



# THE VOICE

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## FOOD TODAY, CHANGE TOMORROW ANNOUNCING DMARC'S CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

BY LUKE ELZINGA, COMMUNICATIONS & ADVOCACY MANAGER

It's official—DMARC is moving its headquarters to the south side of Des Moines. It's been just seven years since DMARC moved into its current facility at 1435 Mulberry Street, but the organization has already outgrown its warehouse and office space.

Food insecurity continues to increase in Greater Des Moines, and it is crucial DMARC is able to respond to the need. But it is equally as important to focus attention on addressing the root causes of hunger and food insecurity.

That's why DMARC is excited to unveil its "Food Today, Change Tomorrow" capital campaign and impending move to 100 Army Post Road.

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## THE NEED IS GROWING— DMARC MUST GROW TOO

BY CHRIST NAUMANN, DMARC PRESIDENT

DMARC is excited to officially announce our "Food Today, Change Tomorrow" capital campaign.

In 2014, the year we moved into our current facility at 1435 Mulberry Street, DMARC assisted just over 32,000 unique individuals. Last year in 2020, DMARC assisted nearly 59,000 unique individuals—an increase of over 80% in just six years. DMARC simply cannot continue to meet the need without a larger, more effective space.

DMARC has purchased and is currently renovating the former Iowa Medicaid Enterprise building located at 100 Army Post Road on the south side of Des Moines. The new facility will:

- triple the amount of available warehouse space and **revolutionize our cold storage capacity**
- increase the amount of offices and meeting spaces for our staff and volunteers
- add training and community rooms
- provide **overnight indoor storage** for our mobile food pantries
- house a permanent **on-site food pantry**

The larger amount of warehouse space will allow DMARC to save money through increased buying power and accept larger food donations that we've previously had to turn away, especially those that require cold storage. Having a food pantry on-site will enable us to better assist the surrounding neighborhood and provide us greater freedom in piloting food pantry innovations.



While it is imperative we continue to meet the needs of people facing hunger and food insecurity in our community, it is also important that we address the root causes of why food insecurity continues to persist in Greater Des Moines.

The new community and training rooms will afford us greater opportunities to engage in education and advocacy efforts, such as nutrition classes, interfaith gatherings, hunger simulations, advocacy trainings, and other events, such as our recent Storytellers Roundtable on Hunger and Food Insecurity, which you can read more about on the opposite page.

DMARC has a \$5.6 million goal for this capital campaign, and we need your help. Throughout our organization's history, we have relied on our community to help meet the need, and we're asking for your support once again.

Christ Naumann  
DMARC President

To learn more about DMARC's capital campaign, please contact DMARC CEO Matt Unger at (515) 277-6969 x11 or [munger@dmarcunited.org](mailto:munger@dmarcunited.org).



# OPPORTUNITIES

BY TARA LEIGH KRAMER

I was blessed with countless opportunities in my formative years. My parents were wealthy. They paid for my private school education. They enrolled me in dance lessons, etiquette lessons, horseback riding lessons, and so on. I went to college, and moved to Texas for an amazing career opportunity with an investment firm.

I fell ill, and my symptoms became profound. I lost the ability to eat and digest food properly. My brain wasn't functioning the way it had before. I was confused by everything and lost the ability to communicate.

I'd been living with the same partner for almost 10 years. She was so bothered by my changing body and mind, she kicked me out of our home. My family was no longer in touch with me due to my coming out as queer. I lost the ability to advocate for myself, and nobody I knew was willing to advocate for my care.

I was introduced to DMARC shortly after arriving in Iowa. I was searching for resources, and they gave me a list of food pantries I could visit. I was terrified, but I went to a food pantry anyway. I'll never forget how I was welcomed at the door of the food pantry at Bidwell Riverside Center.

I wasn't judged by my appearance, or the way my words were strung together. The staff was so gentle and patient. They looked me in the eye. They treated me with dignity and the same kindness I would treat somebody else in need. What a blessing that day was.

People were helping me advocate for myself for the first time since becoming gravely ill. DMARC gave me an amazing opportunity to serve on a couple of their committees. I was willing and able to share my story with anybody it might benefit. I believe my story inspired DMARC to give others in our community the same opportunity they'd given me. The Storytellers Roundtable was born.

