to Des Moines to try to make a better life for her children, has been visiting West Des Moines Human Services off and on since 2013. She has had multiple different jobs while living in Iowa, and has been in college, but has had to put a lot of her endeavors on hold to help sustain her family.

“They’ve introduced more healthy items, and I’m more interested in healthy eating,” said Jenkins.

Danielson, Arroyo, Zi, Honts, and Jenkins all have their own backgrounds, but West Des Moines Human Services and the DMARC Food Pantry Network has helped them sustain their lives regardless of where they come from.



UNITED TO MEET THE NEED

**Des Moines Area Religious Council**

1435 Mulberry Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

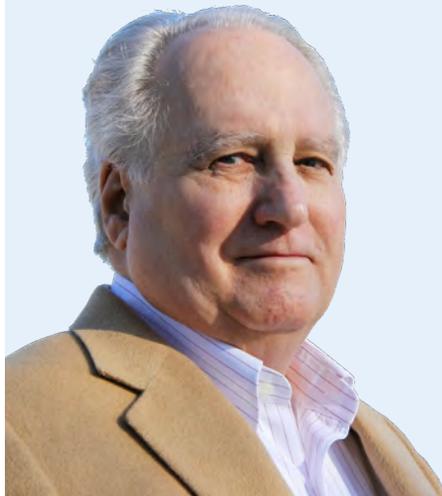
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 **Des Moines Area Religious Council**  
 **@dmreligious**

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THE VOICE



DOUGLAS M. WOODS  
**CHALLENGE HUNGER**  
CAMPAIGN  
**MARCH 1 - APRIL 30, 2019**

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

Now in its seventh year, the Douglas M. Woods Challenge Hunger Campaign offers \$20,000 of matching funds and has raised over \$350,000 to date for DMARC.

This March and April, your gift has extra impact! During the Challenge, a \$10 gift will help DMARC provide 40 meals!



UNITED TO MEET THE NEED