



**ALL ARE WELCOME:
THE FACES BEHIND A RECORD YEAR**

On a particularly sunny afternoon, Heather N. walks into the Urbandale Food Pantry with her son. It's the beginning of the month and with the holidays right around the corner, she is excited to shop for some items that will fill the table when she hosts Thanksgiving dinner.

“Our family has been coming here for quite a few years but recently we’ve been here more often. We couldn’t make it through the month without this service and we appreciate it so much,” Heather said. “Everything has gone up so much. Our property taxes went up \$160/month. This extra food makes all the difference for us.”

Continued on page 4...

special edition:

**THE FOOD PANTRY
VISITOR ISSUE**



**IN THIS
ISSUE:**

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
BEST WAYS TO GIVE NOW
NEW FACES AT DMARC

MY HOLIDAY WISH

BY LISA LOGAN, DMARC BOARD PRESIDENT



"You can't build a peaceful world on empty stomachs and human misery," - Norman Borlaug

These words feel especially chaotic this holiday season as we enter what will likely be the busiest holiday season in the 47-year history of the DMARC Food Pantry Network. It feels like no time is better than now to highlight the reason why we do this work – **the people.**

This special issue of *The Voice* features stories from a number of our neighbors and friends who also happen to visit a local food pantry. As we continue to see a record number of people using a DMARC pantry for the first time, more people are facing the stigma that comes with getting assistance. If you are reading this, you are probably well aware of how prevalent food insecurity is right now in the metro (5 of the busiest days ever have come in November... so far) but it's easy to forget that this isn't something you can always see people struggling with.

The people battling this stigma could be your neighbor across the street, your friends, your co-worker a couple of desks over, or even your own family members.

As we navigate this 'new normal' of rising prices in the grocery aisle, DMARC is making every effort to find ways to adapt our network to meet this growing need while making all feel welcome. This past year we have seen some of these changes play out in real time in our own building. October marked the end of a busy first year for the DMARC-Ket Southside Food Pantry.

The DMARC-Ket is the first permanent pantry site

operated by DMARC and has quickly become one of the busiest in the metro.

Since the soft opening in Sept. 2022, the number of individuals being assisted in the Southside Des Moines zip codes (50315, 50320, & 50317) has increased 69%. In its first four weeks, the DMARC-ket assisted over 1,000 people, and one in four visitors had never been assisted by the DMARC Food Pantry Network before. Building more access on the Southside had long been a focus for our organization but no one could've predicted how quickly and how massive this shift would be for our ability to reach more people and this need isn't going anywhere.

Even though we aren't going to end food insecurity overnight, let's find a couple ways this holiday season to start small. My holiday wish this year is simple ... I challenge you to:

- 1. Listen** – Hear the stories of people who have the courage to share the hardships they are facing.
- 2. Put yourself in their shoes** – what would you do if this was your family member, a member of your congregation, or even yourself?
- 3. Make a plan** – Is there something small or courageous you can do in your neck of the woods? Every bit counts and together we can unite to meet this critical need.

D I D Y O U R 2 0 2 3

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

I N C L U D E G I V I N G T O **DMARC**?

BY LESLIE GARMAN, CFRE, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & OUTREACH | LGARMAN@DMARCUNITED.ORG

It's that time of year again - the time of year that our mail and e-mail boxes are flooded with appeals from nonprofits all doing important work.

But what's the best way to help?

DMARC accepts a wide variety of gift types, including stocks and with planning, they can not only help DMARC, but they can also help you, and quite often have very positive tax implications. Below are a few of our favorites. As always, we check with your financial advisor to learn what makes the best sense for you.

You can make a stock gift.

Donating long-term appreciated securities such as stock, bonds and mutual funds is easier than you may think. When you donate the stock itself—rather than selling or liquidating the security—you won't need to remove the long-term capital gains taxes paid from the overall sum. To transfer stock, either you or your broker fills out DMARC's form and we do the rest.

Everyone can make in-kind donations!

These include physical items, but they can also include gifts of services, time, or expertise and help DMARC use our financial resources in better ways. A new option is our car donation program. We have also received gifts of grain. As always, you can also donate nonperishable food items directly to DMARC or via our Red Barrel program at area retailers.

You can make a planned gift to DMARC - join the Just One Legacy Society

It can be hard to think about what happens after we're gone, but setting up a planned gift is a great way to ensure that your support to DMARC and our mission to meet basic human needs continues through a Charitable Remainder Trust, Charitable Gift Annuity, Charitable Lead Trust, Life Insurance policy (even a SLIVER can make a huge difference) or through your Qualified Retirement Plan. Some planned gifts don't have to happen after you're gone - they can be created now, and even provide taxable income during your lifetime.

