

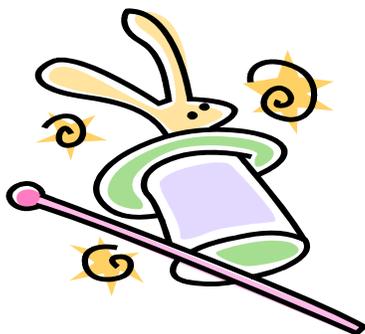
The Echo

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Website

Check out our website at www.ecc-cr.org! Find out information on offices for rent, volunteer opportunities, upcoming events and general information about ECC.



See Page 2 for HHM Magic Show

Letter From the President

I want to thank all of you for your support of the Ecumenical Community Center in 2007. Because of that support the programs of the ECC, Helping Hands Ministry and CompuPlace, were able to reach more people than ever. The faithful support of churches and individual donors allowed Helping Hands Ministry to provide a record amount of emergency aid to people facing financial crises. CompuPlace was able to extend the hours it was available to disabled individuals seeking access to the world of computers.

This year, Helping Hands Ministry will be working in Marion to help qualified individuals with their first month's rent. The goal of the program is to move people into permanent housing arrangements. Director Lois Rude will help match funds with individuals meeting the requirements of the program. The rent money will be provided by a grant from the City of Marion. The cost of administering this excellent program will be borne by ECC with office space generously donated by Living Water United Methodist Church.

Also in 2008, CompuPlace has been busy adding computers and special adaptive software. Robin Brunner is working to increase and improve CompuPlace's ability to serve both individuals and groups. New software improves access as well as expands the selection of programs available to disabled individuals using CompuPlace's services.

The Ecumenical Center is also working to finalize arrangements for a new location. Once these arrangements are completed, ECC will be able to offer Green Square Meals a new home for the critical community service that program provides. At the same time, the programs of the ECC will enjoy improved facilities as will all of the non-profit agencies to which ECC currently provides reduced cost office space.

All thanks to you!

Your generosity has touched with kindness the lives of people you may never meet. Many, many thanks for your support.

Jim Kennedy
ECC Board President

Helping Hands Ministry

Helping Hands Ministry

1035 Third Avenue SE #101

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Phone: (319)-366-2651

Email: helpinghands@ecc-cr.org

Lois Rude, HHM Director

Barb Kane, HHM Staff Associate



A total of 1,022 households/2,014 persons were assisted financially by HHM main office during 2007. Another 3,900 referrals were made by HHM staff and volunteers.

New this year was the establishment of a site on the southwest side of Cedar Rapids in the Crossroads Mission at 526 Third Ave SW. Barb Kane served as HHM Staff Associate at this location and provided services to a total of 102 households representing 228 persons. Unfortunately, services at this west side location were suspended due to lack of additional financial support. Should more support be secured, operations will resume.

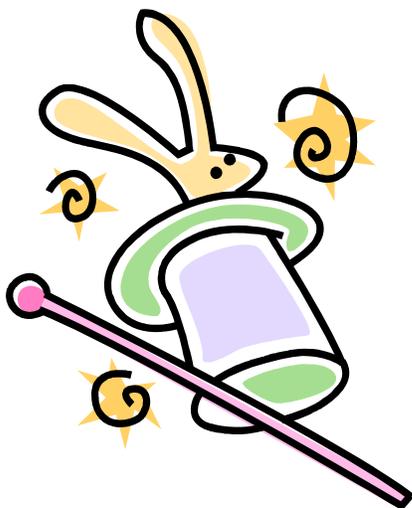
The grand total for Helping Hands Ministry in 2007 is

1,124 households representing 2,242 persons!

This exceeds the goal of 1,000 households made by the HHM Steering Committee at our strategic planning meeting the beginning of this year! In addition, 779 hours of volunteer office support was provided. Thank you, volunteers!

