



MOBILIZING TO MEET THE NEED

*Back row: Polk County Supervisors Robert Brownell (left), Tom Hockensmith (center), and Angela Connolly (right).
Front row: DMARC Executive Director Rev. Sarai Schnucker Rice (left) and Suzie Glazer Burt (right).*

BY LUKE ELZINGA, COMMUNICATIONS & ADVOCACY MANAGER

On Wednesday, October 3, The Partnership for a Hunger Free Polk County dedicated two new mobile food pantries at the Ellis I. Levitt Boys & Girls Club at Carver Elementary in Des Moines.

The two new mobile food pantries were made possible thanks to the generosity of Gregory and Suzie Glazer Burt, Charlotte and Fred Hubbell, Variety—the Children’s Charity, and The Partnership for a Hunger Free Polk County.

The additional mobile food pantries will allow DMARC to reach more locations at a higher frequency, and to reach underserved populations such as children at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa (BGCCI).

continued on page 4...

**IN THIS
ISSUE:**

MOBILIZING TO MEET THE NEED
FOOD INSECURITY & AFFORDABLE HOUSING
INTERFAITH YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP



FOOD AS MEDICINE

BY JOHN WHALIN, PRESIDENT

By now, many people are aware of DMARC's commitment to providing healthy food and fresh produce through our Food Pantry Network. It has been a vital part of our work ever since we found out a decade ago that our food pantry visitors had three times the incidence of diabetes compared to the general population of Polk County.

Many people living with food insecurity in our community don't have the income or the access to a grocery store to afford the healthy food their body needs to thrive. Oftentimes, the most affordable and accessible food in grocery stores is highly processed and calorie-dense. At the DMARC Food Pantry Network, we provide a healthy food supply low in sugar, fat, and salt, with fresh fruits and vegetables.

You may not know, however, that we are also engaged in several projects to further access to

healthy fresh fruits and vegetables and provide nutrition education to the people who use our food pantries.

Foodies in Training, our childhood nutrition project aimed at children ages three and older, helps children explore the area of nutrition through stories, snacks and other activities. And now, with a new Mobile Food Pantry specifically designed to serve children at Boys & Girls Clubs locations, we're teaching healthy eating habits and providing nutritious food to more children and their families experiencing food insecurity.

Our Food Pantry 2.0 project at West Des Moines Human Services continues to push the boundaries of what a typical food pantry looks like and can accomplish. By incentivizing healthy choices, we've observed people make the shift over time from items like canned soup to more fresh fruits and vegetables. We've also started a pilot project to provide free biometrics and health screenings to people who use the food pantry at West Des Moines Human Services.

And we realize that what may be considered healthy food for one person may not be suitable for someone else's dietary restrictions or allergies.

DMARC works in collaboration with Visiting Nurse Services (VNS) and Blank Children's Hospital to provide a specialized food supply to a local family that has a child with highly specific dietary needs due to a rare medical issue. Each week, a specialized food box is packaged by DMARC and distributed to the family through one of our partner food pantries.

These projects, along with our healthy food guidelines, aim to positively impact the health and well-being of people living with food insecurity in Greater Des Moines. But until everyone in our community can afford healthy and fresh food, our impact will be limited.

John Whalin
President, 2018-2019

INTERFAITH CAMP PROVIDES LEARNING AND GROWTH

BY REV. SARAH TRONE GARRIOTT,
COORDINATOR OF INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT

The 2018 Interfaith Youth Leadership Camp was an incredible experience for 17 high school youth from across the religious spectrum—but I have to say, it was also pretty incredible for the adult leaders, too. A partnership between DMARC and the Comparison Project at Drake University, this year's camp focused on relationship building between the participants and lots of memorable, engaging, and fun experiences. Students stayed on the Drake University campus for three nights and spent four days exploring the religious landscape of Greater Des Moines.

It was such a powerful thing to join these young leaders as they explored new places, met new people, encountered ways that were so different than their own, ate foods they had never before tried, and shared about themselves—their faith, their concerns, their struggles.



