



**DRIVING CHANGE  
THROUGH  
FOOD  
RESCUE**



**BY BLAKE WILLADSEN**  
**MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER**

For Joan Habel the sound of the DMARC truck backing up to the dock is always a highlight of the week. With 31 years of management experience at the Windsor Heights Sam's Club, Habel finds that building relationships with organizations like DMARC can make all the difference for community members seeking out help.

"We have a lot of customers and a lot of damages. Rather than throwing the damaged items in to the landfill, we donate them," Said Habel. "Everyone we've met with DMARC is just so pleasant to work with. They make it easy."

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## BLOSSOMING CHANGE IN THE SPRING

BY LISA LOGAN



I have been guided by my own faith to look for the good in everyone and help serve others. As spring blossoms, signs of hope are everywhere; signaling warmer days, longer daylight hours, and an unfurling of leaves, flowers, and people. My creator designed this cycle and with the changing seasons I find hope in a God who can make all things new!

*“He which hath begun a GOOD WORK IN YOU will perform it.”*

I am so grateful to have become a part of this **amazing** group of people who perform good work every day! Not only that, but they also look for the good in everyone as well. A match made in heaven? For me it is! While I am thankful to be working united to meet the need, unfortunately the need continues to rise.

In the same way that my faith is shaped by the guidance of those who have helped me blossom, DMARC is continuously guided by its rich history of interfaith collaboration. Last year’s 70th anniversary not only marked an important milestone in the history of the organization, but the start of a new chapter moving forward with the new headquarters at 100 Army Post Road.

In the short time we have been in the building we have seen our efficiency and capacity to meet the need increase tenfold. Just recently the DMARC Food Pantry Network eclipsed its record total for number of individuals served in the month of March. This was followed by the 2nd and 4th busiest days ever in the network’s 47-year history.

This already concerning trend is bookmarked by impending changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Iowa. SNAP is the most effective tool available today to fight food insecurity and has proven time and time again to be directly linked to the work we do. While the fight to oppose this bill may not lead to the outcome we hoped for, it has shown what we can do together.

Our interfaith leaders stood alongside us in this fight. Over 200 community faith leaders joined DMARC in apposing this bill and urged lawmakers to find solutions that reflect our state’s generosity and compassion in an open letter to legislative leaders.

And our work is not done. This spring and beyond we will continue to grow our signature interfaith events such as the Interfaith Youth Leadership Camp and our Meet My Religious Neighbor. As we look back on a rich history, our interfaith tradition remains the backbone of every piece of this essential work.

So please – join me this year as we continue to do the work together. As we reflect on the journey ahead, we can’t forget the principles that have guided us to this point. Our faith community is stronger together and we’re grateful you are a part of that change.

# FIGHTING HUNGER ONE BARREL AT A TIME

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

Beginning in Des Moines area grocery stores in April of 1990, the Red Barrel program is a source of food for DMARC's Food Pantry Network. Today it is comprised of over 25 Red Barrels located throughout the Des Moines metro area, including Hy-Vee, Price Chopper, and Fareway grocery stores and other community and congregational sites. Each year the goal of this program is to collect over 100,000 food items through the Red Barrel Program.

Customers are encouraged to purchase nonperishable food items (particularly those items noted as DMARC's most needed items). They may also purchase pre-made \$6 and \$12 Hunger Sacks (at participating locations) when they shop.



**Learn more:**  
**Contact Amanda Parkins,**  
**Volunteer & Outreach**  
**Manager at**  
**AParkins@dmarcunited.org**  
**or 515-277-6969 x 220**

The Red Barrel Program started as, and continues to be, a volunteer led initiative. Under the guidance of former DMARC director Rev. Forest Harms, local chapters of the Kiwanis Club helped build awareness and encourage participation in the early years of the program. Volunteer ambassadors continue that work today by serving as liaisons with individual stores. These ambassadors maintain the site, encourage promotions, and help us grow the program at new sites.

Become a Red Barrel ambassador today and help us continue this legacy of giving back. Contact Amanda Parkins (left) to learn more and get started.

**CELEBRATING 33 YEARS OF RED BARRELS**





*...continued from cover*

DMARC is one of many organizations working with stores across the Des Moines metro to ensure that food safely finds its way to people in need through the practice of food rescue.

