



The Ecumenical Community Center

1035 Third Avenue SE #201

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

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On the Web: www.ecc-cr.org

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

We're on the Web!

www.ecc-cr.org

Return Service Requested

HHM Wish List

For distribution to clients:

- Dryer sheets
- Pre-paid phone cards
- 4-roll packages toilet paper
- Hy-Vee gift cards (special dietary needs)
- Small bottles of liquid laundry soap

For office:

- Postage Stamps
- Bright colored cardstock (heaviest available)
- Financial donations for general operations
- Avery labels (style 8160)
- White 8-1/2 x 11 copier paper
- Gift cards to purchase ink cartridges

CompuPlace Wish List

- Office computer chairs that can be easily wiped and cleaned.
- 1 or 2 (4 port) USB 2.0 hubs
- White card or cover stock
- A-2 (invitation sized) envelopes
- White copy paper
- Scratch paper (clean, blank on one side)
- Avery White Clean Edge business card stock
- Lightweight portable file boxes
- File folders (new or used), preferably with stickers for new labels
- Financial donations for...
 - Software designed for adults with disabilities
 - \$350 for one more MagicTouch touch screen
 - Conference in October
 - General operational support

The Echo

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Website Notice

Please note that between August 28th–30th our website will be down for reconstruction. Be sure to check us out on the 31st to see our brand new look at the same address, www.ecc-cr.org!

HHM Needs You!

We would like to have more representation on our HHM Steering Committee which meets at Noon every third Wednesday at the ECC. At least two SW quadrant representatives would be a good start. Please call 366-2651 if interested.

Letter From the President

Sometimes the heat can make inactivity sound very reasonable. During the dog days of summer things are supposed to slow down. Right? But in the Midwest summer is a time of activity. And so it is at the Ecumenical Community Center. Here is a quick summary of what's going on at the ECC.

Helping Hands Ministry now operates out of two locations. The main office is still located at 1035 Third Avenue SE. Once a week HHM also operates out of a second site at Crossroads Mission, located in the lower level of Cedar Christian Church, 526 Third Avenue SW. Through these two locations, total financial assistance provided by Helping Hands Ministry has increased substantially. This giving is possible thanks to the financial support of our church partners and generous gifts from individual donors. The need is great – thank you to all who are helping to meet it.

CompuPlace is also a very busy place. Through your support and the efforts of Robin Brunner, Director, CompuPlace is providing computer access to more individuals with disabilities. Robin has expanded the number of computers and the adaptive equipment available to those with disabilities, as well as introduced new software to her clients. If you have never visited CompuPlace, you should. Call ahead, it can be very busy, but Robin is glad to explain the services CompuPlace provides and the impact it makes on the lives of its clients.

Last but not least, the ECC is making plans for the future. With generous support from churches and individuals like you, ECC will continue to look for ways to expand its services to the Cedar Rapids community. Even in the heat of summer.

Jim Kennedy
ECC Board President

HHM Testimonials

In giving presentations on Helping Hands Ministry, the number one question people ask HHM Director, Lois Rude, is: “Who do you serve?” Letting households speak for themselves, here are some of their answers:

“I am a veteran who has been without work for six weeks. Veteran Affairs is paying my rent. However, I need an \$80 electric deposit to turn on my lights.”

-38 yr. old male

HHM paid this deposit. HHM is the only source of support for rent or utility deposits in our community.

“We have enough money to pay our first month’s rent of \$450 and \$250 of the rent deposit, but need \$200 more. We had to move as our previous landlord sold the apartment house and gave us a 30 day notice.”

-Young married couple with two children

HHM was able to pay \$100 of the rent deposit and serve as an advocate for the family by getting the landlord to wait on the remaining \$100 until the following month.

“I have just found a full time job and need help getting back and forth to work until my first pay check. The hours are in the evening and I can not ride the city bus. I’ll need gas for my car.”

-28 yr. old male

After verifying new employment, vehicle registration and insurance, HHM provided a voucher for \$25 gas.

“My water will be shut off if I don’t get \$60 to them by 4 p.m. today!”

-22 yr. old female

This was said by a part-time college student working part-time at a fast food establishment. As she only goes to college part-time, she is not eligible for student loans to cover living expenses. General Assistance was unable to help as she is a college student. HHM authorized payment of \$60 to the City Water Department.

“Never in my life did I think I would be sitting in your office and asking for help! After working for my employer for 7 years, the business folded and I found myself out of work. I have been paying on my husband’s burial and finally got that paid off. I have been living paycheck to paycheck. Unemployment insurance came about three weeks after my final paycheck. I used what little savings I had to pay one month’s bills. I could see right away that I would not be able to pay the health insurance premiums on this reduced income. Then I fell and broke my leg. That resulted in a huge medical bill that I am now paying with small monthly payments. With a broken leg, I was no longer eligible for unemployment benefits. General Assistance would not help as they based eligibility on the last four weeks income and the unemployment benefits were over their income guidelines. I had already used my last unemployment check to pay rent. Now I have this electricity bill for \$98.00 and no way to pay it.”

-51 yr. old widow

Helping Hands Ministry (HHM) was able to pay the full \$98 electric bill.

ECC News

Staff Highlight

Hello! My name is Barb Kane and I would like to introduce myself as the newest member of the Helping Hands Ministry staff. I came on board in February as a volunteer interviewer for HHM's main office, and am now on staff as the HHM-SW Associate.

What can I tell you about myself? I came to this job with several years of volunteer experience in the community. I have been involved in many projects including direct aid at St. Pius X Church. I am a graduate of St. Ambrose College with a degree in Psychology and Sociology and live in Marion with my husband and three children. I am really enjoying being part of the Helping Hands family.