The camp kicked off with community building activities at ArtForce Iowa where the students also screen printed their own T-shirts. A Drake University photo scavenger hunt brought the small groups together, and helped them get to know the campus. The experiences in religious communities were just as engaging: the students shared in a Langar meal at the Sikh Temple in

INTERFAITH YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP



Johnston, were present for Friday prayers at Masjid An-Noor, joined the people of Tifereth Israel for Shabbat worship, experienced Buddhist meditation at Pureland of Iowa, danced with a Bhutanese Hindu community, and visited several diverse Christian communities during their Sunday worship services. Over the course of the four-day camp, each student also created a digital storytelling project reflecting on their own faith.

It was not always easy to have so many teenagers who were so different all in one place. But as we watched these young people overcome their fears and navigate the challenges of being with others who are different, the adult leaders came away with such hope for the future. If the tears, laughter, applause, and hugs at the screening of the digital stories were any indicator, the camp was a success in raising up interfaith leaders across the religious spectrum. We can't wait for next year!

And finally, a special thank you goes out to Kay Myers for helping to make Interfaith Youth Leadership Camp 2018 possible!

If you'd like to learn more about the Interfaith Youth Leadership Camp or watch the digital stories created by this year's participants, visit www.iowainterfaithexchange.com/youthcamp.



...continued from cover

“I am so proud to join Hunger Free and DMARC with a donation on behalf of myself and my late husband Greg, and to help Polk County residents who struggle to feed themselves and their families,” said Suzie Glazer Burt. “These new mobile pantries will serve hungry children throughout our community by partnering with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa.”

One of the mobile food pantries will be designed specifically to cater to children, with art murals adorning the walls, more accessible shelving, and single-serving food items that make choosing a healthy snack the easy choice.

Childhood nutrition is especially important to us, as we know that inadequate nutrition can harm a child’s development and performance in school.

“We know that hungry children simply aren’t able to succeed academically and reach the great futures they deserve. That’s why we’re honored to be a part of this incredible community partnership,” said BGCCI CEO Jodie Warth. “Not only will our Boys & Girls Club families be able to access fresh foods from the mobile pantries, but they’ll also learn about nutrition and how to make critical healthy food choices.”

Research has shown that hunger can affect a student’s cognition, attention-span, and their ability to learn. Undernourished children are also more likely to get sick, miss school and exhibit behavioral issues in the classroom.

The addition of the new mobile pantries will provide healthy food to more children and their families who are living with food insecurity.

By focusing our services to meet the specific needs of children, we hope to instill healthy eating habits and teach valuable nutrition skills that will last a lifetime.

The new DMARC Mobile Food Pantries will begin operation in the following months, with numerous new partnerships already being established for possible mobile food pantry site locations.

DMARC thanks the generosity of Gregory and Suzie Glazer Burt, Charlotte and Fred Hubbell, Variety–the Children’s Charity, and The Partnership for a Hunger Free Polk County for making the new mobile food pantries a reality.

To learn more about the DMARC Mobile Food Pantries and to find their scheduled hours, please visit www.dmarcunited.org/food/mobile.

THE INTERSECTION OF FOOD INSECURITY AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

BY LUKE ELZINGA, COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY MANAGER

Since 1978, DMARC has been providing emergency rent and utilities assistance for families facing an eviction or utility shut-off. Originally established under the name “Compassion in Action,” DMARC’s Housing Stability Fund currently partners with Polk County General Assistance to distribute funds to families facing a financial emergency that could leave them without housing.

