

# The Echo

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### **Give Us Hope!**

In pondering my first president’s message, I recall my 12 year-old granddaughter’s St. Louis Children’s Choir concert on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Her Chorister group sang “Give Us Hope”. This song’s title captures the spirit of many facets of the Ecumenical Center’s intended *result* – and also the broader issues of those we serve.

We, however, cannot give *hope* without the insistence on maintaining *dignity!* So maybe these thoughts really reflect the broader message of “hope and dignity”.

The Helping Hands Ministry program continues to see demands that far exceed our ability to help. Financial assistance each month is exhausted while many who apply are not served.

CompuPlace also continues to serve those with learning and physical challenges by establishing and enhancing computer skills.

When we cannot help directly, we can often refer people in need to other resources available in the community, whether that is another charitable organization or a governmental agency.

So, we thank all of you who have supported us, and continue to do so – but we can do more. If your church or parish supports the Ecumenical Center through a mission committee, social justice committee, or some special collections – continued attention is necessary because our needs continue to increase while contributions do not. If you have made a personal contribution, we thank you and ask you to consider us again this year. But your help does not need to stop at the door of your church or your home. Talk with others you know about us – encourage them personally or as part of a church to consider active support of us. We are ecumenical, and want more churches to be a part of the ECC.

Know that we are one of many organizations doing our part. Support efforts such as food pantries when you can. Give your used resalable items to a charity that provides direct & financial support. Be part of housing the homeless.

But providing ‘hope and dignity’ is often carried out most effectively when providing help and encouragement face-to-face with someone in need.

In the concert finale the combined choirs sang, “I Am But a Small Voice”. Let us combine *our many small voices* and *acts of kindness* to address obvious and hidden needs.

Don Leonhart, ECC President

# Helping Hands Ministry

## Helping Hands Ministry

601 Second Avenue SE #2  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401  
Phone: (319)-366-2651

**Lois Ann Rude, HHM Director**  
**Kristin Moore, HHM Staff Associate**



### During the first four months of 2013, Helping Hands Ministry has provided:

Rent to <u>71</u> households (\$7,731)	Rent deposit to <u>15</u> households (\$1,652)
Electric to <u>39</u> households (\$4,288.60)	Electric deposit to <u>1</u> household (\$95)
Gas to <u>2</u> households (\$140)	Identification/Birth Cert for <u>9</u> HH (\$66)
Water to <u>7</u> households (\$679.12)	Water deposit to <u>1</u> household (\$125)
Shelter Rent to <u>14</u> households (\$325)	1,700 Local Bus Tickets for <u>272</u> persons (\$850)

For a total of **\$15,951.72 to 157 households** (6 households received both service & bus tickets)  
A total of 266 households received local bus tickets only.

Other activities included:

- Giving HHM presentations to Westminster Adult Sunday School and Marion Sunrisers Kiwanis;**
- Serving as “Business of the Week” at Hills Bank & Trust;**
- Marching in the Cedar Rapids St. Patrick’s Day Parade;**
- Offering 10 week course on “Getting Ahead in a Just Getting By World” at Bridgehaven;**
- Participating in Kaplan University Resource Fair;**
- Completing of two grant applications to Alliant Energy Foundation and St. Joseph’s Catholic Church;**
- Implementing a first month’s rent program for residents of rural Linn County.**

Members of the HHM Steering Committee will be working on a Five Year Strategic Plan on May 29. Believe it or not, HHM just successfully completed our first five-year plan! Our current mission statement is: “Helping Hands Ministry will provide assistance and support to persons in Linn County through collaborations with local agencies and the faith community.” This strategic planning will help us to focus on our vision and priorities in responding to a changing environment. Currently there are representatives from the following churches: First Lutheran, St. Paul’s United Methodist, Christ Episcopal, Lovely Lane United Methodist, Peoples Unitarian Universalist, Salem United Methodist, Westminster Presbyterian, First Congregational, Grace Episcopal and St. Joseph’s Catholic in Marion. Three agency representatives serve in an ex-officio capacity. They are Linn County General Assistance, Hawkeye Area Community Action Program, and Wellington Heights Resource Center. We would like to have at least three more churches represented on this committee. Anyone interested should contact Lois Rude at 366-2651. One hour meetings are held the third Tuesday noon of each month.

If you are aware of any businesses or foundations that may support Helping Hands Ministry, please provide the contact information to me. We are only limited by the amount of donations received. Working together we can provide help, hope and dignity to those experiencing temporary financial difficulty. Thank you for your continued support!

