



**COMMEMORATING  
45 YEARS  
OF THE DMARC FOOD PANTRY NETWORK**

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

*Pictured front to back: Matt Unger, Chief Executive Officer; Leslie Garman, Director of Development & Outreach; Rebecca Whitlow, Food Pantry Network Director. Photo by Luke Elzinga/DMARC.*

In May 1976, DMARC embarked on an important new mission: ending hunger and food insecurity in Greater Des Moines. Much has changed in the past 45 years, but unfortunately, the need for food pantries still exists, and the number of people facing food insecurity has only increased.

*continued on page 4...*

**IN THIS  
ISSUE:**

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT  
SPRING GREENS • WAYS TO GET INVOLVED  
INTERFAITH YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP

## A TIME OF TRANSITION

BY CHRIST NAUMANN

What a time of transition. With the COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest, a presidential election, and many other challenges we have all faced over the last year, there is a lot to look forward to in DMARC's up and coming year. DMARC has had a critical role in our great community. I have had the opportunity to live in a variety of communities across the country and I have found that the ones that have more community-minded leadership and engagement offer a better quality of life than those that do not. For that to occur, it takes everyone being involved working to make our community a better place to live for everyone.

Since moving to Des Moines in 2008, I have focused on helping provide a quality of life that I know is possible with everyone's engagement. For my part that has been at all levels, as a volunteer, committee member and leader of non-profits and campaigns. I have averaged over 100 hours of community volunteering per year



over the course of the last eight years and have inspired many of my colleagues to give back in their time and or financial resources.

Unfortunately, for many of the individuals and families we assist, the transition out of the pandemic will be much more difficult. Many of them are still trying to replace the jobs they had depended on; many will continue to need additional assistance until they make those transitions and DMARC will be there for them when they do. I am looking forward to new beginnings with a safe and healthy DMARC team, and a new building with greater capacity.

I have seen the results of being present and actively engaging in nonprofit organizations and how that impacts our community. When barriers are removed, people can focus more on other needs, which in turn can lead to a better life not only for them but their family. I strongly believe in the premise of paying it forward, volunteering and being active in the community. I know the work DMARC is doing in the community brings opportunities to others.

Christ Naumann  
*Incoming DMARC President, FY22*

# HELP US COMMEMORATE 45 YEARS OF FOOD WORK

BY LESLIE GARMAN, CFRE,  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & OUTREACH

Are you reflecting back (like so many of us are) on what a difference a year makes? The world was truly upended by the COVID-19 pandemic.

But one bright light for DMARC was the incredible generosity of our community. If you made your first gift or an additional gift to DMARC last year—thank you. Your help allowed us to remain flexible and provide support for our community in new ways, assisting tens of thousands of first-time food pantry visitors in Greater Des Moines.

DMARC has a history of being there when extra help is needed. But it's only with your help that this is possible. Your gifts—large and small—allow DMARC to provide this safety net.

Which is why we are asking for your support again this spring. Won't you join us? You can—

**Make a gift to support our annual spring appeal.** Each year, DMARC provides two special opportunities—one in the spring and one in the fall—to support our mission. This year we ask that you give a gift to help us celebrate an important milestone: the 45th anniversary of the founding of the DMARC Food Pantry Network!



For 45 years, members of our generous community like you have supported DMARC's efforts to successfully meet the needs of those in our community who face food insecurity. Celebrate this accomplishment in meeting the need and join DMARC's **Apple a Day Giving Club** by making a recurring gift at whatever level—be it \$4.50 or \$45 per month.

Your donation will be used to efficiently and effectively help your neighbors while providing long-lasting stability to our organization.



Join the Apple a Day Giving Club today:  
[dmarcunited.org/donate](https://dmarcunited.org/donate)

**Volunteer for DMARC's "Drive for 45."** The week of May 10-16 marks the 45th anniversary of the founding of the DMARC Food Pantry Network, and you can help us commemorate this milestone through your own volunteer efforts! Join us and "paint the town red" with Red Barrel events in our community.

Where to start? First, consider a site in your area. From there, you can gather a few friends (service club, youth group or others) to join you as you encourage others to donate funds or food items to the Red Barrel. Create a competition to see which group gathers the most donations for the DMARC Food Pantry Network!