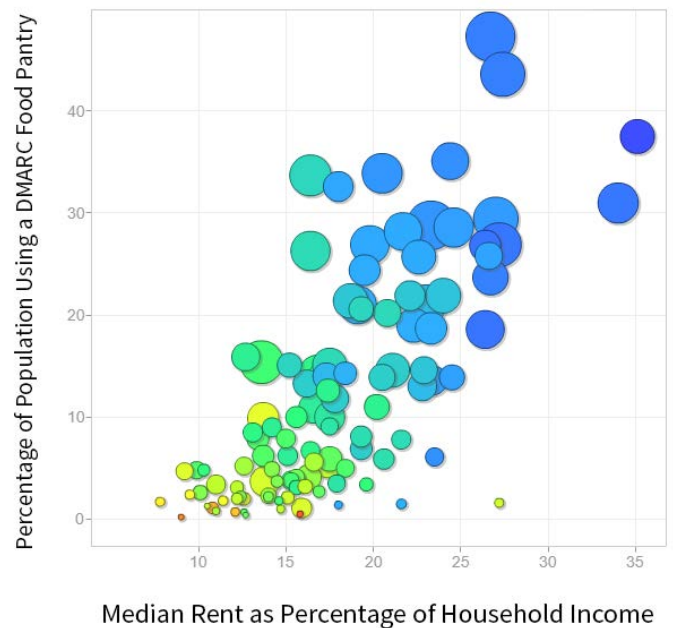
However, providing emergency rent and utilities assistance is not going to solve the problem of Polk County’s lack of affordable housing. It’s an immediate and temporary fix to a very complex and ongoing problem in our community.

Currently, Polk County is 8,000 homes short of affordable housing for its residents. For too many people, finding affordable housing in Greater Des Moines seems an impossible task. 17.8% of renters in Des Moines and West Des Moines are forced to spend over half their income on rent.

“Most concerning are the members of our community who make less than 30% of area median income who, on average, spend about 68% of their monthly income on housing,” said Polk County Housing Trust Fund Policy and Communications Coordinator Lauren Johnson. “When families are this severely burdened by housing costs, they have less money available for essential goods such as food, clothing, and health care. This makes for some extremely difficult decisions at the kitchen table.”

Using our data visualization dashboard, we’ve paired DMARC client data with the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) data. Through this, we’ve identified the overwhelming relationship between the average percentage of household income that goes to rent and the percentage of people using a DMARC food pantry in specific census tracts.

Not surprisingly, higher average percentage of household income paid to rent in a census tract correlates to higher use at food pantries (see chart below). When people are spending more just to keep a roof over their heads, they don’t have as much money to spend on groceries. More and more people are turning to food pantries to help stretch their monthly budget.



[Watch the animation:youtu.be/T6RiJN-p0Bw](https://youtu.be/T6RiJN-p0Bw)

DMARC is already refocusing our affordable housing efforts. We’re engaging with our congregations to come up with ideas to repurpose spaces for affordable housing projects, and advocating the need to our local leaders.

“There is no silver bullet to solve the issue of housing affordability in Des Moines,” said Johnson. “Members of our community must come together across sectors in order to provide lasting solutions for our most vulnerable families. The truth is that we all benefit when we all have a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.”

For more information about Polk County’s need for affordable housing, please visit www.pchtf.org.

Black Friday. Cyber Monday.

#GIVINGTUESDAY™

November 27, 2018

DMARC'S MISSION:

Working Together to Meet Basic Human Needs.

STAFF:

REV. SARAI SCHNUCKER RICE,

Executive Director

LESLIE L. GARMAN, CFRE,

Director of Development & Outreach

REBECCA WHITLOW,

Food Pantry Network Director

DANIEL BECK

DON CRAWFORD, JR.

MONICA CURL

JOE DOLACK

LUKE ELZINGA

REV. SARAH TRONE GARRIOTT

JOHN McPHEE

PATRICK MINOR

DREW ROBERTSON

SHOSHANA SALOWITZ

LINDA VANDER HART

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2018-2019:

JOHN WHALIN,

President

RABBI DAVID KAUFMAN,

Secretary

THOMAS CROSS,

Treasurer

JODY MEAD,

Past President

DALE BENTLAGE

TOM CHAPMAN

JULIE McMILLIN

CHRIST NAUMANN

MATT STRAWN

CATHERINE SWOBODA

EMILY WEBB

DOUG VENTLING

DIANE ALTON (Advisory)

RON BEANE (Advisory)

Keep an eye out for our special #GivingTuesday online campaign on November 27! #GivingTuesday is a global day of online giving that follows the Thanksgiving weekend every year. Last year, DMARC raised over \$3,000 on #GivingTuesday.

