

The Echo

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Letter From the President

Happy New Year! The Ecumenical Center had an active year in 2010 and we look forward to 2011. Thanks to your help, excellent staff and volunteer support in 2010 the Ecumenical Community Center was able to

Provide \$6,000 per month in emergency financial assistance through the Helping Hands Ministry program. This money helped provide housing, utilities, and limited local transportation.

Administer funds to provide 296 'first month's rent' grants. These grants, completely separate from the emergency assistance program, came from the Housing Fund for Linn County and the City of Marion. Helping Hands Ministry's role in administering the funds reflects its reputation for careful stewardship of funds. All grant funds went to qualified residents. Your support provided the staff time for Helping Hands to administer the programs.

Provide hundreds of hours of computer access to persons with disabilities. The CompuPlace program used special equipment and software to provide customized access to an extraordinary variety of computer programs.

Provide the space for the meals programs of Green Square Meals and the Witwer Senior Center. Together these programs served over 300,000 meals in 2010.

Provide reduced-cost office space for several non-profit organizations, including Foman Infant Care, the Tapestry Program, the SERRV store and Cedar Rapids Aquatics.

Provide free storage space for several churches still dealing with damage from the 2008 flood.

With your support and God's help the Ecumenical Center looks forward to helping address the needs of our community in 2011. May God bless you and guide us all in the New Year.

Jim Kennedy, ECC President

Mark your calendar :

Saturday, *February 5, 2011*

Returning Prisoner Simulation

9:30 a.m.—1:30 p.m.

St Pius X Fellowship Hall

Registration at 9:15 a.m.

Call 366-2651 to pre-register

Cost: \$10 Adults; \$5 Students
(includes light meal)

Appropriate for anyone age 16+ There are over 3000 individuals in our six county area who are in jail, prison, parole, probation, or residential placement. 95% of these individuals will return to our community. This is an opportunity to learn what these individuals face, and discover ways to make their return to society successful.

Helping Hands Ministry

Helping Hands Ministry

601 Second Avenue SE #2

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401

Phone: (319)-366-2651

Email: helpinghands@ecc-cr.net

Lois Ann Rude, HHM Director

Kiersten Onanga, HHM Staff Associate



HHM has a mission to provide material assistance, referrals, and/or supportive ministry to persons in emergency need in collaboration with faith communities and local agencies in Linn County. It provides caring support to people in emergency need and preserves dignity by helping them manage their own lives. They are Linn County residents with incomes that fall below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. **During 2010, 745 households representing 1,559 persons** were assisted with rent, utility, security/utility deposits, and miscellaneous items such as birth certificates, photo identifications and limited transportation. Another 3,300+ referrals were made. This is made possible by the generosity of the Linn County faith community, private donations and grants.

Helping Hands Ministry (HHM) is the recipient of two grants to help households with first month rent. **The City of Marion granted \$36,260** to be used for 1st mo rent to Marion residents who were experiencing difficulty moving into a new place. Due to limited income, they could pay either the deposit or the rent, but not both. When approved, the household pays the deposit and the grant pays the rent. A total of **92 households representing 204 persons were assisted** at a cost of \$36,260.

The **Housing Fund for Linn County** provided a \$70,000 grant to be used in 2010 for either 1st month rent, rent deposit, one month's rent to avoid eviction or utility deposit to residents of Linn County. Applicants' income must fall within the 30% Area Median Income as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. They must pay their own deposit, have a steady source of income/support for the last three months, and show that they will be able to continue paying for ongoing rent afterwards. A budget counseling session with Horizon's Consumer Credit Counseling is mandatory. A total of **158 households representing 397 persons were assisted** at a cost of \$70,000. A grant application for 2011 was approved in the amount of \$70,000. *We are very thankful for these two grants that have been a tremendous help to 250 households representing 601 persons!*

HHM also received a \$25,000 grant from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation to assist households who experienced documented loss following the Flood of 2008. During 2010, **75 households representing 172 persons** were assisted with rent, utility, minor auto repair, licensing, minor home repair, etc. at a total cost of \$20,034.41. The remaining \$4,965.59 can be utilized in 2011. A grant application requesting another \$25,000 will be submitted in Feb.

