



PEOPLE POWER

BY LUKE ELZINGA &
ROBERT ROBERSON

Rebecca Whitlow has been involved with DMARC almost her entire life. Her first memory of the organization is at age 14, when her youth group held a food drive for the Food Pantry Network.

And in 2012, she joined DMARC's staff as Food Pantry Network Director. In the years since, the DMARC Food Pantry Network has seen the average number of people assisted each month increase by over 85%, all while our average cost per food item has steadily decreased.

An organization is nothing without its people, and Whitlow credits the staff at DMARC for constantly adapting to meet an ever-increasing need for food assistance in our community.

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FEEDING OUR CHILDREN IS A TOP PRIORITY

BY EMILY WEBB, DMARC PRESIDENT

The statistics on childhood hunger in Central Iowa are what motivate me to be an advocate for change in our community. As many readers may know, one in five children in Polk County do not have enough to eat. Not only is this fact morally offensive, but it also leads to some serious health and educational problems.

Hungry children are sick more often, suffer growth impairment, and have limits on their intellectual and emotional development. In addition, hungry children cannot learn as much or as fast and do more poorly in school than other children. DMARC has recognized this and has made it a priority to make sure the children in our communities have access to alternative food sources.



Iowa Total Care CEO Mitch Wasden, Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa CEO Jodie Warth, and DMARC Mobile Food Pantry Program Manager Joe Dolack give remarks at a Refuel Station unveiling event at the Levitt Boys and Girls Club at Carver Elementary on April 2, 2019. Photo credit: Robert Roberson.



This April, DMARC and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa launched the Refuel Station, a new mobile food pantry that is being utilized at local Boys & Girls Clubs locations.

This new pantry offers children and families healthy, kid-friendly, grab-and-go food items. The pantry also strives to be widely available and accessible by making weekly stops at five Boys & Girls Club sites in the Des Moines metro area.

This focus on nutrition and providing healthy food options is not novel for DMARC. We have long recognized the importance of providing food that nourishes healthy bodies and minds. By providing children with healthy food, we hope to allow them to develop good eating and wellness habits that can follow them into adulthood.

DMARC's focus on feeding our children and providing healthy food options to all food insecure central Iowans continues to grow. The Refuel Station collaboration with Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa is just one more effort in tackling this issue.

Emily Webb
DMARC President

GETTING CREATIVE WITH SUPPORT!



Photo credit: Carl Olsen

DIAPERS AND VIRTUAL DRIVES

Central Presbyterian Church hosted a diaper drive during the month of March, and raised over 20,000 diapers, thanks in part to a matching gift from an anonymous donor in their congregation.

The congregation worked with DMARC to set up an online “virtual drive” for diapers on dmarcunited.org, and saw over \$1,000 from 20 donors come in through the virtual drive. DMARC can purchase diapers at an average of just 15 cents apiece, so if you are considering raising diapers for DMARC, monetary donations are sure to maximize your impact.

PEANUT BUTTER

Knowing that cash can go further than in-kind donations, the Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines and Ashworth Road Baptist Church both got creative to raise funds for peanut butter.

The Jewish Federation hosted their staff meeting at DMARC so they could see in person how much their support mattered. Ashworth Road Baptist Church set an entire pallet of peanut butter in their gathering space, shifting the cases from one pallet to another to mark their progress toward donating 2,040 jars of peanut butter, a two-week supply for DMARC.



PERIOD SUPPLIES

Drake University Women In Business recently held a tampon and pad drive for DMARC. Recognizing that one in four menstruating people do not have access to period products due to a lack of income, the women held a drive for period products at the student center on campus. The group received 532 donated items from students, faculty, and even some prospective students touring the campus! They hope to continue the drive every semester to raise awareness and period products for DMARC.



Photo credit: Maddie Mueller

SAVING THROUGH EFFICIENCY

Back in 2012, DMARC was located at 36th Street and Douglas Avenue on the city's northside. DMARC's warehouse at the time was a 1,400 ft² metal-sided shed, separated from DMARC's office, built by local Kiwanis club members in 1986.

"We were getting two trucks a week to cover our needs," said Whitlow. "We would empty the warehouse every week of the food that we had purchased."

The move to 1435 Mulberry Street in January 2014 was a huge boon to DMARC's ability to purchase large quantities of food from wholesalers at a reduced rate. In the past ten years, DMARC has decreased its average cost per food item by 49%.

"The first year we moved into this building, we saved over \$200,000 just by buying in bulk and from wholesalers," said Whitlow.

GROWING RELATIONSHIPS

Since 2013, DMARC has been purchasing food from the Harding Hills Hy-Vee. In the past, there has been speculation about that particular location closing, and the impact it would have on the surrounding community, which could potentially become a food desert without access to a full-service grocery store.