To volunteer or host your own "pop up" event to raise funds and food for the DMARC Food Pantry Network, contact Nisha Kishor, Volunteer and Outreach Manager, at [nkishor@dmarcunited.org](mailto:nkishor@dmarcunited.org).

**Take a walk down memory lane.** Share your memories of the DMARC Food Pantry Network throughout our 45 years! Send your story to [info@dmarcunited.org](mailto:info@dmarcunited.org) or share it on your own social media account and tag DMARC so we can share it, too!

Want to learn more? Contact Leslie Garman at (515) 277-6969 x13 or [lgarman@dmarcunited.org](mailto:lgarman@dmarcunited.org).

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What started in a church basement has grown to become the largest Food Pantry Network in the state of Iowa. At its inception, the DMARC Food Pantry Network consisted of seven partner food pantries, and over the years has expanded to our current network of 14 partner pantries and over 30 mobile food pantry sites.



*The basement of Central Presbyterian Church served as DMARC's "warehouse" from 1976-1986.*

We have grown to occupy 9,000 square feet of warehouse space with pallet racking and walk-in coolers and freezers, employ a staff of 17 people, manage a fleet of six vehicles, and assist over 58,000 unique individuals on an annual basis.

Whenever our community has faced a crisis, DMARC has stayed flexible and risen to the

challenge to provide food in innovative new ways, from the gas crisis of the 1980's, to the flood of 1993, to the Great Recession, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. Food insecurity does not only exist during these crises, however, and we have seen the need for food pantries steadily rise even in times of "plenty."

We have adapted our food supply to focus on providing healthier food options, more culturally appropriate foods, and have increased the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables distributed throughout our network. We have diversified our sources of food and increased the amount of food rescue and recovery efforts.

We have also found creative new ways to get food to people who need it in an equitable way throughout our community. In the past five years, DMARC has added two mobile food pantries to our fleet of vehicles, rolled out a "Refuel Station" mobile pantry that is specifically designed to cater to children, and launched a food pantry delivery service to bring food directly to the homes of people who face transportation barriers.

But we know that simply providing more food to more people in more places will not solve hunger and food insecurity in our community. We must also strike at the root causes of hunger and poverty and advocate for systemic change if we truly want to end hunger in Greater Des Moines.

That is why we advocate with our elected officials and community leaders to not only support

# HISTORY OF THE DMARC

**May 1976**

DMARC launches the Emergency Food Pantry.

**April 1990**

Red Barrel Program is established.

**2010**

DMARC purchases its first vehicle.

**January 2014**

DMARC moves to 1435 Mulberry Street.

**Summer 1986**

DMARC builds a warehouse and hires its first Emergency Food Pantry Director.

**2008**

Emergency Food Pantry is renamed as Food Pantry Network.

**2011**

DMARC establishes healthy food guidelines.

important public assistance programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in Iowa as Food Assistance, but also advocate on intersecting issues that directly relate to food insecurity, such as affordable housing, higher wages, and access to child care.



*DMARC's secondary warehouse space on Scott Street, complete with pallet racks and a forklift.*

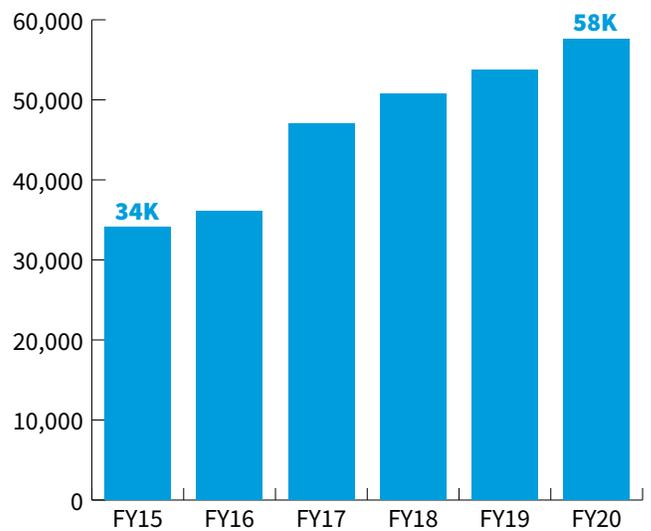
As we look to the future, we are already running out of space for food and staff at our current facility at 1435 Mulberry Street, and a move to a larger space is on the horizon for DMARC. The DMARC Food Pantry Network continues to explore innovative solutions to meet rising levels of food insecurity while also advocating for systemic change in our community.

