

The Echo

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IN REMEMBRANCE



07/15/1928—07/12/2011

Letter From the President

Summer in Iowa is a combination of enervating heat but increased activity. Activities at the Ecumenical Community Center are keeping pace: there is a steady flow of people seeking help for a variety of needs. Director Lois Rude and her staff at Helping Hands Ministry use community resources and donations from churches and individuals to provide options to people who have run out of them. The continued impacts of the 2008 flood and a soft economy are sending more people than ever in search of resources to deal with a variety of problems. It's summer – and problems don't take vacations.

The CompuPlace program and activities continue without interruption. For most clients, the opportunities presented at CompuPlace are not found anywhere else. Robin Brunner has provided new programs and software to increase the accessibility of CompuPlace's computer programs. The activities provided by CompuPlace are as popular in warm weather as in cool.

The Ecumenical Community Center continues to provide the space for the Witwer Center meals program and the Greensquare evening meal program. Reduced cost office space is also provided to the Foman Infant Care program and half a dozen other non-profit agencies and activities.

This is summer at the Ecumenical Center - and I would like to close with an acknowledgement of Chuck Scott. Chuck has been involved on a daily basis with the Ecumenical Center and its programs since its inception. Recently, his health forced his retirement from these activities. Chuck kept the books, prepared financial reports, served on the ECCF Board, HHM Steering Committee and Margaret Bock Housing Board, changed light bulbs and remodeled office space. He was instrumental in planning and coordinating the 2009 relocation of the ECC to its current location on Second Avenue and Sixth Street. Chuck played a central role in arranging space at the new ECC location for the Green Square Meals program and then for the Witwer Senior Center when that program was flooded out of its previous location. Chuck has played a critical role in the successful operation of the ECC, positively touching countless lives without fanfare or recognition. We owe a lot to Chuck and he leaves an amazing record of accomplishments. Thanks Chuck – may we live up to your example!

Jim Kennedy ECC Board President

Helping Hands Ministry

Helping Hands Ministry

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Phone: (319)-366-2651

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Lois Rude, HHM Director

Kiersten Onanga, HHM Staff Associate



Hands Ministry (HHM) continues to receive many requests for assistance. Incoming telephone calls average 735 per month to date. Financial assistance for the first six months of 2011:

<u>Month</u>	<u># Households</u>	<u># Persons</u>	<u>Total Amount</u>	<u>Funds Exhausted Date</u>
January	55	125	\$ 5,988.41	01/28/11
February	67	108	\$ 6,273.59	02/25/11
March	65	129	\$ 5,201.67	03/24/11
April	59	140	\$ 6,603.86	04/25/11
May	42	96	\$ 4,384.80	05/18/11
June	<u>65</u>	<u>136</u>	<u>\$ 7,294.95</u>	06/20/11
Total	353	734	\$35,747.28	

The majority of requests are for help with rent and utility (electricity), followed by deposits for rent or utilities. Typically the amount of financial help ranges between \$75 and \$150 per household. Households unable to find jobs due to the current economy or households no longer eligible for unemployment benefits continue to seek HHM assistance. Those with FEMA numbers are being helped by our Flood 2008 Grant from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Fund with up to \$300 per household. Being good stewards of the funds donated, HHM ascertains if households are eligible for other local agency help. HHM also serves as an advocate with service providers to work with the households. Donations of items on our "Office Supply Wish List" helps control costs. Grants provided the following for the first six months of 2011:

Flood 2008 Grant	50 Households/121 persons	\$13,302.40
Housing Fund for Linn County	<u>89 Households/219 persons</u>	<u>\$91,677.41</u>
	139 Households/340 persons	\$104,979.81

It is only through the continued support of the faith community and individual donations that we have been able to increase the number of households served. We are so thankful! A total of 609 volunteer hours have been provided which is also a key to serving more people. Thank you, volunteers!

HHM will be welcoming a Senior Field Placement from Mount Mercy University this Fall. Whitney Boyenga will contribute 24 hours per week as an Intern under both Lois & Kiersten's supervision.