The first Storytellers Roundtable was held at an accessible, safe and quiet location where others who had experienced hunger and food insecurity could challenge the prevailing stigma our culture has towards people living below the poverty level.

I met a handful of strong, brave, inspiring people who seemed nervous and timid about coming in the door. I understood, because I'd been in their shoes. Being mistreated and exploited so many times before, that's all I'd grown to expect.

Together we discussed the prevailing narrative so many have towards "the poor." We got to share why that narrative is far from being truthful, being based off negative biases and assumptions. We were given the guidance and tools to be able to effectively share our own stories about hunger.

It was such a powerful and enlightening experience to hear the stories of these amazing human beings who had circumstances much beyond their control derail their lives, and the steps they've taken to navigate their new normal. Being able to use our voices in spaces where we could process traumatic events was empowering.

It's an honor to have people at DMARC consider me their friend. I know my voice will be heard and respected. Thanks to DMARC and the Storytellers Roundtable, I have been given countless opportunities to use my voice to advocate for myself and my community.



*Participants and organizers of DMARC's Storytellers Roundtable on Saturday, August 7, 2021. Tara Leigh Kramer pictured second from left.*

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Just two years after moving in at 1435 Mulberry Street, DMARC was already running out of warehouse space, and added a second warehouse facility on Scott Street in 2016 thanks to the Partnership for a Hunger-Free Polk County. While this extra space allowed DMARC greater storage capacity, the logistical issue of two separate warehouses has not been without challenges.

In 2018, DMARC began looking at other properties that would expand and consolidate operations. By mid-2019, DMARC had assembled a committee to conduct a feasibility study on the need for a larger facility and capital campaign to fund it. Trudy Holman Hurd and Dr. Robert Shaw, MD, graciously accepted invitations to co-chair this committee, and multiple groups of stakeholders provided input for the feasibility study.

As the DMARC Food Pantry Network repeatedly broke all-time monthly records for food pantry use in 2019, the answer became clear—DMARC needed to find a bigger facility in order to respond to the growing need in the community.

After an extensive search, DMARC made an agreement to purchase the building at 100 Army Post Road from Knapp Properties in October 2020, and put 1435 Mulberry Street up for sale.

In the middle of all this, the COVID-19 pandemic swept across Iowa, and thousands of people turned to the DMARC Food Pantry Network for the first time ever—again underscoring the necessity for DMARC to move to a larger facility.

INVISION provided early design services pro bono on the renovation project, holding multiple brainstorming and design sessions with DMARC staff and leadership to dream up and design an architectural plan for the new facility. Engineering Resources Group provided additional advising.

Munro Construction Company began work on renovations to the new facility in spring 2021, and is slated to finish the project in early 2022.

DMARC has already raised \$1.5 million of its \$5.6 million capital campaign goal.

With this move, DMARC is redoubling its efforts to provide food today and change tomorrow.

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CABINET

Emily Webb, *Chair*

Lanny Benishek

Denise Bubeck

Brendan Comito

Tom Chapman

Linda Gobberdiel, MA RD LD

David C. Gobberdiel

Rich Haberkamp

Jon Hummel

Randy Jensen

Robb Manning

Cory McAnelly

Rachel Murdock

Martha James

Stuart Oxer

Rev. Sarai Rice

Dave Schwartz

Matt Sexton

Eden Sexton

Leanne Valentine



***The new facility at 100 Army Post Road will ensure DMARC can respond to the emerging levels of food insecurity in our community, deepen interfaith relationships and partnerships, and advocate for systemic change. Won't you join us in this effort?***

***—Emily Webb, Capital Campaign Chair***

For nearly 70 years, DMARC has responded to the basic needs of our community, and we've done it together. We could never accomplish this mission without the steadfast support we have received from faith communities, individuals, businesses, foundations, philanthropic clubs, and other groups and organizations. Now, we're again asking for your support as we take this next step in our journey together.

**Learn more: [dmarcunited.org/foodtoday](https://dmarcunited.org/foodtoday)**

### SPACE FOR FUTURE TENANT

100 Army Post Road has empty space for a tenant to lease. DMARC is actively seeking out partners who would like to be co-located with the organization.