Gifts of Cash

Gifts of cash allow organizations to do what is needed most when a contribution is made. You can give a gift of cash in a number of ways:

- *By making a year-end gift online. Establish a recurring gift to join the 'Apple a Day' Giving Club*
- *By designating DMARC as your charity of choice through your workplace giving campaign*
- *By donating your IRA required minimum distribution (for those age 70 and a half)*
- *By designating a gift to DMARC through your giving fund at the Community Foundation.*

Whatever your gift, know that it will be valued and used efficiently and effectively in our community to meet basic human needs in greater Des Moines. **Want to learn more? Connect with me!**

...continued from cover

Heather and her husband have five children and seven grandchildren. She is thankful to be able to spend most of her time as a full-time caretaker for her kids and her mother... but the work can be difficult.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, business came to a halt for the handyman business that she and her husband operated. He went to work as a forklift operator and she found her time spread even more thin. After her father's unexpected passing in a car accident, her mother came to live with them.

The Urbandale Food Pantry has been a safe haven for her family in navigating life's challenges and the dignified experience of shopping for your own food is a small but important victory.

"When you come in here the people are so friendly. They don't treat you like you are less than, they treat you like they're glad you are here," said Heather.

"It takes a lot of courage to ask for help and it takes courage to share your story. It is humbling to say I need your help and I can't do this without you... but that's what I'm saying. I couldn't do it without you."

As the DMARC Food Pantry Network nears the end of what will be the busiest year on record, a staggering 53,000+ people have been assisted so far through the end of September. About 1 in 3 of these individuals are utilizing a DMARC Pantry for the first time. For those like Heather, and new visitors especially, feeling welcome can be the difference in making the trip or not.

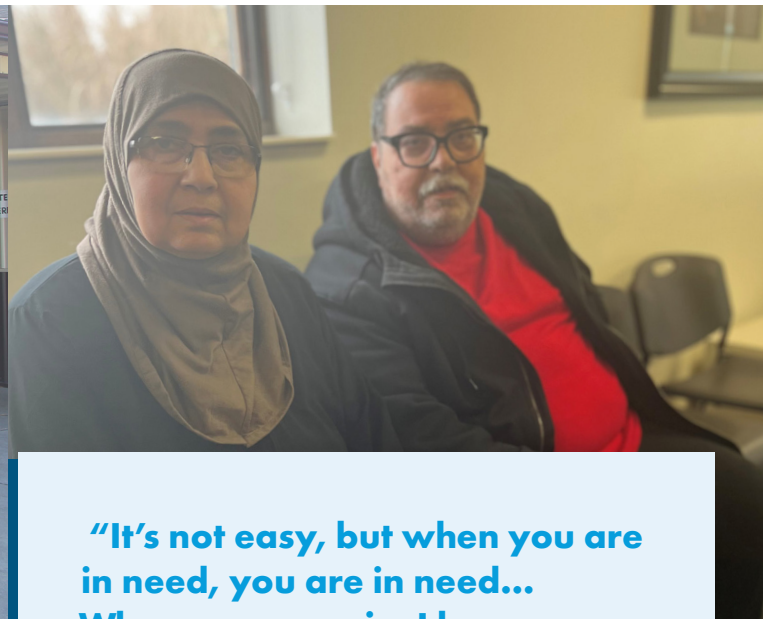
As the need grows, so does the frequency

Debra G. pulls up to the Families First – Bidwell Pantry on one of the first bitter cold days of the fall. She is grateful that today is a good day for her health, but getting to the pantry isn't always realistic.



"We're stressed out and hungry. We're kind of getting what we can, where we can, without bothering anyone... because its real cold. I'm looking for a better brighter future and some sunshine."

- **Rebeka S.** appreciates the option for mobile and permanent pantries. She's used both as a resource to help handicapped relatives and grab food while being unhoused in the winter months.



"It's not easy, but when you are in need, you are in need... When you come in, I hear 'You are welcome, Come on in, or thank you.' "

- **Majed A.** and his wife immigrated to the US 7 1/2 years ago. He wants to work but his career as an electrical engineer isn't feasible anymore with his health. At 65, he is taking classes at DMACC to learn IT skills.

“I've had five major surgeries. I wasn't supposed to take a step in my life. But guess what? By the grace of god I'm walking!”

- **DEBRA G.** is recently retired and lived in DSM for the last 13 years. She and her husband deal with multiple health difficulties including diabetes and severe arthritis. She was born prematurely in the 1960's and wasn't supposed to survive more than a couple weeks.



Debra was born prematurely in the 1960's and wasn't supposed to survive more than a couple weeks. She has had five major surgeries and her mobility issues were complicated even further by a major car accident in the 1990's. She appreciates the ease of access the DMARC food delivery service provides on days when getting to a pantry is especially difficult.

Debra, like many folks, finds herself visiting a pantry more frequently now after retiring last year.