**Lois Ann Rude, Director**

**Helping Hands Ministry = providing assistance & support to persons in Linn County through collaboration with the faith community and local agencies.**

Over the years, Helping Hands Ministry has been blessed with wonderful volunteers! Contributions include serving on an active Steering Committee, entering data into our computerized data base, filing, copying, mailings, answering telephone calls, working with individuals/families, making referrals to other agencies and general office duties. One such individual is **Beverly A. Smith**. She would volunteer at her church (Peoples Church Unitarian Universalist) and then come and volunteer several hours per week at HHM. She was passionate about helping others and would go the extra mile. Her smile was contagious and she will surely be missed as she entered eternal rest on March 27, 2013. The last few years, Beverly also served on the HHM Steering Committee. Quoting from her favorite poem by Saint Francis of Assisi, "...Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive..."



Thank you, Beverly Smith, for giving of your time and talents at Helping Hands Ministry for nearly 15 years!

A creative and "fun" way to support Helping Hands Ministry...

Consider a wine tasting party and inviting 10 to 15 of your friends or relatives to your home. Ask each to bring a bottle of wine to share plus a check to Helping Hands Ministry for \$10. As host or hostess you may want to provide some finger foods. Be creative; have fun! Then send your checks to Helping Hands Ministry. Ask those present if they would be willing to host a "fun" draiser for Helping Hands to generate even more donations. If you have any questions, call Jessica at 366-2651 today!

Thanking you in advance!



## CompuPlace

601 Second Avenue SE #3

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401

**Phone:** (319)-362-4284

**Email:** [compuplace@ecc-cr.net](mailto:compuplace@ecc-cr.net)



**Robin Switzer Brunner,**

### **COMPUPLACE: A Specialized Computer Learning Lab for People with Intellectual Disabilities and / or Needs for Assistive Technology**

This Spring, exciting new HTML-based games help cultivate the hope and dignity so salient at CompuPlace! Our HTML-based games are again adapted to meet the learning needs of our clients in ways that are personal, meaningful, useful and fun.

One “variation on a theme” is a newer 4 X 4 “concentration” game where the task is to match 2 different pictures that go together in some way. This game has great potential. We could match left and right sides of a photo, animals of the same species, colors, numbers and number words, match pictures to words, or make analogies.

The other new activity is a variation on our Q and A game, except that the “question” is a picture instead of written words. The answer is one of the 16 words nearby. Like the “concentration” game, when each of the 16 correct answers is chosen, a portion of a larger picture is revealed. Our first version is for a lady who is just emerging into the world of words and associating their meaning in her daily life. She brought in about 40 photos and is thrilled to begin work on her own “Word Match” game!

Other successes include a gentleman who no longer plays his game after his spelling work, but restarts the spelling game, and spells as long as he can! A few ladies can WIN the Gravity Tiles game with ALL of the tiles gone. A gentleman finished a problem-solving / adventure game recently in record time.

Our largest group is growing, and recently over 20 individuals were working in the lab at the same time. In the first 4 months of 2013, an average of 52 clients received 161 hours of service at CompuPlace via 166 staff hours and over 16 volunteer hours each month. Listen: “I Win!” “I can do this!” “I’m working hard.” “I like it here.” “It’s not so hard.” “I read it!” “I know that. See?” “Show me” “Let’s look it up.”

**COMPUPLACE (cont.)**  
**COMPUPLACE Fundraisers**



Navigate to the CompuPlace page at [www.ecc-cr.net](http://www.ecc-cr.net) for details of a CompuPlace Fundraiser: Personalized Greeting Cards you can order as gifts or for yourself! They will be made at CompuPlace just for you.

Also for sale: A few small potted house plants and perennials. Navigate to the February edition of our ECHO Newsletter at [www.ecc-cr.net](http://www.ecc-cr.net) for a list of classes we could offer your group.



**Prisoner Re-Entry Simulation**

**Saturday, 08/03/13 9 am to 2 pm with light lunch served at St. Pius X Catholic Church;**

**Cedar Rapids**

**Admission = \$10 payable to Helping Hands Ministry**

**Register by calling 366-2651**

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.

**WALK IN THE SHOES OF A RETURNING PRISONER**



## Margaret Bock Housing Update

### “A Home on Third” = Margaret Bock Housing

**1021 Third Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403**

As you likely already know, Margaret Bock Housing (MBH) is affiliated with the Ecumenical Community Center and has a mission to provide low income housing to single adults, men or women, who are ready for independent living. MBH is always looking for people who could consider being on our volunteer board of directors. How you ask could I help as a board member. Consider these areas of interest:

1. Help define improvements to our building located at 1021 Third Ave SE.
2. Help define/generate grant requests.
3. Attend NMT 2 hour monthly board meetings to discuss tenant issues and financial information.
4. Help interview prospective tenants.
5. Enjoy the company of other board members.

For example, in this and future ECHO articles, we want to feature one of our board members. The first to volunteer is Amy Siglar:

Amy feels blessed to be a MBH board member. As an active community contributor, she recognizes the need for safe affordable housing. It is an honor to serve God in this capacity and to help and welcome those who seek this refuge in MBH.

