

The Echo

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Would you like to receive this newsletter electronically?

Please visit our website at

www.ecc-cr.net

and sign up!



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"Community Support"

Letter From the President

What a year this has been. The Ecumenical Community Center moved to 601 Second Ave SE in February. From our new location:

ECC has provided a home from which Green Square Meals and the Witwer Senior Center have prepared over 250,000 meals.

Helping Hands Ministry has provided over \$60,000 in financial assistance to people coping with the impacts of flood and the economic downturn. Funds you provided, given to people in great need.

CompuPlace awarded more scholarship assistance than ever before to persons with disabilities using the program's special computer hardware and programming.

ECC has provided free storage space to several area churches and agencies that lost buildings to the 2008 flood.

Through floods and economic downturn your generous support has helped ECC assist more people than ever. Thank you.

Thank you for your generosity and your concern. I hope that you will continue to support the Ecumenical Center. The need is great and together we can accomplish even more!

May this be a time of giving and thanksgiving for all of us.

Jim Kennedy
ECC Board President

Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year 2010!

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 Rude, HHM Director

Barb Kane, HHM Staff Associate



Hands Ministry (HHM) continues to receive many requests for assistance. Incoming telephone calls average 564 per month to date. 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>
August	74	150	\$ 5,479.66	08/26/09
September	59	114	\$ 5,136.09	09/28/09
October	<u>57</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>\$ 5,201.67</u>	10/27/09
	190	389	\$15,817.42	

The majority of requests are for help with rent, rent deposit, utility or utility deposit. Typically the amount of financial help ranges between \$75 and \$100 per household with a maximum of \$150. Households affected by the loss of jobs due to the flood and those unable to find jobs due to the current economy continue to seek HHM assistance. Those with FEMA numbers are being helped by our Flood 2008 Grant from the GCRCF 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 August through October:

Flood 2008 Grant	26 Households/57 persons	\$ 4,805.32
City of Marion First Month Rent	12 Households/28 persons	\$ 5,135.48
Local Homeless Fund for Linn Co	<u>26 Households/58 persons</u>	<u>\$10,771.00</u>
	64 Households/143 persons	\$20,711.80

Volunteer training sessions are scheduled for the last Wednesday of the month from 10:30–11:30 am. Come if you are interested and could donate at least three (3) hours per week or twelve (12) hours per month between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm, Monday through Friday. Please call 366-2651 if you have any questions.

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! Barb and I wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Community Support

You can support the Ecumenical Community Center by logging on to our website at

www.ecc-cr.net

If you click on the link at the bottom of ECC's web page to get your own great web hosting, then DreamHost will make a donation to the ECC in the amount of \$97 to begin with and \$5 thereafter.

Other ways to support us, is to volunteer. Volunteer opportunities are detailed on our website. Helping Hands conducts monthly orientations on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 10:30 to Noon. Just drop in.

You can "make a positive difference" in a person's life by donating:

- \$10 will buy picture ID's for two persons to seek work
- \$50 will help pay a utility bill for needy person
- \$100 will help pay rent for low income applicant
- \$7 will purchase one hour of service for a disabled client
- \$28 will purchase one month of service for a weekly client
- \$50 will purchase software or hardware or serve as a contribution to staff salary

-----clip & return-----

___ \$7.00 ___ \$10.00 ___ \$28 ___ \$50 ___ \$100

___ Other Amount, specify ___

I am unable to send money at this time. Please call me to discuss volunteering.

Name: _____

Phone: _____ or E-mail _____



CompuPlace, Robin Switzer

Brunner, Director

601 Second Ave SE #3

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401-1305

Phone: (319)-362-4284 Email: compuplace@ecc-cr.net

COMPUPLACE: Provides Specialized Abilities-Based Computer Access & Training to People with Disabilities

CompuPlace provides individualized computer learning services primarily to people with intellectual disabilities, and also to people who need Assistive Technology. We serve those for whom a typical computer learning center is not appropriate. Often emphasized are literacy and basic skills. We are in need of increased community support. Since the flood, and now in belt-tightening mode, fewer clients can bring the requested \$7 per hour. This is because fewer are employed, may work fewer hours, or have other expenses. We do have group sessions. If your group can help support CompuPlace and seeks training in a computer lab, please contact us. Please leave a message. The Director cannot always answer the phone while teaching. We serve clients usually from about 10 AM to 4 PM Monday through Friday BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.

In the third quarter of 2009, July through September, an average of 52 clients received an average of 177 client-hours of service per month. Services were delivered and maintenance tasks were performed with a monthly average of 170 paid staff hours.

Using skills gained from designing and maintaining the Ecumenical Community Center's website, www.ecc-cr.net, the Director is designing personally tailored learning games for individual clients. Snapshots are needed for these games, and volunteers to photograph and sort snapshots from around the community would be very helpful.

Taking Care of Your Computer Learn some Do It Yourself computer maintenance, or barter with someone who can help you. All tools need a bit of care, and your computer is no different. We like C Cleaner to tidy up relatively quickly. Defragmenting can help speed up a machine. Up-to-date versions of AVG Free Anti-Virus, C Cleaner and an effective defragmenter, Defraggler, are available at www.filehippo.com. There is a NEW AVG Free AntiVirus version **9.0**. These and many other helpful programs are NOT very difficult to learn to use, and ONLY work IF you USE them. They are NOT all automatic. One aspect of maintenance is cleanliness. At CompuPlace we periodically turn the keyboards upside down over the trash can and tap firmly. Keyboards, Touch Screens and mice are wiped off regularly with a cloth moistened with rubbing alcohol in an effort to keep our workspace healthier.

