



KEVIN KING
Volunteer

WHY WE ♥ VOLUNTEERS

APRIL IS NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH AND WE'RE CELEBRATING THOSE WHO WORK TO MEET THE NEED.

PEOPLE LIKE KEVIN....

STORY BY MARY GOTTSCHALK, CONTRIBUTOR

When Kevin King began volunteering at West Des Moines Human Services, he never imagined he'd get to use many of the same skills he acquired during his nursing career.

During King's 32-year-long career, he was a critical care nurse in the transplant unit of UCLA Health in Los Angeles. "My parents and grandparents instilled in me that you need to be compassionate when people are suffering." That advice guided King in his choice of a career. He points out that people are not at their best when they are sick.

In the same vein, if people are hungry, they often need more than just food. They also need empathy. That's part of what makes volunteering at the food pantry so appealing to King, who did a stint as a grocery store clerk in his youth. He likes getting to know the clients – he sometimes thinks of them as patients – and looks for ways to make the food pantry experience positive.

He pays particular attention to first-time visitors, who feel often overwhelmed and embarrassed. King shares the story of a young mom who was very nervous about having to manage shopping with four young, active children.

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“By engaging with the kids, by getting them to count out the number of each specific food item the family needed,” King says with a smile, “I was able to take the pressure off the mom. It actually went beautifully ... a good experience for them all. The kind of experience I thrive on,” he adds.

On another occasion, King worked with a young woman who was “having a bit of a meltdown.” When she came into the waiting room, she was upset and using obscenities in a way that made other clients nervous. King, with his medical background, recognized the problem. “I’m very good at redirecting people,” he observes, “keeping them within the guidelines and doing it tactfully and not hurtfully.” He was able to calm her down, help her get all the groceries she needed, and put her back in a cab. He felt good that he could take care of her in a way that didn’t upset other clients.

PUTTING EVERYTHING IN PERSPECTIVE

King also finds that his nursing background makes him a resource in other ways that he hadn’t anticipated. On one occasion, a client had a grand mal seizure in the middle of picking out groceries. King instinctively stepped in to clear the room and safeguard the woman until the paramedics arrived. He wanted to help her physically, but it was just as important to him to prevent her from the embarrassment she’d feel if she woke up and saw people standing around gawking.” Incidents like this are very rare but make King glad he can bring his skills to bear for the food pantry clients.

Kevin, who has been at the food pantry for two years now, is scheduled to work every Friday for 3 hours. As often as not, he comes in early. “Fifteen minutes extra can make a huge difference,” King says, “when there are people waiting in line in the hallway because it’s so busy.” During his career, he was used to working 24/7. So he’s happy to work extra days when they are short a volunteer. “No matter how much I do, I want to go back and do more.”

When people ask King about volunteering, he always says, “Just try it. Do one shift and I guarantee you, you’ll be doing it more because it uplifts you so much. It makes you forget your problems – it puts everything in perspective.”



KEVIN KING
Volunteer | West Des Moines Human Services

Last Year...



2,500+
VOLUNTEERS

**GAVE THEIR TIME ACROSS THE
FOOD PANTRY NETWORK**



**THEIR EFFORTS
GENERATED
82,200+**
**HOURS OF
SUPPORT.**

**THIS IS THE EQUIVALENT TO
\$2.7 MILLION OR ADDING
ROUGHLY 39 FULL-TIME STAFF.**



Read more stories like Kevin’s & find
your passion for volunteering at
dmarcunited.org



Working Together to Meet Basic Human Needs for the Greater Des Moines Community.

WHAT'S NEW AT DMARC.

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THANK YOU MATT!

The DMARC board of directors recently announced that CEO Matt Unger will be resigning effective June 30, 2025. In the months prior to his departure, Unger will be assisting with the transition of his successor, who is yet to be named.

Read his full letter to the community at dmarcunited.org/news.



VOLUNTEER THIS SPRING



Get the group together!
Support DMARC at an upcoming event.

- Meals from the Market
- Sundays at the Iowa Cubs
- Volunteer at Spring Greens



SAVE THE DATE - MAY 10

Our largest food drive of the year returns to your doorstep! That Saturday, Leave a donation of nonperishable food at your mailbox and your letter carrier will collect it for DMARC or sign up to volunteer and sort donations.

READY TO GET STARTED?



515-277-6969



www.dmarcunited.org



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UNITED TO MEET THE NEED

Des Moines Area Religious Council

100 Army Post Road
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JOIN US FOR...

SPRING
GREENS

THURSDAY,

APRIL 10, 2025

6 TO 9 PM

KRAUSE GATEWAY CENTER

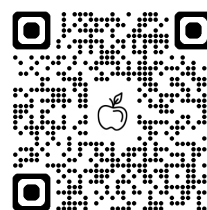
THIS YEAR'S THEME...



PALATES, PALETTES

PALLETS!

BUY A TICKET ONLINE AT
DMARCUNITED.ORG/SPRING-GREENS



SCAN ME