Development Director's Corner & Meeting Notice

I am thankful for the months of summer. Summer means going barefoot; watching children in the sprinkler; tending flowers (and praying for the right attitude about deer); eating watermelon; and new opportunities for ministry "outside". God interrupts a planned schedule to give us the gift of a butterfly; or a mosquito. I remember we are fragile beings and, with the mosquito, especially, that what doesn't kill us makes us stronger. I pray that Helping Hands Ministry (HHM) remains a source of strength in the fragility of life.

Our needs at HHM do not stop in the summer. With 800 calls last month, we know that needs take no time off. Emergency expenses happen and are a way of life to those who are at-risk for homelessness. Helping Hands provides the few dollars that can keep families together, in homes, at work, and in safe environments. We are thankful for the many churches and compassionate individuals who keep Helping Hands "on the radar".

We are grateful to see Asbury United Methodist Church and Peace Christian Reformed Church become new contributors this year! Thank you!

Basically, we ask of our partners:

- prayers
- referrals to HHM for those needing help

As God works through His plan within your church or organization, we see financial support being offered to us as you are blessed. HHM can take the responsibility off churches for legitimizing requests for assistance and for quantifying need with accountability.

God is Good... and summer is one of His many gifts. We are humbled and grateful to act as His ministers for His Little ones with these very few dollars at very critical times. Please call if you have any questions regarding partnership in His Work.

Peace and blessings for your journey,
 Marvalee Vuichard,
 Development Director (319) 491-4523

Project Self-Sufficiency Kick-off: Thursday, September 15.
begins with a free meal at 5:30 p.m. followed by guest speaker on
“The Hidden Rules of Middle Class” and “Getting Ahead in a
Just Getting By World”! Location: Imago Christi second floor
conference room (1700 B Ave NE) Door Prizes & Child care!
For more information, call Lois at HHM 366-2651.

CompuPlace, Robin Switzer Brunner, Director

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Providing Specialized Abilities-Based Computer Access, Training & Technology to People with Disabilities

CompuPlace has served individuals with intellectual disabilities as part of the ECC since 2000. Over this time computers and computing has evolved in many ways. Our clients have grown and changed too! Several clients have “rediscovered” CompuPlace recently. They came as teenagers, and are now adults.

They are e-mailing, word processing, surfing the net for education and entertainment, and weaving themselves into the fabric of popular social networks. They are writing our Senators, Representatives and other officials, gaming with competitive zeal, making artful greeting cards, and exercising their minds with dedication, enthusiasm and mutual support that is easy to admire.

CompuPlace has new clients who are working on typical touch-typing skills, hoping to eventually incorporate these skills into a vocational goal. These individuals are extremely highly motivated to learn and to improve. Volunteers to assist in tutoring these individuals on a regular basis are needed. They are a joy to work with.

Currently, several clients who need more assistance have expressed an interest in farm equipment and machinery. CompuPlace is requesting a donation of the recent, or even an old, Tractorcade DVD. If you can make us some of your own short videos of farm activities, we could use them to make learning games of our own.

Operational support is still most difficult to identify and obtain. The one single salary required to run CompuPlace is the major cost of the program.

Consider Some of These Training Possibilities!

CompuPlace can speak to your group on a variety of topics, and could even provide specialized training sessions to groups of more typical computer users as a fund-raiser for hard-to-find general operational support.

Make your organization's web page more accessible & user-friendly, and also more compatible with a greater variety of devices & technologies:

Web users avail themselves of an increasingly bountiful cornucopia of assistive technologies, browsers and devices as the WWW wrangles with its own evolution. Developing standards-based web sites that validate, or at least come close, will more robustly present the information contained on a web page. Do you know if your web site validates? You can easily find out. Valid code renders information that will be more accessible, more cross-browser compatible, more device-independent, geared up for search engines and prepared for the future. Even more importantly, it will also be less time-consuming to debug and to update, thereby lowering maintenance costs. We can distill this information for your web site team. You might look at:

<http://validator.w3.org/docs/why.html>

While some consider validation a "game not worth the candle," others can enumerate and detail reasons in favor of it. A well-rounded argument can be found at:

<http://www.alistapart.com/articles/whereourstandardswentwrong/>

Managing the files on your computer:

Are you comfortable regularly backing up your documents, photos, music and data? Can you move files easily from an e-mail message to, say, a flash drive so that you can take them in your pocket to your local photo printing station, or your relatives far away? Your computer has a file manager, for instance, Windows Explorer (different from Internet Explorer). Understanding how to use it can help you get much more out of the technology into which you have probably invested a good bit of your time and money.

