



The Ecumenical Community Center

1035 Third Avenue SE #201

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Phone: (319)-366-2651

Email: admin@ecc-cr.net

On the Web: www.ecc-cr.net

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

We're on the Web!
www.ecc-cr.net

Return Service Requested

HHM Wish List

For distribution to clients:

- 4-roll packages of toilet paper
- Small bottles of liquid laundry soap
- Deodorant
- Gift cards (special dietary needs)
- Razors and shaving cream
- Shampoo

For office:

- Postage Stamps
- 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 (Clients use to make nice greeting cards.)
- 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
 - "Closing the Gap" Conference in Oct
 - General operational support

The Echo

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Website Notice

Please note that the website has been reconstructed. Be sure to check us out at

www.ecc-cr.net



Can you see yourself here?

See Page 5

Letter From the President

Great news! At long last, work is beginning on the new location for the Ecumenical Community Center. The existing building at 601 Second Avenue SE will be remodeled to accommodate Helping Hands Ministry, CompuPlace and the non-profit agencies that rent reduced-cost space from the ECC.

Greater news! The Second Avenue location will also house not one but two meals programs. The Ecumenical Center had arranged to lease space at the new site to the Green Square Meals program. The new space, leased by ECC to Green Square Meals for \$1 a year, will provide an expanded kitchen, seating area and an enclosed area where those waiting to eat can get in out of the weather.

The Second Avenue site will also house the Witwer meals program. The Witwer Senior Center was flooded out of its previous location. Until new permanent space can be found for the Witwer Center, the two meals program will share the Green Square Meals kitchen and dining facilities. Witwer serves a noon meal seven days a week and prepares 450 meals per day. Green Square Meals will continue to serve an evening meal Monday through Friday to everyone who shows up.

The two meals programs have worked out a kitchen design that will serve the clients of both. Both programs are contributing funds and kitchen equipment toward the remodeling effort. We all hope to be in the new space in December.

I want to thank everyone who has worked to make this move possible. The ECC's member churches, individual donors and business donors have all contributed toward this project. Likewise, Green Square Meals and the Witwer Center are also making substantial contributions. If you would like to contribute to this project there is still time to do so. You may contact either of the meals programs or contact the ECC at 319-366-2651. Thank you all for providing a new location for three important programs!

Jim Kennedy
ECC Board President



Helping Hands Ministry

1035 Third Avenue SE #101
 Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403
 Phone: (319)-366-2651
 Email: helpinghands@ecc-cr.net

“We provide caring support to people in emergency need and preserve dignity by helping them manage their own lives.”

Helping Hands Ministry (HHM) continues to receive many requests for assistance. Incoming telephone calls average 468 per month in 2008. Financial assistance since the last issue of *The Echo* has been provided as follows:

<u>Month</u>	<u># Households</u>	<u># Persons</u>	<u>Total Amount</u>	<u>Funds Exhausted Date</u>
May	82	167	\$4,970.28	05/29/08
June	87	149	\$5,207.76	06/26/08
July	<u>79</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>\$5,154.96</u>	07/28/08
	248	465	\$15,333.00	

In addition, HHM staff make referrals to other agencies and serve as advocates for those needing pay agreements with utility companies, working out arrangements on rent deposits with landlords, finding out what information is needed to apply for various programs, etc. Following the June flood, many households needed help in applying for FEMA and other services available in the community. For some, this was the first time they had to reach out and ask for help. HHM staff were able to provide caring support and preserve their dignity by helping them manage their own lives.

During May through July, a total of 9 households representing 19 persons received first month rent assistance through the City of Marion’s Grant to HHM. To date, 16 households (33 persons) have been authorized at a cost of \$5,928 out of the \$36,260 allocation. To qualify, the household must have an income for 3 months minimum that is sufficient to pay ongoing rent for a place in Marion. The household must pay the deposit and then the HHM staff can authorize payment of the first month’s rent. A Federal Emergency Food & Shelter grant administered through Linn County has also provided first month’s rent to six households at a cost of \$2,755 in Cedar Rapids and Hiawatha as approved by HHM.

Volunteers continue to provide wonderful support to HHM. Seven volunteers provided 309 hours of office assistance during the first six months of 2008. Having the telephones answered and people greeted while staff are conducting interviews is of immense help! More support is need, so if you are reading this and can set aside at least 3 hours a week between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, please call and talk to Lois or Barb.

Thanks for your continued support of HHM! **Lois Rude, Director & Barb Kane, Associate**

ECC News

Volunteer Highlight

A new volunteer has joined the HHM family following the flood of 2008. Diane Connor called the office to offer a table & chairs to a flood victim. She then came to the office to learn more about the services provided. She could not help but notice that the telephone kept ringing while the HHM Director was trying to talk with her. Diane said, "I am available to answer telephones." Lois said, "When can you come in for orientation?" and the rest is history. Diane volunteers the third and fourth Tuesday of the month. Diane is also very active in Stephen Ministry at First Lutheran, Aid to Women, and jail ministry (once the jail is operational again). After two weeks on the job, Diane said, "I'm so glad I can be a volunteer here!" HHM Staff is happy, too!

Does this sound like something you would like to do? Call (319)-366-2651 to discuss volunteer opportunities.

Margaret Bock Housing (MBH)

"A Home on Third"

1021 Third Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

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 ninth 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 Ray Pina's 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
MBH & ECCF Board Member

A Big Thanks to...