Amy is a mother of three, grandmother, and a member of Gospel Light Baptist Church. She serves in children's Sunday school, plays the harp and guitar, plus sings with a gospel band. She loves to ride her motorcycle around the countryside, and has climbed/hiked 11 mountains in Colorado that are above 14,000 feet.

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As a friendly reminder, any financial assistance or request for a tour of MBH should be addressed to our mail station: Margaret Bock Housing, 601 Second Ave. SE, Suite 9, Cedar Rapids IA 52401, or call 361-6871 and speak with Mike Williams our property manager.

Jim Federer, MBH President

## ECCF Board of Directors

### Executive Committee

Don Leonhart, President, St. Pius X Parish

David Jiruska, Vice-President,  
Westminster Presbyterian

J.D. Combellick, Secretary,  
Peoples Unitarian Universalist

Conrad Baumler, Treasurer, At-Large

Jim Kennedy, Past President, 1st Lutheran

Scott Olson, Development & At-Large

### Board Members

Peter Riley, At-Large

Vacancy, Mound View  
Neighborhood Association

Mark Mintzer, Salem United Methodist

Dale Crosier, At-Large

Jim Federer, At-Large

Don Boland, At-Large

Vacancy, Immaculate Conception Catholic

Ed Holstrom, St. Paul's United Methodist

Vacancy, Wellington Heights  
Neighborhood Association

Jean Oxley, First Congregational

Darlene Schrimper, Echo Hill Presbyterian

Donna Fernandes Jiruska, At-Large

John vonLackum, First Presbyterian,  
Cedar Rapids

Vacancy, First Christian

Mary Ann Stewart, Lovely Lane United  
Methodist

Vacancy, Christ Episcopal Church

Vacancy, At-Large

# ECC News:

**Contributions received between January 1 & April 30, 2013  
(not including private donations and agency rent)**

<b>Christ Episcopal</b>	<b>Echo Hill Presbyterian</b>
<b>First Lutheran</b>	<b>First Presbyterian</b>
<b>Gloria Dei Lutheran</b>	<b>Living Water United Methodist</b>
<b>Lovely Lane United Methodist</b>	<b>Mission of Hope</b>
<b>Oakland Church of the Nazarene</b>	<b>Peace Christian Reformed</b>
<b>Peoples Church Unitarian Universalist</b>	<b>Salem United Methodist</b>
<b>St. Paul's United Methodist</b>	<b>King of Kings Lutheran</b>
<b>St. Stephen's Lutheran</b>	<b>Our Savior's Lutheran</b>
<b>The Mother Mosque of America</b>	<b>Unity Center</b>
<b>Westminster Presbyterian</b>	<b>Buffalo United Methodist</b>
<b>Immaculate Conception</b>	

**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!**

**A big thanks goes out to all of you! We could not do it without you!!! Thank you for partnering with ECC!**

**Order your White Lights Soy Candles from Helping Hands today!**

**Choose from many scents in a 16 ounce glass jar for just \$14 each...what a great gift idea (for yourself or others). Send a check to Helping Hands along with how many/what scent (Buttercream Frosting, Cinnamon Buns, Fresh Laundry, Honey Pear Cider, Hot Apple Pie, Pomegranate, Pumpkin Spice, Tangerine & Lemongrass, and White Tea). Stop by the office to see the candles and make your**

**The Ecumenical Community Center provides low-cost office space to nearly a dozen other non-profit agencies.**

These agencies in turn provide a variety of services to the Cedar Rapids community. The reduced rent offered by the ECC allows these agencies to focus more of their precious dollars on direct help to the groups they serve. If your agency / business is interested in renting space at the Ecumenical Community Center, please contact us. All spaces for rent have full access to our break room, conference rooms (as available) and bathrooms.



## The Ecumenical Community Center

601 Second Avenue SE #1  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Cedar Rapids, IA  
Permit No. 1017

To receive **The Echo** electronically, go to  
[www.ecc-cr.net](http://www.ecc-cr.net) or call (319) 366-2651

Return Service Requested

### HHM Wish List

For distribution to clients:

- Shampoo/Conditioner
- 4-roll packages toilet paper
- Feminine hygiene products
- Razors and shaving cream
- 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

### CompuPlace Wish List

- White Card or Cover stock (for clients to make nice greeting cards); White copy paper (any weight)
- Apple Pro Mouse
- Photos of animals, vehicles, farm equipment for game development
- A-2 (invitation sized) envelopes for quarter-fold greeting cards
- 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
- Postage Stamps (just a few each month)

Printing of the quarterly publication of *The Echo* is graciously provided by First Lutheran Church; Cedar Rapids, IA. Articles may be submitted to Lois Rude, Editor.