Call Robin at 362-4284 to inquire about training to develop for your group!

ECC News - 2011 Donations & Thanks:

Donations for the first half of 2011 continue to be substantial. Thank you, thank you, thank you! The names of individual donors are not being listed. However, all will receive a letter for use in tax preparation. The following churches and non-profit organizations have donated during the period of 01/01/2011–06/30/2011:

St Pius X Catholic
 First Baptist Marion
 First Congregational
 Oakland Church of the Nazarene
 Echo Hill Presbyterian
 First Lutheran
 Salem U/Methodist
 St. Paul's U/Methodist Women
 Living Water U/Methodist
 Buffalo U/Methodist
 Lutheran Church of Resurrection
 St. Stephen's Lutheran
 Prairie Chapel U/Methodist
 People's Church Unitarian

St. Ludmila Catholic
 Immaculate Conception Catholic
 Kiwanis Marion Sunrisers
 First Presbyterian, C.R.
 Echo Hill Presbyterian Deacons
 Our Savior's Lutheran
 Asbury U/Methodist
 Westminster Presbyterian
 Lovely Lane U/Methodist
 Christ Episcopal
 Gloria Dei Lutheran
 Mission of Hope
 Peace Christian Reformed
 Westminster Presbyterian Women

Rockwell Collins Employees' United Fund provided a technology grant to CompuPlace!

The Housing Fund for Linn County provided a \$70,000 grant to Helping Hands Ministry (HHM)!

The Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation provided a \$20,000 grant to HHM!

The Brimmer Foundation continues to support Helping Hands Ministry as well.

If your church or organization has donated and is not listed here, please call the office at 366-2651. We do not want to miss recognizing anyone. Thanks!

Governor's Volunteer Awards 2011:

Two Ecumenical Community Center Board of Directors were recipients of the 2011 Governor's Volunteer Awards at the June 24, 2011, ceremony held at Linn Mar Community Schools. Both were nominated by Rockwell Collins Retiree Volunteers for the Individual Governor's Volunteer Award. They are **Ed Holstrom** and **Chuck Scott**! As expressed in their program, "There is no question that contributions from volunteers greatly enhance our cities, towns, schools, and state. The most recent 'Volunteering in America' study shows that volunteers in Iowa collectively contribute 93.7 million hours of service and have an estimated economic impact of \$2 billion annually. The entire report can be viewed at www.volunteeringinamerica.gov"

A big "congratulations" and "thank you" to both of you!



The Ecumenical Community Center (ECC)

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HHM Wish List

For distribution to clients:

- Money to purchase bus tickets
- Quarters for laundry needs
- 4-roll packages toilet paper
- Feminine hygiene products
- Shaving razors & shaving cream
- Deodorant
- Laundry Detergent

For office:

- Colored 8-1/2 x 11 copier paper
- White 8-1/2 x 11 copier paper
- 3 tab letter size file folders
- Gift cards to purchase ink cartridges
- Financial donations for general support

CompuPlace Wish List

- A DVD or photos from the Tractorcade
- Volunteers to work with 2 highly motivated clients on typing and reading skills
- A-2 (invitation sized) envelopes for quarter-fold greeting cards made by clients
- Photographer Volunteers for projects that will yield learning games for clients
- White copy paper (8-1/2 x 11)
- Office-type chairs that can be easily cleaned
- \$ to help Director attend "Closing the Gap" conference in Minnesota this October
- Postage Stamps—just a few each month
- Financial donations for general support because most grants do not cover the one salary required to run the program