These past 45 years have seen their fair share of challenges, but with your help, the DMARC Food Pantry Network has been there to meet the needs

of people facing hunger and food insecurity in Greater Des Moines. The fight to end hunger is far from over, but we are not alone in this endeavor.

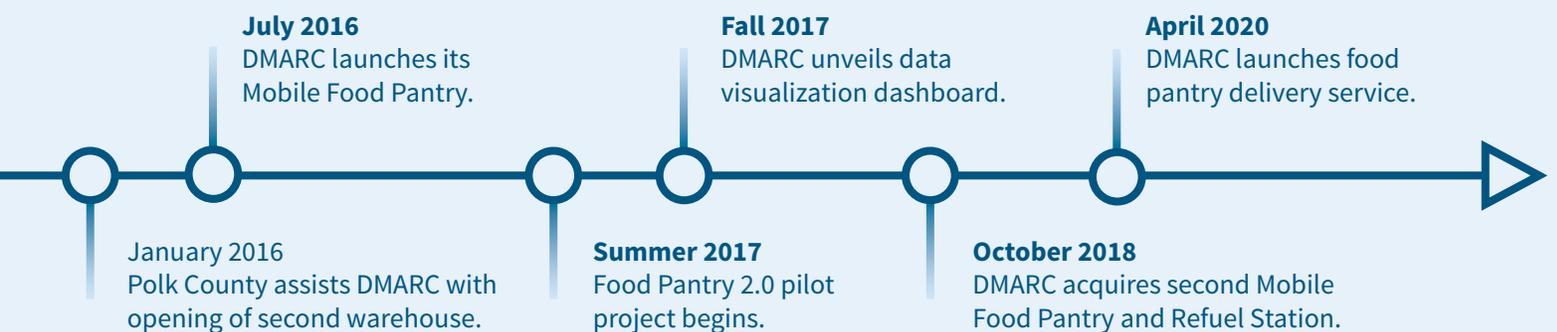
Through it all, you have shown that we can count on you to help us fulfill this mission. We thank our faith community partners, partner food pantries, mobile pantry host sites, volunteers, donors, DMARC board members and employees past and present, and the entire community of Greater Des Moines. We feel truly grateful to call such a giving, generous community home.

### UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS ASSISTED



*In the past six years, DMARC has seen a 68.8% increase in the number of unique individuals assisted by the Food Pantry Network.*

# FOOD PANTRY NETWORK



## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Working Together to Meet  
Basic Human Needs.

### STAFF:

#### MATT UNGER,

Chief Executive Officer

#### LESLIE L. GARMAN, CFRE,

Director of Development & Outreach

#### REBECCA WHITLOW,

Food Pantry Network Director

#### DANIEL BECK

#### MONICA CURL

#### JOE DOLACK

#### LUKE ELZINGA

#### ANDREW FIRESTINE

#### CHRIS HAUGEN

#### NISHA KISHOR

#### PAMPHILE KIWAYIELE

#### CARRIE LA RUE

#### JOHN McPHEE

#### PATRICK MINOR

#### MICHAEL SIROIS

#### REV. SARAH TRONE GARRIOTT

#### KEN WITMER

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS, FY21:

#### MATT DURHAM,

President

#### CHRIST NAUMANN,

President Elect

#### THOMAS CROSS,

Vice President

#### IHSAN YASEEN,

Secretary

#### RANDY JENSEN,

Treasurer

#### EMILY WEBB,

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#### DENISE BUBECK

#### TOM CHAPMAN

#### LISA LOGAN

#### RACHEL COLLIER MURDOCK

#### REV. RACHEL MITHELMAN

#### STUART OXER

#### MATTHEW STRAWN

#### RON BEANE *(Advisory)*



# SPRING GREENS

DMARC'S ANNUAL SIGNATURE EVENT

**THURSDAY, MAY 13**

**5:00-8:00PM**

**COLBY PARK  
WINDSOR HEIGHTS**

Spring Greens is back! Think **FRESH**. Think **UNIQUE**. Think **TROPICS**. You're going to love Spring Greens this year!