In total, 1070 households representing 2,332 persons received financial assistance in 2010! This represents a 3% increase that would not have been possible without all your support! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! May you have a healthy and joy-filled 2011!

Helping Hands Ministry Volunteer Highlight . . .

Meet the new HHM Staff Associate

This time we will feature all of the volunteers in 2010. Unfortunately, a group picture is not available. These are very special people who are dedicated to Helping Hands Ministry and give generously of their time and talents:

Eldon Pugh, Data Entry	130 hours
Jean Kenison, Front Office	146 hours
Jessica Stamper, Front Desk	350 hours
Shari Barden, Front Office	88 hours
Ben Symonds, Front Office	150 hours
Teresa Hedgepeth, Intakes	187 hours
Sarah Mason, Front Office	288 hours
Pat Kudart, Front Office	68 hours
Pat Goodwin, Front Office	35 hours
Lynn Perry, Front Office	20 hours
Janelle Bezlay, Filing	18 hours
Joe Symonds, Data Entry	9 hours
Beverly Smith, Filing	86 hours
Beverly Smith, HHM Steering Com	<u>11 hours</u>
14 volunteers gave a total of	1,586 hours!

On behalf of the HHM Steering Committee and HHM Staff (Kiersten Onanga, Lois Rude and Barb Kane—not pictured) a very big **THANK YOU** and we look forward to 2011!



Alternative Gift Market held 12/04/10 at Coe College resulted in \$310 contributed to HHM!

After serving as Staff Associate for Helping Hands Ministry since February of 2007, Barb Kane gave her letter of resignation effective 11/19/10. Barb was an exemplary employee with a passion for the clientele served. We thank her for her dedication and continued support.

We are pleased to announce that the new HHM Staff Associate is Kiersten Onanga who was able to transition from Senior Social Work Intern to this staff position effective 12/04/10. Her plans are to graduate from Mount Mercy University with a B.A in Social Work in May 2011 and then enter a Master's in Social Work program online. Welcome Kiersten!

Kiersten's husband is working on his PhD, her 9 year old daughter is active in school activities (choir & orchestra), and they are expecting another child in February.

Her hours will be every Thursday and Friday and every other Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lois Rude works every Monday and Tuesday and the 1st and 3rd Wednesday.

We would welcome new volunteers as some of our regulars have found new jobs or have relocated out of state. Could you see yourself contributing 3 hours a week? 6 hours a week? Or 8 hours a month? Just come to the volunteer training session held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month beginning January 19th from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Our goal is to have a volunteer at the front desk every hour that we are open (10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday except holidays).

Please call 366-2651 for more information.





CompuPlace

601 Second Avenue SE #3
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401

Phone: (319)-362-4284

Email: compuplace@ecc-cr.net

Robin Switzer Brunner, Director

COMPUPLACE: A Specialized Computer Learning Lab for People with Intellectual Disabilities

In 2010, 106 individuals visited CompuPlace for over 1800 hours of computer work. On average, 47 people worked for 150 hours each month. Just over 1930 hours of paid staff time were required to run the center and provide in-house technical assistance at the ECC. With budget cuts and family belt-tightening, CompuPlace brought in only \$5899 in total contributions from clients, family and community members. Operational support is crucial. Most of our computers are provided by REACT and Rockwell's Employee United Fund, but support for the one single salary required for CompuPlace to function is much harder to identify and obtain.

Clients come to CompuPlace for a mental workout. It's a lot like going to the gym for a physical workout. We thought ECHO readers might enjoy a workout using web sites and games similar to the ones we use here. Play games on the internet at your own risk, but we have had no trouble with the sites below. First, a little background:

An article from Time Magazine entitled, "Study: Brain Exercises Don't Improve Cognition" includes information about why this study may be right AND wrong:

www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1983306,00.html

And a challenge to the above article includes interesting links at the end of the article:

www.brainfitnessforlife.com/brain-games/challenging-the-nature-and-bbc-brain-games-study/