Food Rescue, or food recovery, is a widespread practice across the country, but for DMARC it is a tool for providing healthy and cost prohibitive options at our pantry sites. Every year, over 4 million pounds of food is distributed through the DMARC Food Pantry Network and approximately one third of those food items are acquired through food rescue. Food rescue items have typically been rejected by a retailer like convenience stores, grocery stores and warehouse operations but items are still usable and safe to eat. Often times this is something as small as a bump or bruise on a piece of produce.

“Food rescue allows our pantry visitors to eat the rainbow,” said

DMARC Food Pantry Network Director Rebecca Whitlow. “Food Rescue can allow us to provide those (produce) items to individuals who might not have been able to afford them in the grocery store.”

For much of the last decade, DMARC has made a strategic commitment to expanding choice for pantry visitors and working to make the healthy choice,

**THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY ESTIMATES THAT FOOD WASTED OR LOST IN THE UNITED STATES COSTS AN ESTIMATED \$218 BILLION ANNUALLY.**

the easy choice. building food recovery relationships with area retailers and wholesalers has helped to make this possible.

Partnerships with key stakeholders like Capital City Fruits, the Downtown Farmer’s Market, and retailers like Sam’s Club, Walmart, and Costco have been key in expanding choice at the pantry level.

“Food rescue is all about relationships,” said Whitlow, who has spent the past 11 years growing the DMARC Food Pantry Network’s purchasing power. “It’s estimated that over a million pounds of food goes to landfills (in the Des Moines area) each year. As our numbers grow, that food is needed.”

As DMARC works to meet the growing need, collaboration becomes an active part of the job. The new agreements announced with the Food Bank of Iowa in February 2023 are allowing DMARC to pick up and distribute food to any pantry in the network from select Feeding America partners. DMARC also regularly partners with other food pantries outside of our network and food rescue agencies to help move large donations to Iowans safely and equitably.

Partnering with Eat Greater Des Moines on large donations, helps us support a network of over 200 anti-hunger organizations in Central Iowa that include food pantries, nonprofits, daycares, schools, apartment complexes, churches, libraries, and community fridges.

With the opening of the new DMARC Headquarters at 100 Army Post Rd., our ability to rescue large donations has grown exponentially.


Previously our warehouse spaces only accommodated six pallets of frozen food and now 40-50 pallets can be stored safely.

In the past, DMARC would have to go to extraordinary lengths to ensure that large food donations didn't go to waste.

Now we can unload semi loads of items like milk, meat or produce as opposed to a few pallets. For Whitlow, the work is not done as DMARC continues to build new relationships each day with

existing and new partners.

“There's potential for a lot more rescue in the community than what is currently happening, especially when it comes to things like prepared foods and meat cases at the grocery store. There's no reason that edible food should go to the landfill,” Said Whitlow.



**THE DMARC FOOD  
PANTRY NETWORK  
DISTRIBUTED  
1,417,085 LBS OF  
PRODUCE IN FY22.**

## Advocacy update: Why the Farm Bill Matters

*By Luke Elzinga, Policy and Advocacy Manager*

Did you know that 85% of the funding in the Farm Bill goes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other nutrition programs?

The Farm Bill is a large, omnibus bill that comes up for reauthorization from Congress every five years. The next Farm Bill (or a continuing resolution) must be passed by September 30, 2023. And while, yes, there are many agricultural and conservation titles in the bill, the vast majority of the funding in the Farm Bill goes to support nutrition programs.

Iowa plays an especially important role in the Farm Bill debate. Both Sen. Charles Grassley and Sen. Joni Ernst serve on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. Iowa also has two representatives serving on the House Committee on Agriculture: Rep. Zach Nunn of

Iowa's 3rd Congressional District and Rep. Randy Feenstra of Iowa's 4th Congressional District.

With this outsized influence on Farm Bill discussions, Iowa has a unique opportunity in front of us. Yes, we are an agricultural state, but we also have hundreds of thousands of our residents across the state relying on SNAP. Hunger is not an urban vs. rural issue.