By purchasing food from the Harding Hills Hy-Vee, DMARC is able to buy food cheaper than retail cost while helping the store's bottom-line.

"We help them, and they help us," said Whitlow.

DMARC purchases most of our fresh produce from another local company, Capitol City Fruit in Norwalk. In 2018, DMARC purchased nearly 450,000 pounds of produce from Capitol City Fruit, and received another 275,000+ pounds in donations to the DMARC Food Pantry Network from Capitol City Fruit.

In addition to purchasing food from local distributors and grocery stores, DMARC works with wholesalers and food brokers in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and California.

"When I first started, all the work was on my end to try to find the best buys," said Whitlow, "and now they actually come to me."

RECOVERING FOOD FOR ALL IN NEED

One of the largest new sources of food for the DMARC Food Pantry Network is food recovery. And according to Whitlow, building relationships is the most important aspect of a successful food recovery program.

"Food recovery *is* relationships," said Whitlow.

"If companies know food recovery is important to you, and that it's helping you as an organization and you're appreciative of it, they're going to do a much better job of handling that food to make it more usable later, or even providing that food."

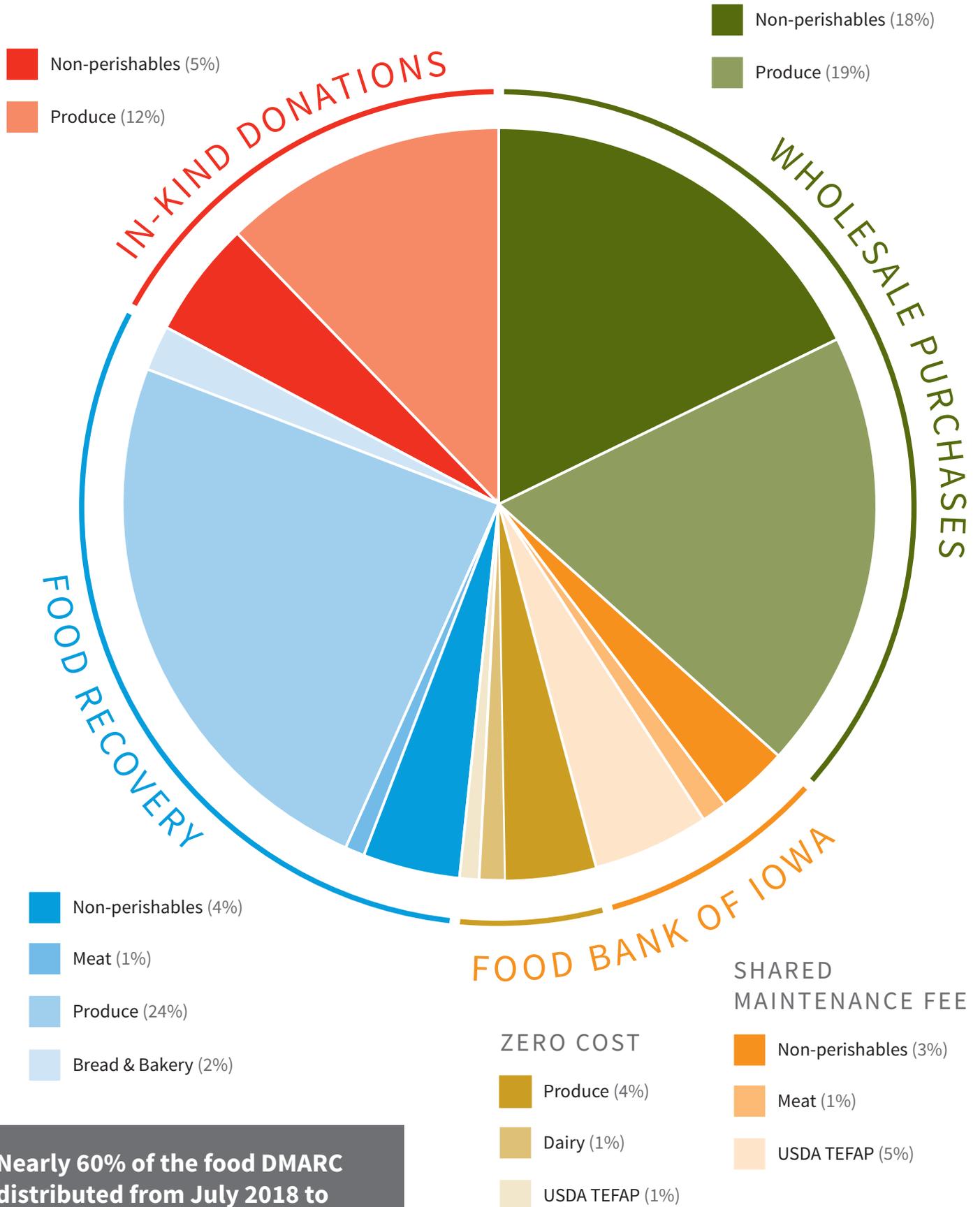
***"Food recovery
is relationships."***

Food recovery also provides the DMARC Food Pantry Network with a wider selection of fresh produce options and other food choices.