Here are some web sites with free games we've tried for brain exercise that you might enjoy:

www.brain.com/

www.cambridgebrainsciences.com/

www.brainmetrix.com/

www.aarp.org/ Then click on the Entertainment link on the left, and then Games

A Variety of Disability Advocacy Links

To receive email about Iowa Disability Advocacy, send a blank email to

Iowa_Disability_Advocates-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

U of I Center for Disabilities and Development. See links to The Resource Library, Center for Excellence on Disabilities and Iowa COMPASS

<http://www.healthcare.uiowa.edu/cdd/index.asp>

Disability.gov

<http://www.disability.gov/>

Useful Disability Advocacy links

<http://www.katrinadisability.info/iowa.html>

American Association of People with Disabilities

<http://www.aapd.com/site/c.pv11kNWJqE/b.5406299/k.FBCC/Spotlight.htm>

National Organization on Disability

<http://www.nod.org/>

The ARC of East Central Iowa

<http://www.arceci.org/>

American Council of the Blind

<http://www.acb.org/>

National Federation of the Blind

<http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Default.asp>

National Association of the Deaf

<http://www.nad.org/>

A page on Environmental Sensitivities

<http://users.lmi.net/wilworks/>

The Institute for Human Centered Design

<http://www.adaptenv.org/>

U of I Legal Clinic

<http://www.uiowa.edu/legalclinic/>

E-Mail compuplace@ecc-cr.net to receive these resources as clickable links in an email

Margaret Bock Housing Update

“A Home on Third”
1021 Third Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Margaret Bock Housing (MBH) continues to serve low income single adults with affordable housing. It is currently at full capacity with a waiting list for acceptance. Thirty-four (34) single rooms are available to be occupied. Six of the rooms have an adjoining bathroom whereas the remaining 28 share one of several community bathrooms. Rent varies according to the size of the room from \$235 to \$255 per month including utilities and cleaning of all common areas.

The minimum requirements for acceptance are: must be single, have a source of income, pay a \$130 security deposit, pay one month rent in advance and agree to a “criminal check”. Rent applications may be picked up at the Helping Hands Ministry office located at 601 Second Avenue SE #2. **Wish list:** twin sheets & pillows

Hank Hernandez, MBH & ECC Board Member.

ECCF Board of Directors

- Jim Kennedy, President, First Lutheran
- David Jiruska, Vice-President, Westminster Presbyterian
- J.D. Combellick, Secretary, Peoples Unitarian Universalist
- Peter Riley, Treasurer, At-Large
- Vacancy, Mound View Neighborhood Association
- Gary Novak, Salem United Methodist
- Dale Crosier, At-Large
- Jim Federer, At-Large
- Charles Scott, At-Large
- Henry Hernandez, Immaculate Conception Catholic
- Ed Holstrom, St. Paul’s United Methodist
- Vacancy, Wellington Heights Neighborhood Association
- Scott Olson, At-Large
- Jean Oxley, First Congregational
- Darlene Schrimper, Echo Hill Presbyterian
- Donna Fernandes Jiruska, At-Large
- John vonLackum, First Presbyterian-CR
- Mary Evans, First Christian
- Mary Ann Stewart, Lovely Lane United Methodist
- Claudia Whitney, Christ Episcopal Church
- Vacancy, At-Large

Please take the time to participate in the

Returning Prisoner Simulation on 02/05/11

Presented by: Ecumenical Community Center

“Do not be afraid any longer...your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom.” Jesus said this to his disciples and to us today, but how do we live as **“kingdom people”**? A suggestion for this is happening Saturday, February 5 in St. Pius X Hall from 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. A brief explanation follows.

At the simulation, you are provided with a new identity as a parolee released from prison that morning. The session guides you to try to accomplish all the tasks facing returning prisoners in their first month back in the community, such as obtaining housing, a job, paying restitution and child support, while trying to avoid being sent back to jail. It is an eye opening opportunity. A debriefing is held afterwards, so participants can exchange reflections on your own role in prisoner re-entry – a chance to live as **“kingdom people”**.