DMARC will be advocating for policies that would improve SNAP benefits for hundreds of thousands of Iowans and reduce barriers to participation. Other Farm Bill priorities include continued investment in The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), SNAP-Ed, and SNAP Employment & Training.

You can learn more about DMARC's policy priorities for the 2023 Farm Bill and how you can help us advocate at: [dmarcunited.org/advocacy/](https://dmarcunited.org/advocacy/).

## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Working Together to Meet Basic Human Needs for the greater Des Moines community.

### STAFF:

#### MATT UNGER,

Chief Executive Officer

#### LESLIE L. GARMAN, CFRE,

Director of Development & Outreach

#### REBECCA WHITLOW,

Food Pantry Network Director

#### DANIEL BECK

#### MICHELLE CHUMBLEY

#### MONICA CURL

#### JEFFREY CZERWIEC

#### JOE DOLACK

#### MAX DOUGLASS

#### LUKE ELZINGA

#### KELLY ERICKSON

#### CARL EVANS

#### ANDREW FIRESTINE

#### JOHN MCPHEE

#### SARAH MCCRORY

#### PATRICK MINOR

#### AMANDA PARKINS

#### REV. SARAH TRONE GARRIOTT

#### BLAKE WILLADSEN

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS, FY23:

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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)

## DMARC ANNUAL MEETING



This event serves as an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the last year while taking a look ahead at the strategic focus of our organization and show what ways we hope to make the biggest impact in the coming year. Register at [dmarcunited.org](http://dmarcunited.org).

**ALL ARE WELCOME! THURSDAY, MAY 18 FROM 6 TO 8 P.M.**

## VOLUNTEER AT MEALS FROM THE MARKET



Each Saturday morning during the summer, the Meals from the Market program collects donations from vendors at the Des Moines Downtown Farmers' Market.

DMARC is currently seeking 12 -15 volunteers to collect donations during each Downtown Farmers' Market. If you are interested, please contact, Amanda Parkins [aparkins@dmarcunited.org](mailto:aparkins@dmarcunited.org) or (515) 277-6969 x 220.

**EVERY SATURDAY MAY THROUGH SEPTEMBER**

## 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.

DMARC is looking for volunteers to assist with this effort. If you are interested, please visit [dmarcunited.org/volunteer](http://dmarcunited.org/volunteer).



**UPCOMING GAMES: MAY 14, JUNE 4**

# GIVING YOUR TIME AND TALENTS

In April we celebrated National Volunteer Month and we wanted to take a minute to recognize some of individuals who donate their time to help meet the need. **Hear from some of those dedicated folks why volunteering is important to them.**



***“I started volunteering in October of 2022 right after the pantry opened and it has been a pleasure since. I like to stay busy and the staff are wonderful... The need is so great and it breaks my heart thinking about the people who don’t have enough to eat. I could cry just thinking about it.”***

*- Helen Bell*

*DMARC-Ket Southside Food Pantry Volunteer*

***“When working in the pantry, people are always so appreciative and thankful. You get to know the regulars. There is one gentlemen who always gets 21 cans of chicken. Everyone’s experience is different. They are always appreciative of the food and this work as become even more important since the pandemic.”***

*- Sharol & Chuck Heiken*

*DMARC Mobile Food Pantry volunteers*



***“Food insecurity should not be an issue in this country. I feel it’s incredibly important to be a part of something bigger than myself. I’m a very social person. In volunteering, I have met some really interesting people. DMARC is an excellent way to give back and do something important. ”***

*Brenda Holt*

*2023 Spring Greens Co-Chair*



UNITED TO MEET THE NEED

Des Moines Area Religious Council  
100 Army Post Road  
Des Moines, Iowa 50315

(515) 277.6969  
[dmarcunited.org](http://dmarcunited.org)

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

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THE VOICE

# STAMP OUT HUNGER® SATURDAY, MAY 13



The National Association of Letter Carriers will hold their annual Stamp Out Hunger® food drive, and DMARC will once again be the recipient of this drive. Be sure to leave a food donation at your doorstep on Saturday, May 13, to be picked up by your postal worker!

You can also make a donation online or sign up to volunteer at [dmarcunited.org/stamp-out-hunger](http://dmarcunited.org/stamp-out-hunger).



UNITED TO MEET THE NEED