This is the third year of our signature event, and we ask for your support! Although the pandemic is not over, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. We ask that you help us celebrate the 45th anniversary of the DMARC Food Pantry Network as we enjoy a low-key and breath-of-fresh-air event with a Caribbean flair on Thursday, May 13, from 5:00-8:00pm at Colby Park in Windsor Heights.

Guests and sponsors can participate in-person or virtually as they will have the option to either pick up a Spring Greens basket or take it home. But food never tastes better than when eaten at an Iowa park in the spring with live music! To become a sponsor, purchase a ticket, or volunteer with Spring Greens, visit the website below.

Questions? Contact Leslie Garman at [lgarman@dmarcunited.org](mailto:lgarman@dmarcunited.org).

**Get your tickets today: [dmarcunited.org/spring-greens](https://dmarcunited.org/spring-greens)**

## SAVE THE DATE: ANNUAL MEETING

DMARC's annual meeting will be held virtually online on Thursday, May 20, from 6:00-7:00pm. Join us to hear from DMARC's leaders on what we have been doing this past year and our plans for the future.

For more information, or to register to attend, please contact Rev. Sarah Trone Garriott at [stronegarriott@dmarcunited.org](mailto:stronegarriott@dmarcunited.org).

# INTERFAITH YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP 2021

BY REV. SARAH TRONE GARRIOTT,  
COORDINATOR OF INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT

The 5th annual Interfaith Youth Leadership Camp will be taking place July 14-18. The camp is a collaborative effort between DMARC and Drake University's Comparison Project to increase understanding and build relationships between the diverse religious communities in the Des Moines metro.



In previous years, the camp was focused on in-person experiences: visiting religious communities for worship, meals, or conversations. Students would stay on Drake University's campus, spend time with campers from diverse backgrounds and work together to develop their own story of faith/values into a short digital project. More than just learn about other religions, the campers had meaningful personal experiences with these communities and the opportunity to reflect on their own faith tradition. Many campers have continued their interfaith efforts, creating opportunities to educate and involve others.

Last year the camp proceeded with an entirely virtual experience that brought students from all over the country together on Zoom. Because the majority of religious sites were meeting online, we were still able to visit with many communities and

even attend their worship. Campers were still able to build connections with the other campers and create their digital stories. Thanks to the magic of meal delivery services we were even able to share a meal!

**Watch each year's digital stories:**  
[www.iowainterfaithexchange.com](http://www.iowainterfaithexchange.com)

It is not yet clear if the camp will be online, in-person, or a hybrid experience. The availability of vaccines and the decreasing numbers of cases in our state are pointing to the possibility of an in-person camp with safety precautions. Camp coordinators are exploring options and collecting feedback from applicants. We've also taken some great lessons from the online camp that will expand the possibilities and enhance the experience whether in person or online. We will make our decision public later this spring.

Applicants must apply by May 31. For application materials and more information, visit:  
[www.iowainterfaithexchange.com/youthcamp](http://www.iowainterfaithexchange.com/youthcamp).

Contact Coordinator of Interfaith Engagement Sarah Trone Garriott at (515) 661-9679 or [stronegarriott@dmarcunited.org](mailto:stronegarriott@dmarcunited.org) for more information about the Interfaith Youth Leadership Camp or our other interfaith opportunities.





UNITED TO MEET THE NEED

Des Moines Area Religious Council  
1435 Mulberry Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

515.277.6969  
[dmarcunited.org](http://dmarcunited.org)

Warehouse: 515.282.2026  
Fax: 515.274.8389  
Email: [info@dmarcunited.org](mailto:info@dmarcunited.org)

 **Des Moines Area Religious Council**  
 **@DMARCunited**

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## YOUR HELP MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

DMARC is celebrating an important milestone this May—our 45th anniversary of providing food for those in need in our community. For 45 years, DMARC has assisted those living with food insecurity—whether a single individual or a family, a senior or a child, single parent or grandparent—whenever help was needed, DMARC has been there, even during a pandemic.

Unfortunately, even after 45 years, food insecurity persists. But your donation to DMARC helps us to continue to meet our community's needs and serve as a safety net for our most vulnerable. DMARC never turns anyone away. And because of you, DMARC can keep our promise to always be there for our community.

**Make a donation today: [dmarcunited.org/spring-appeal](http://dmarcunited.org/spring-appeal)**