This increased need is a growing reality for many this year. So far in 2023, 20% of everyone who has utilized a DMARC Pantry has gone more than once a month. Nevertheless, Debra is hopeful for the future and insists that the pantry is an "essential" service in the communities for people like herself.



VIEW THE FULL VERSION OF EACH STORY ONLINE AT DMARCUNITED.ORG.



“I like the fact that they have options. I come here because of the variety.”

- **AL H.** is a lifetime Des Moines Resident (except for attending the U of I) and a regular pantry visitor. He is grateful for the opportunity he was given to work at the original DMARC Food Pantry Warehouse on Douglas when he was able to work.

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

MERONICA BREEDLOVE

MICHELLE CHUMBLEY

MONICA CURL

JEFFREY CZERWIEC

JOE DOLACK

MAX DOUGLASS

LUKE ELZINGA

KELLY ERICKSON

CARL EVANS

ANDREW FIRESTINE

WADE JOHNSON

SARAH McCRORY

DENNIS MINARICH

PATRICK MINOR

AMANDA PARKINS

REV. SARAH TRONE GARRIOTT

BLAKE WILLADSEN

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, FY23:

LISA LOGAN,

President

RACHEL COLLIER MURDOCK,

President Elect

REV. RACHEL MITHELMAN

Secretary

SHASHANK AURORA,

Treasurer

DENISE BUBECK,

Past President

MATT DURHAM

LENDIE R. FOLLETT, PH.D.

RANDY JENSEN

TARA KRAMER

STUART OXER

SHEILA NELSON

REV. RYAN RUSSELL

EMILY WEBB

IHSAN YASEEN

RON BEANE (Advisory)



TRIVIA NIGHT



DMARC's young professionals group is hosting a trivia night with all funds raised supporting DMARC. Bring your team out and you never know who might show up...

ALL ARE WELCOME!

TUESDAY, DEC. 5

FROM 5:30 TO 7:30 PM

PEACE TREE BREWING



Hut-hut-hike! Support the DMARC Food Pantry Network with a food and fund drive during the Souper Bowl of Caring this February.

We can guide help you and your congregation to the endzone with some helpful tools like an online fundraising page, "how to" packet and even hosting an interactive 'hunger simulation' to help you tell the "why" of food insecurity here in the Des Moines Metro. Make your drive a competition between dueling fanbases to encourage more donations. Contact us today if your congregation is interested in getting involved!

With the winter holidays on the horizon please be aware of closures that will impact the DMARC Food Pantry Network. DMARC's office, warehouse, and the DMARC-ket Southside Food Pantry will be closed Dec. 25, 2023 through Jan. 1, 2024.

MEET THE NEWEST DMARC TEAM MEMBERS



HELLO
MY NAME IS
Wade

WADE JOHNSON - Local Route Driver

Wade joined the DMARC staff this fall and has been a huge difference maker in helping to ensure speedy delivery of food pantry orders across the network. He is happy to get a chance to support DMARC's mission everyday and see the work in action.

MAX DOUGLASS - Local Route Driver

Max joined the DMARC staff in April 2023 and has had an immediate impact in helping to ensure orders are getting to our pantries quickly. He has also helped DMARC take on additional help around food rescue. In his free time he loves video games and writing horror movie scripts.



HELLO
MY NAME IS
Max



HELLO
MY NAME IS
Dennis

DENNIS MINARICH- Warehouse Associate

Dennis Joined the DMARC Staff this fall and brings a wealth of experience in warehousing operations. His role will be focused on adding capacity as our operations grow and specifically on the processing of donated product.

MERONICA BREEDLOVE Warehouse & Food Pantry Associate

Ronnie joined the DMARC staff this fall in a new role to help assist the day-to-day operations at the DMARC-Ket Southside Food Pantry as well as warehouse operations for the Food Pantry Network.



HELLO
MY NAME IS
Ronnie



UNITED TO MEET THE NEED

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

(515) 277.6969
dmarcunited.org

 **Des Moines Area Religious Council**

 **@DMARCunited**

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
DES MOINES, IOWA
Permit No. 2934

THE VOICE

WHAT IS YOUR 'WHY'?

I spent the better part of 8 years developing a food recovery organization in Maryland. From modest beginnings we grew to assisting upwards of 12,000 people a week during the COVID-19 pandemic.

When I returned to Iowa, I was looking for an organization that had the same impact. After (maybe) 5 or 6 volunteer shifts in the DMARC mobile pantry, I was invited in for a tour and got to see the work in action. It didn't take long for me to confirm this was a cause very worthy of my support. The DMARC team is counting on us. So, why do you support DMARC?

- Jack Bell

**JOIN JACK THIS HOLIDAY SEASON AND
HELP IN WHATEVER WAY YOU CAN.**