### VOLUNTEER SORTING AREA & BREAKROOM

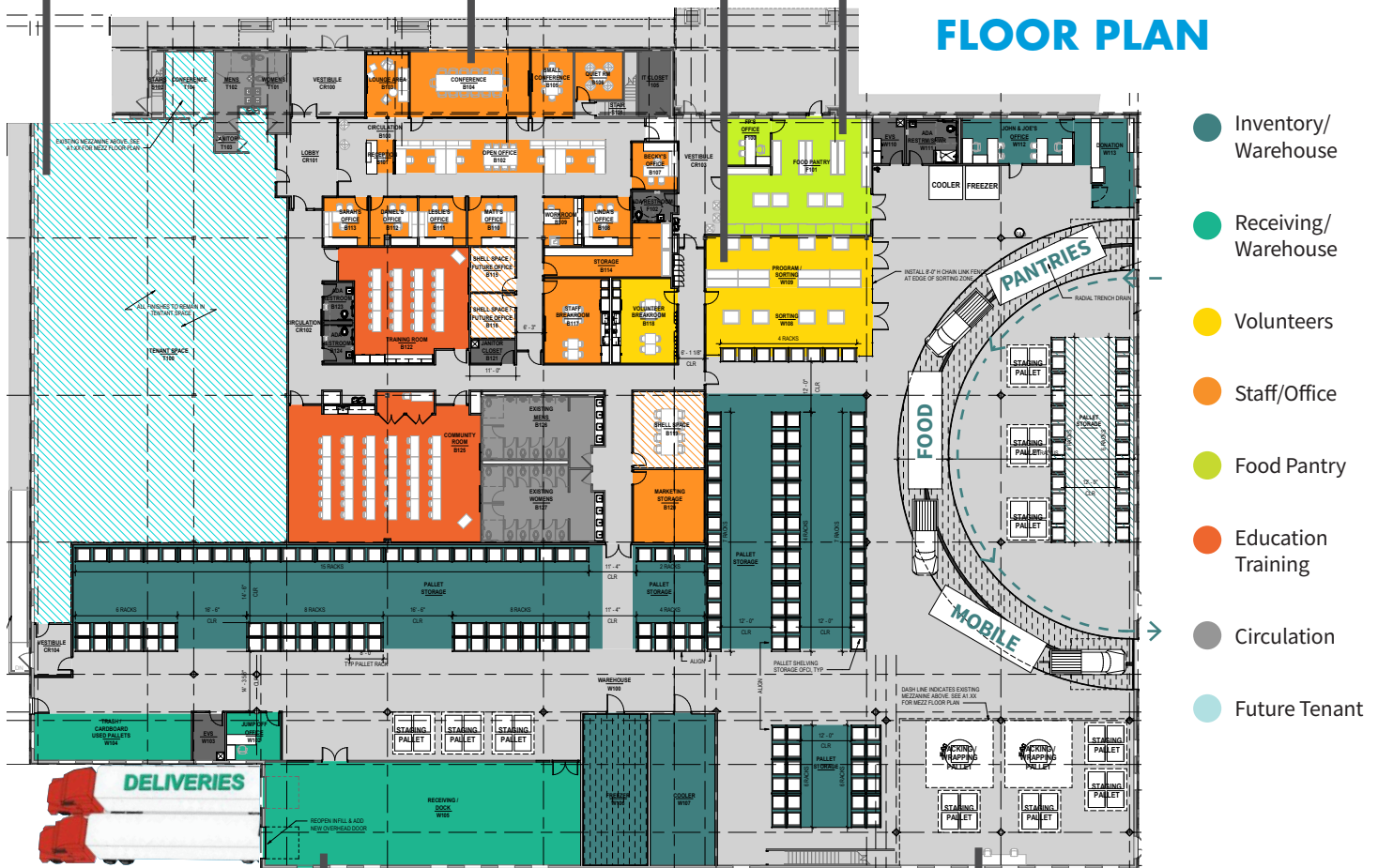
DMARC will have a dedicated food sorting area for volunteers, a volunteer breakroom, and storage lockers for volunteers to use during shifts.

### EXPANDED OFFICE AND MEETING SPACE

Office and meeting spaces are greatly expanded, including the addition of a large community room and a training room, both available to partners to utilize.

### ON-SITE FOOD PANTRY

DMARC will have space for a brick and mortar food pantry with its own entrance, intake office, coolers and freezers, and adjustable shelving.