First Baptist—Marion
First Christian
St. Joseph's Catholic
St. Matthew's Catholic
St. Pius X Catholic
C. R. Aquatics
Chrome Divas
Church Women United
Christ Episcopal
First Lutheran
Gloria Dei Lutheran
St. Stephen's Lutheran
Oakland Church of the Nazarene
First Presbyterian and First Presbyterian Women
Inter Religious Council
Westminster Presbyterian
Muslim American Society
Living Water United Methodist
New Creation U/M
St. Paul's United Methodist
Salem United Methodist
Stuff, Etc.



CompuPlace

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Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Phone: (319)-362-4284

Email: compuplace@ecc-cr.net

...a caring

computer-based

learning environment

The caring computer based learning environment at CompuPlace is unique. As individuals we all have the right and the responsibility to continue lifelong learning. CompuPlace enables some Cedar Rapids area residents with disabilities to work in an atmosphere of compassion and respect. Most clients are adults with developmental disabilities over the age of 21 who are no longer eligible for public school services. In addition to all the typical computer-related needs, CompuPlace clients also have non-typical needs for computer use and / or computer learning.

There is nothing exactly like CompuPlace near, even in Iowa City or Des Moines. We have the luxury of simply serving people who desire the work of self-improvement. We do record who comes, how often and for how long in order to report activities and data to the ECC Board and to grantors. We are mindful of goals set by individuals and their agencies, staff and families, but we are unencumbered by required reporting of formal statements of clients' goals. We cut to the chase and get to work. Abilities are respected, celebrated and challenged compassionately and appropriately. In Confucian style, the teacher is guided by responding to the student's individual learning needs.

Quality of life is enhanced here through computer activities that help teach and reinforce basic skills and confidence. CompuPlace is post secondary education for people with disabilities. A few teens and occasionally children under age 12 attend, but the vast majority of our 60 - 70 or so individual clients per month are adults working on basic skills. A few clients do use CompuPlace as a "try before you buy" technology center in order to prevent precious resources from being wasted on inappropriate assistive technology. We also train family, staff and other caregivers to assist with challenges of disability through computer use. Our clients take skills learned and reinforced at CompuPlace out into the community. We help to improve the quality of their lives at home, at work, and out in town. For the April to July 08 quarter, client numbers and hours, though just a bit low, remained fairly steady. Despite the flood, we averaged 54 individuals enjoying 179 client-hours per month. Activities were performed with a monthly average of 141 hours of paid staff time. Some clients and staff have immediate flood losses and many clients are affected by the monumental changes at Time Check and Options. The resilience of all is remarkably admirable.

CompuPlace is finding ways to create software with a better fit to adult clients who are "emerging" readers. With recent research on epistemic gaming (games relating to the science of knowledge and learning), we design both games that teach and teaching methods that are fun. The Director has also been involved in coordinated efforts at advocacy for

CompuPlace (continued)

Linn Countians with disabilities through both an Independent Living group and a Heritage Area Agency on Aging collaborative effort to remedy Institutional Bias in the state of Iowa. Iowans have the right to remain in their own homes for as long as possible and as independently as possible.

The support of the CDBG, the REACT Center, and the many churches and individuals which provide funds and other resources are deeply appreciated. Lois Fergus still provides warmly welcome wisdom and assistance. We are in need of support from community agencies, groups and individuals, and have always requested a \$7 per hour donation from our clients. Many clients simply cannot afford ANY extra expenses, although computer activities are worth effort, time and also monetary support. We have fun, but we are NOT just playing around. Social skills, though important, are almost never the only skills we are exercising. Proving that an individual has unknown or unsung abilities is a joy, and NOT unusual.

We notice progress in clients' attention, communication, confidence, and in skills for tasks and games chosen by the client. These are specific to the individual, and improvements are eagerly anticipated, no matter the rate of change. Clients, family, staff and agencies all continue with CompuPlace because of these successes. We've all heard the adage recited, "Use it or lose it!" Just as we recognize the value of physical exercise, we must acknowledge the importance of regular and vigorous exercise for our minds. AARP's Top Ten Tips for a Healthy Memory include these three CompuPlace activities: learn new things, socialize, and solve brain teasers. This can be especially important for a person with cognitive or intellectual issues. Is CompuPlace working well enough? Our clients tell us YES by their devoted commitment to regular attendance here, and by continuous improvements over time. Our educational philosophy and methods, used at least since the time of Confucius, are informal, explorative and individually tailored.

Clients will continue to celebrate day to day successes here at CompuPlace as they grow, just like their friends and family members, through lifelong learning.

Robin Switzer Brunner, CompuPlace Director

ECCF Board of Directors

Jim Kennedy, President, First Lutheran
Charles Scott, Vice President, Salem
United Methodist

Peter Riley, Treasurer, At-Large

Lois Nosek, Secretary, Mound View
Neighborhood Association

Vacancy, Salem United Methodist*

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Universalist

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Conception Catholic

Ed Holstrom, St. Paul's United
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Robin Kash, Wellington Heights
Neighborhood Association

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Jean Oxley, First Congregational

Carolyn Schmidt, Echo Hill Presbyterian

Tom Ryder, At-Large

John vonLackum, First Presbyterian-CR

Mary Evans, First Christian

Mary Ann Stewart, Lovely Lane United
Methodist

Beth Robbins, Christ Episcopal Church

*Would like position filled by
November 2008