HUNGRY TURKEY HALF MARATHON & 5K



The Des Moines Hungry Turkey Half Marathon & 5K will be held on Saturday, November 24.

DMARC is the charity beneficiary of the run, and you can support us by registering for the run with the coupon code 'DMARC,' or by volunteering! Learn more at dsmhungryturkeyrun.com.

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

Support the DMARC Food Pantry Network with a fund or food drive during the Souper Bowl of CaringSM!

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 strongarriott@dmarcunited.org.



SET UP A PLANNED GIFT TO DMARC TODAY

Planned gifts come in different forms, but they share a common trait: they are all contemplated by an individual during their lifetime to take effect at or after their passing. There are many types of planned gifts, with the most common example being a simple bequest in a will, trust or within an estate plan. Learn more about leaving a legacy for DMARC:



We believe...

www.dmarcunited.org/planned-giving

Note: in all cases it is recommended you consult your tax professionals.

DMARC INNOVATION LEADS TO INCREASED SUPPORT

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

This past fiscal year has been one for the record books for DMARC.

All-time record number of individuals assisted.

All-time record number of pantry visits.

Four consecutive months of double-digit monthly increases when compared to the year's previous monthly pantry network usage reports (January, February, March and April 2018).

They say that necessity is the mother of invention. And although DMARC's data visualization dashboard was not invented because of the increased need, it could not have been created at a better time.

Data can tell a story. But data presented in a pictorial format such as that used by DMARC's Data Dashboard has communicated that story in a way that has uniquely engaged leaders from all areas of our community – legislative, community, faith based, and philanthropic. Leaders have been excited to understand more about the “who, what, where and why” of the DMARC Food Pantry Network and its work to help, in ever increasing numbers, those who are food insecure and utilize DMARC's services.

The **data visualization dashboard** is just one way that DMARC is innovative. In the coming year, DMARC will receive additional funding from United Way of Central Iowa to expand this tool so that we can more fully understand the story of the food pantry clientele we serve so that we can visualize and share real-time data with local stakeholders and highlight the socioeconomic issues that impact low-income families.

Another example of DMARC innovation is our **Food Pantry 2.0 program expansion**, also funded by United Way. Known as “The Food Pantry of the



Future,” DMARC is revolutionizing the delivery of supplemental food assistance services to low-income individuals. Funding will help to expand our new food distribution model, which utilizes an incentivized point system and other forms of behavioral economics to increase consumption of fresh and healthy food among pantry clientele—something important to DMARC clients as they have three times the incidence of diabetes than the general public.

DMARC's **Mobile Food Pantry** meets a unique need, but recent funding from Greg and Suzie Glazer Burt, Variety—the Children's Charity, Charlotte and Fred Hubbell and Hunger Free Polk County will expand the number of DMARC's current mobile food pantries from one to three to better serve children through a partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa.

The ways in which we have innovated couldn't have been predicted 10 years ago. But these efforts have helped us to become more efficient and better meet the needs of our community.

What's ahead in the next ten years? We don't know. But what we do know is that innovation comes with a price tag. Your gift—whether it be a personal gift or a gift given through an employee, organization or faith community—will allow DMARC to continue its work to innovate so that we can meet the needs of our community.

Would you like to invest in DMARC's future?

You can do this by endowing our work and making a planned gift to DMARC today.

To learn how, contact Leslie L. Garman, CFRE, Director of Development & Outreach or visit www.dmarcunited.org/planned-giving.



UNITED TO MEET THE NEED

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

Des Moines Area Religious Council

1435 Mulberry Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

515.277.6969
dmarcunited.org

Warehouse: 515.282.2026
Fax: 515.274.8389
Email: info@dmarcunited.org

Des Moines Area Religious Council
 @dmreligious

FY2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT OUT NOW



Inside our annual report, you'll find information on program innovations from the past year, Food Pantry Network usage and demographic data, and financials for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

www.dmarcunited.org/annual-report

THE VOICE



UNITED TO MEET THE NEED