### LOADING DOCKS AND RECEIVING AREA

Two full-sized loading docks will allow DMARC to accept multiple large vehicle deliveries at the same time and have adequate space to receive product before adding it to DMARC's inventory.

### INCREASED WAREHOUSE CAPACITY

The new facility more than triples DMARC's warehouse storage capacity, exponentially increases freezer and cooler space, and provides indoor parking space for mobile food pantries.

## 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, FY22:

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President

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President Elect

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#### STUART OXER

#### REV. RYAN RUSSELL

#### MATTHEW STRAWN

#### EMILY WEBB

#### RON BEANE (Advisory)

# SPRING GREENS

## DMARC'S ANNUAL SIGNATURE EVENT

## SAVE THE DATE: SPRING GREENS 2022

Join us at DMARC's fourth annual signature event, Spring Greens, on May 12, 2022, where we will be celebrating the 70th anniversary of DMARC! In 2021, DMARC raised over \$90,000 through Spring Greens, which was held at Colby Park in Windsor Heights on May 13.

## SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

Support the DMARC Food Pantry Network with a fund or food drive during the Souper Bowl of Caring<sup>SM</sup>!

We'll give you all the tools you need in January, including a "how to" packet, FAQ sheet, and a hunger simulation that can help you tell the "why" of food insecurity in our community. If your congregation is interested in getting involved, please contact Rev. Sarah Trone Garriott at (515) 277-6969 x19 or [stronegarriott@dmarcunited.org](mailto:stronegarriott@dmarcunited.org).



## JOIN THE 'APPLE A DAY' GIVING CLUB



For 45 years, members of our generous community 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 the organization.



# MARISOL'S STORY

BY LESLIE GARMAN, DIRECTOR OF  
DEVELOPMENT & OUTREACH

**"If you were here right now, I'd give you a hug!"**

No, I'm not the one saying that; Marisol, a DMARC food pantry visitor is. And she's saying it because she's grateful—to you.

Thanks to you and your support, the DMARC Food Pantry Network continues to serve as a safety net for our community's most vulnerable, including women like Marisol, who are doing their best to make ends meet and provide for both themselves and their family.

And Marisol's story is all too common. She is just one of the 58,700 unique individuals that DMARC assisted in 2020 through the DMARC Food Pantry Network. As a single mom with a high school-aged daughter she also helps her son who is a young father provide for her two and a half year old granddaughter. But, where Marisol is unique, she is also one of the less than 5% of Latinas in the U.S. who has a master's degree. Even so, sometimes she needs help to make ends meet.

This was the case when Marisol came to Des Moines in 2017. "I remember packing vividly—there was only enough space for me and my daughter in the truck. There was no furniture and we had only enough money for the deposit and first month's rent—nothing else. My plan was to find a job and make enough money to cover the next month's rent. I had no money for food."

Finding a pantry was high on the "to-do" list and Marisol found Urbandale Food Pantry, one of DMARC's 14 partner food pantries. "They were so organized, so kind and so very helpful. They were non-judgemental and the volunteers were great!"

Growing up, Marisol's family were migrant farm workers. Originally from Mexico, her parents and their 11 children traveled wherever work could be found, and Marisol traveled with them from the tender age of six to seventeen.



*Photo courtesy of Marisol Saladaña Leza, MSSW.*

"They did this so that their children would have a better life. It was my parents' goal and my goal as well. But even making \$18 an hour I sometimes need help."

But Marisol remains positive. "If I could, I would give everyone who supports a food pantry a hug. It is so hard sometimes because you have to pick which bill you will pay when you don't have enough money. It's a continual juggling game." She is grateful for health, her family and friends. And organizations like DMARC that really help people in need.

We are grateful for you too! Your continued support will help people like Marisol. Won't you renew your gift to DMARC? Your donation will help us continue to meet our community's needs and serve as a safety net for our most vulnerable.

On behalf of the many people like Marisol who are doing their best, but still need help, thank you in advance for your continued support to DMARC.



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## FY21 ANNUAL REPORT NOW AVAILABLE



DMARC's annual report for FY21 (July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021) is now available! Learn how DMARC has stayed flexible in meeting the need this past year.

**Read the report: [dmarcunited.org/annual-report](https://dmarcunited.org/annual-report)**