Does this sound like something you would like to do? Call (319)-366-2651 to discuss opportunities to get involved!

Margaret Bock Housing Update

"A Home on Third"

1021 Third Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Margaret Bock Housing (MBH) continues to function very well with a nine member volunteer board of directors. Our board meets monthly and is very active between meetings as well. This is our eighth year as a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation! Our mission is to provide humanitarian care and service with the surrounding neighborhoods by providing low income housing, and to seek local, state, and federal funding in support of this mission. Our facility has 34 rooms for single adult men or women with low incomes. Tenants pay \$225 - \$240 per month including utilities. A deposit of \$100 is required and applicants are screened for any criminal record within the State of Iowa. All the social service agencies in Cedar Rapids know about our facility. Contributions for day-to-day operations to help cover mortgage payments, property insurance, utilities, property manager salary and other expenses are always welcome and needed since no grants provide this help. *Please consider supporting MBH and join us as we strive to continue operating and improving Margaret Bock Housing.*

Hank Hernandez
ECCF Board Member

A Big Thanks to...

Immaculate Conception Catholic
St. Joseph's Catholic
St. Ludmila's Catholic
St. Matthew's Catholic
St. Pius Catholic
Community of Christ
Christ Episcopal
Peoples Unitarian Church
First Lutheran
St. Stephen's Lutheran
Oakland Church of the Nazarene
First Presbyterian
First Presbyterian Women
Kenwood Park Presbyterian
Kenwood Park Presbyterian Church Deacon's Fund
Westminster Presbyterian
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection
Muslim American Society
Living Waters United Methodist
Prairie Chapel United Methodist
Salem United Methodist



Helping Hands Ministry

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HHM—SW Update

HHM-SW opened on Wednesday, May 16, 2007 and is located at 526 Third Ave SW (lower level of Cedar Christian Church). This was made possible by the generous donation of “seed money” by a local couple who wanted to provide services throughout the community. The Ecumenical Community Center is providing the part-time staff and Cedar Christian Church is providing the office space. HHM is sharing the space with Crossroads Mission and can make referrals for food, clothing and other Crossroad services. This has been a good partnership.

The HHM-SW Staff Associate is Barb Kane. She reports that families really appreciate having a location closer to their homes. Transportation is often difficult for this population. The need to provide financial assistance to working families who do not earn sufficient income to cover emergencies continues to increase. We need your help. To date, we have not received any donations from the Southwest quadrant faith community. If financial support is not received

within the next couple of months, HHM will be forced to suspend services at this location due to lack of funding. We ask for your prayer support as well to continue providing this much needed service.

First Quarter 2007 Report for HHM-SW

45 households assisted
\$3,108 of the \$5,000 seed money from the Brimmer Fund expended

- Rent..... 17 households (\$1,265)
- Shelter Rent 4 households (\$84)
- Electric..... 15 households (1,114)
- Electric Deposit..... 1 household (\$85)
- Gas 6 households (\$425)
- Water 1 household (\$75)
- Auto Gas..... 1 household (\$25)
- Auto Part 1 household (\$35)

We are relying on the faith community to provide the financial support for Helping Hands. Those who are seeking help may or may not be members of a congregation. Not only do we encourage referrals by your church but ask that we become a funded local mission for our community’s poor and needy. We will appreciate an opportunity to discuss the vision, mission and purpose of Helping Hands Ministry with your staff, your congregation and/or any appropriate committee.

HHM-SE Report

Let me send a huge “Thank You” to those who financially support HHM on behalf of those served. They are truly appreciative! During July 2007, Helping Hands Ministry helped 92 households at the 1035 Third Ave SE office representing 177 persons with rent, rent deposit, utility, utility deposit, photo identification, birth certificates, transportation and miscellaneous for a total of \$4,725.

Lois Rude
Director



CompuPlace

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Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

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CompuPlace continues to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities by providing abilities-based computer access and training. Though most clients are over 21 and can no longer work with the school system to reinforce basic reading and math skills, they come to CompuPlace to work and play and enjoy the advantages of the Information Age.

The second quarter of 2007, client numbers and hours were very good. We averaged 72 individuals, enjoying 213 client-hours per month. In July, 73 people utilized CompuPlace services for a total of over 281 hours! Thanks to Barb Klawiter at REACT, there are now 25 working computers at CompuPlace. We have had a generous volunteer (with astounding expertise), Zach Peters, assist with technical issues and ideas for improving the website. Thank you, Zach! Robin is becoming more familiar with programs to help protect online computers. We now have new specialized software from Attainment, Laureate, Microsoft and Soft-Touch. We also have some new off-the-shelf CDs with good problem-solving games. This software, and a new robust laptop, were purchased with a grant from the Rockwell Collins Employee United Fund. Visitors included John Morris from Discovery Living and Gary Johnson from the Iowa Program for Assistive Technology. A presentation was made to Noon Lions.

CompuPlace will be seeking funds for assistive technology, and also for operations. While grantors can be quite generous and willing to help with equipment and software, it is very difficult to identify possible funding sources for the one salary that is CompuPlace's major single operating expense. Any ideas or assistance in this area of funding would be gleefully welcomed.

Robin Brunner
Director

ECCF Board of Directors

Jim Kennedy, President, First Lutheran
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Karen Young, Lovely Lane United Methodist
Vacancy = Christ Episcopal Church

Did you know that in the second quarter of 2007, CompuPlace averaged 72 clients with an average of 213 client hours each month?!