Web Accessibility Does your favorite website provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities to access the information it contains? The CompuPlace Director is learning about and advocating for greater web accessibility. Screen Readers are one type of Assistive Technology. They allow computer text to be read aloud. Making a web page more accessible to users of Screen Readers can help everyone. Ensure that your page can be navigated and controlled by either keyboard or mouse. In Linn County 14% of us have a disability. A little over half of these 28,000 individuals use some alternative method to access information on the web. Welcoming these individuals to a website may be simpler than you think. There are many good resources for learning about web accessibility, guidelines to follow, and choices to make. Call CompuPlace if your group would enjoy a Web Accessibility presentation.

WebAIM (Web Accessibility in Mind) is a great resource and has a listserv

<http://webaim.org/>

WAVE provides the ability to evaluate accessibility as you follow links

<http://wave.webaim.org/>

Cynthia Says provides options for details in the report of the evaluation

<http://www.umich.edu/~webaccess/CynthiaSaysTool.html>

HERA Evaluator provides options for how “picky” you want the evaluation to be

<http://www.sidar.org/hera/index.php.en>

Margaret Bock Housing Update

“A Home on Third”

1021 Third Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Margaret Bock Housing (MBH) has a total of 34 single rooms. Six of the rooms have an adjoining bathroom (female residents) whereas the remaining 28 share one of several community bathrooms.

Rent varies according to the size of the room from \$225 to \$255 per month including utilities and cleaning of all common areas.

The **minimum** requirements for acceptance are

- Must be single
- Must have a source of income
- Must make a \$135.00 security deposit
- Must pay current month’s rent in advance
- Must agree to a “criminal check”

Rent applications may be picked up at the Helping Hands Ministry office located at 601 Second Avenue SE #2 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. A five member volunteer board of directors meets monthly and is very active between meetings as well. This is our tenth year as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

The MBH Property Manager, Raymond Pina, is available between the hours of 8 a.m. And 1 p.m., Monday through Friday, by calling 361-6871.

Please consider supporting MBH and join us as we strive to continue operating and improving Margaret Bock Housing.

Recent correspondence:

Dear Margaret Bock Housing Board of Directors,

You saved my life! It has been over two years since I came to Margaret Bock Housing. I was broke, new to Cedar Rapids and had no friends. You allowed me to move in on the faith that I would keep the job I had which provided me part time work at minimum wage. Since I have lived here, I learned to control my addictive habits and started saving money. I am now planning to move next month into a one room apartment which I can afford.

Thank you for giving me help and hope. I hope the next tenant who lives in my room is as fortunate as I.

James Lewis

Room #13

ECCF Board of Directors

Jim Kennedy, President, First Lutheran

Charles Scott, Vice President, At-Large

Peter Riley, Treasurer, At-Large

Lois Nosek, Secretary, Mound View
Neighborhood Association

Gary Novak, Salem United Methodist

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Methodist

David Jiruska, Westminster
Presbyterian

Robin Kash, Wellington Heights
Neighborhood Association

Scott Olson, At-Large

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Tom Ryder, At-Large

John vonLackum, First Presbyterian-CR

Mary Evans, First Christian

Mary Ann Stewart, Lovely Lane United
Methodist

Claudia Whitney, Christ Episcopal
Church

Donna Fernandes Jiruska, At-Large

ECC News - 2009 Donations & Thanks:

The end of 2009 is rapidly approaching and New Year's resolutions will be developed. We would be remiss not to thank all those who included the Ecumenical Community Center in their donations this year and encourage continued support in 2010! Thank you, thank you, thank you! The names of individual donors are not being listed. However, they will all receive a letter for use in tax preparation. The following churches and non-profit organizations have donated during the period of 01/01/2009–11/30/2009:

St Pius X Catholic

Immaculate Conception Catholic

First Baptist Marion

First Congregational

First Congregational Women

St Stephens Lutheran

Oakland Church of the Nazarene

Echo Hill Presbyterian

First Lutheran

First Presbyterian, C.R.

First Presbyterian, Ely

Westminster Presbyterian

Our Savior's Lutheran

Asbury U/Methodist

Living Water U/Methodist

Lovely Lane U/Methodist

Lutheran Church of Resurrection

Peace Christian Reformed

Peoples Unitarian Church

Christ Episcopal

Salem U/Methodist

Buffalo U/Methodist

St Joseph Catholic

First Christian

First Christian Women

Church Women United

Kiwanis Marion Sunrisers

P.E.O. Chapter LF

Rotary Club of Cedar Rapids

Eden Church of Christ

Echo Hill Presbyterian Deacons

Prairie Chapel U/Methodist

Gloria Dei Lutheran

St. Paul's U/Methodist

St. Paul's U/Methodist Women

King of Kings Lutheran

St. Ludmila Catholic

St. Matthew's Catholic

Maurice Paul & Glennys Brimmer
Foundation

Bethany Lutheran

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!



The Ecumenical Community Center (ECC)

601 Second Avenue SE #1

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Phone: (319)-366-2651

On the Web: www.ecc-cr.net

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

Return Service Requested

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

- Office-type chairs that can be easily cleaned
- One or two (4 port?) USB 2.0 hubs
- White Card or Cover stock (for clients to make nice greeting cards)
- A-2 (invitation sized) envelopes for quarter-fold greeting cards
- \$ for software designed for adults with disabilities
- \$ for typical computer learning games
- 3 to 4 lightweight portable file boxes
- \$ to attend "Closing the Gap" conference in Minnesota this October
- White copy paper (8-1/2 x 11)
- Postage Stamps—just a few each month
- Financial donations for general support