This simulation is open to the public and is appropriate for adults and high school students. A \$10.00 donation is requested from adults and \$5.00 from high school and college students. Pre-registration is requested. Contact Lois or Kiersten at 319-366-2651 or helpinghands@ecc-cr.net.

WALK IN THE SHOES OF A RETURNING PRISONER

ECC Board Meetings are held the last Thursday of each month beginning at 7:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.

If you would like more information on serving as a member at-large, please contact President Jim Kennedy at 366-2651.

ECC News:

Contributions received between January 1 and December 31
(not including private donations and agency rent):

Bethany Lutheran	First Christian
Buffalo United Methodist	First Christian Women
Calvin Sinclair Presbyterian	First Congregational
Christ Episcopal	Gloria Dei Lutheran
Echo Hill Presbyterian	Immaculate Conception Catholic
First Baptist—Marion	Salem United Methodist
First Lutheran	St. Ludmila Catholic
Living Water United Methodist	St. Pius X Catholic
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection	St. Stephen's Lutheran
Mission of Hope	St. Paul's United Methodist Women
Oakland Church of the Nazarene	Westminster Presbyterian
Our Savior's Lutheran	Westminster Presbyterian Women
Peoples Church Unitarian Universalist	First Presbyterian Mission Com
Lovely Lane United Methodist	First Presbyterian Thrift Shop
Prairie Chapel United Methodist	St. Joseph Catholic—Marion
St. Matthew's Catholic	St. Paul's Lutheran—Marion

Rockwell Collins Employees' United Fund provided a technology grant to CompuPlace!
City of Marion and Housing Fund for Linn County provided grants to Helping Hands as
did the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation & Brimmer Foundation.

If your church contributed during this 12-month period and is not recognized above, please contact the ECC office at 366-2651.

Development Director's Corner:

2010 is in our a memories. I look forward to 2011 and the joy of creating more new outcomes for the people we serve. Many are "so close" to losing their water, their electricity, their housing, or their jobs.

Many are juggling bills so closely that the unexpected loss of a day's pay can have devastating consequences. It is sobering to hear the stories - "I have four children...." My check was short "... "My daughter says if we are ever homeless..."

I am grateful for all the people who have talked with me the last few weeks. Ministers with busy holiday schedules; lay people assuming new responsibilities in their churches; community leaders; and our board members and staff have all provided insight and direction for my seeking funding for needs that never end. Thank you for keeping the Ecumenical Community Center Foundation in your hearts and your prayers. We also appreciate your generous "gifting" at the Alternative Gift Market!

Please contact me. I am grateful for opportunities to share the Ecumenical Center's story with your church group or organization. I also have a few ideas of how to "make money" where there is no money to benefit ECCF; I would love to hear your ideas, too! You may like to consider volunteering for our Board; to answer our phone; or to be a welcoming presence in our lobby. There are many ways to be a Helping Hand! **My e-mail is mvulchard@msn.com; my cell phone # is 319-491-4523.**

Marvalee Vulchard



The Ecumenical Community Center

601 Second Avenue SE #1
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401
Phone: (319)-366-2651

On the Web: www.ecc-cr.net

Non-Profit Org.
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Return Service Requested

HHM Wish List

For distribution to clients:

- Shampoo/Conditioner
- 4-roll packages toilet paper
- Feminine hygiene products
- Hy-Vee gift cards (special dietary needs)
- Quarters for laundry needs
- \$ for local bus tickets

For office:

- Postage Stamps
- Colored 8-1/2 x 11 copier paper
- White 8-1/2 x 11 copier paper
- Avery labels (style 8160)
- Gift cards to purchase ink cartridges
- Financial donations for general support

CompuPlace Wish List

- Office-type chairs that can be easily cleaned
- White Card or Cover stock (for clients to make nice greeting cards)
- A-2 (invitation sized) envelopes for quarter-fold greeting cards
- White copy paper (any weight)
- Internet hubs (maybe 4 port?)
- Volunteers for PowerPoint and/or Photo projects making learning games for clients
- \$ for software specially designed for adults with disabilities
- \$ to attend "Closing the Gap" conference in Minnesota just once (held each October)
- Postage Stamps (just a few each month)
- Financial donations for general support