"It allows a lot of variety to go into our system that we otherwise wouldn't receive," said Whitlow. "When it comes to purchasing produce we are limited to shelf-stable items because they have to last from Monday til Saturday."

At the end of the day, DMARC would not be able to accomplish all that we do without our staff of dedicated and passionate individuals working tirelessly to provide healthy food for people living with food insecurity in Greater Des Moines.

From July 2018 to March 2019, over 3.5 million food items distributed by DMARC came from the following sources:



Nearly 60% of the food DMARC distributed from July 2018 to March 2019 was fresh produce.

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

SHOSHANA SALOWITZ

MICHAEL SIROIS

LINDA VANDER HART

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CHRIST NAUMANN

STUART OXER

MATT STRAWN

RON BEANE (Advisory)



STAMP OUT HUNGER®

On Saturday, May 11, the National Association of Letter Carriers will hold their 27th annual Stamp Out Hunger® food drive, and DMARC will be the recipient of tens of thousands of food items! That's where we need your help.

We are organizing hundreds of volunteers to help us date-check, seal-check, and sort these food items into categories.

Can you help us Stamp Out Hunger® the week of May 13? Sign up to volunteer online at dmarcunited.org/volunteer.

RECOGNITION FOR FOOD PANTRY 2.0

DMARC recently received national recognition for its innovative work to provide incentives for healthy choices at food pantries through our Food Pantry 2.0 project. DMARC was announced as a finalist for the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA) Partner of the Year Award, and was also selected for The Harkin Institute's second annual Harkin On Wellness (HOW) Report.



L to R: Lyndi Buckingham-Schutt, Stephanie Corbett, Sen. Tom Harkin, Althea Holcomb, Rev. Sarai Rice.

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. Learn more about leaving a legacy for DMARC:



We believe...

www.dmarcunited.org/planned-giving

Note: in all cases it is recommended you consult your tax professionals.

VOLUNTEER WITH MEALS FROM THE MARKET

BY SHOSHANA SALOWITZ, COMMUNITY OUTREACH & VOLUNTEER MANAGER

Springtime has finally arrived in Iowa, and with it the irresistible allure of activities that define the season: bustling home and garden shows, long meandering rides on the bike trails, picnics in the park under blooming lilacs...and volunteering to fight food insecurity with Meals From the Market at the Downtown Des Moines Farmers' Market!

For the eleventh year in a row, DMARC will join forces with the Greater Des Moines Partnership to put thousands of pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables, generously donated by local farmers through this valuable program sponsored by Great Western Bank, on the tables of metro families in need.

In 2018 alone, proceeds from Meals From the Market provided more than 34,000 meals at a value of over \$119,000, while engaging the community in a robust food recovery effort and connecting growers of healthy food and the people whose wellbeing it benefits.

Volunteer talent is absolutely essential to the success of Meals From the Market, enabling us to distribute nearly 40,000 pounds of produce over the course of the May-October season.



Each Saturday is divided into three shifts with volunteers responsible for handing out guides, sharing about DMARC, and collecting food donations from vendors and patrons.

Families with school-age children, retirees, workplace groups, Scouting troops, faith communities, and more—all are welcome to participate! There is no better way to spend a Saturday than hanging out at one of Des Moines' premier destinations while supporting your neighbors with nutritious food.

Training and Meals From the Market t-shirts are provided, along with on-site support from a DMARC staff person. For more information and to register for a shift or two, please visit:

dmarcunited.org/volunteer

Meals From the Market is a program of the Des Moines Downtown Farmers' Market and is sponsored by Great Western Bank.





UNITED TO MEET THE NEED

Des Moines Area Religious Council

1435 Mulberry Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

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dmarcunited.org

Warehouse: 515.282.2026
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Email: info@dmarcunited.org

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

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THE VOICE



SPRING GREENS

DMARC'S INAUGURAL SIGNATURE EVENT

MAY 23, 2019, 5:00-9:00PM

State Historical Museum of Iowa
600 EAST LOCUST STREET, DES MOINES

GET DETAILS AND TICKETS AT
DMARCUNITED.ORG/SPRING-GREENS



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