Also new this year was receipt of a \$36,260 grant from the City of Marion to provide first month's rent to provide stable housing. Recipients must be able to pay their own deposit and show financial stability to pay ongoing rent. Living Water United Methodist Church is providing free office space at 1179 Grand Avenue in Marion. Office hours are Tuesdays by appointment. Look in the February 21st issue of the *Marion Times* for a more complete article.

A special "thank you" to Midwest Athletic Club for the full page advertisement on 01/22/08!



Please mark your calendars for a March Magic Extravaganza—a benefit performance for HHM. Members of the local "Mombo" ring of the International Brotherhood of Magicians will have two performances (2:30 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.) on Saturday, March 29th, at Westminster Presbyterian Church at 1285 Third Ave SE, Cedar Rapids. Admission is \$5 per person or \$15 for a whole family! Tickets may be purchased by calling HHM at 366-2651 or at the door. What a fun way to support Helping Hands! See you there!

Lois Rude

Helping Hands Ministry Director

Helping Hands Ministry from the Churches' Viewpoint

by Lisa Phillips, Volunteer

HHM was pleased to have two "Composition II" students from Kirkwood Community College this past term. Amanda Mason revised the HHM brochure and Lisa Phillips interviewed churches to provide the following article:

In 1998 Cedar Rapids area churches felt a strong need to assist members of the community economically, a need that they did not have the resources to fulfill individually. Because of this, our community now has Helping Hands Ministry.

When talking with Kate Brokaw, Office Coordinator from St. Paul's United Methodist and Wendy Kemmann, Administrative Assistant from First Lutheran, a common thread can be determined. This sentiment is not a coincidence, but an overwhelming assertion that HHM is a positive place for churches to refer those seeking help. It is a place that can take care of the details that the churches do not have the time or staff to complete, a place that can verify which of those seeking help are repeat customers who may need further referrals. Because Helping Hands exists this also cuts down on the leg work for the clients, who no longer have to go from church to church seeking help; they can find help or information in one central location.

According to both Kate and Wendy, one outstanding part of Helping Hands is Lois Rude, the Director. Wendy stated that its fortunate Lois had so much experience as Director of Linn County's General Assistance before joining the staff at Helping Hands. Because of her knowledge of the government programs, more people are helped more effectively. One of the things that both Wendy and Kate like best about HHM is the level of communication with Lois. She is always willing to visit a congregation, sharing what the Helping Hands mission is and answering questions that anyone may have. Another thing Wendy likes is that Lois will call or email from time to time when emergency funds might be needed, giving the congregations a chance to contribute even more than they already do.

The most requested services when churches are approached for help is assistance with rent, utilities, food, and gas money. Local food banks supply pantry items, and both of these churches offer times when meals are served so that no one has to go hungry. St. Paul's and First Lutheran do, however, send 10 to 15 clients per week to Helping Hands for other assistance. Lois and the volunteers are always willing to listen to each person and help as much as possible. "The location is good, just across the street," said Wendy. Kate agreed that being in a central location was great and knowing that "people are treated with respect and dignity" makes sending them to Helping Hands a blessing.

Both First Lutheran and St. Paul's are actively involved with Helping Hands. Kate serves on the HHM Steering Committee, and both churches contribute to the mission through special offerings that are collected on Sunday mornings. At the moment, neither of these churches currently has volunteers working at HHM. Wendy attributes the lack of volunteers to the fact that people are so much busier with work and family these days. Kate agreed that everyone is busy and that volunteer positions might be more readily filled if the churches did a better job of listing specific tasks and time slots that need to be taken care of. On the financial side, both Kate and Wendy agreed that if the public could be more involved, maybe the operating budget would grow, increasing the number of people that can be helped. The only way this can happen is to educate those who don't know about Helping Hands. By spreading the word maybe others would contribute either time or money, helping to make HHM even more successful in its mission.

Overall, Kate and Wendy both agree that Helping Hands Ministry has been a definite asset to the Cedar Rapids area. Without the help of Lois and the volunteers, too many people would go without assistance. St. Paul's and First Lutheran, as well as most churches are dedicated to being mission oriented, and with the assistance of Helping Hands Ministry they are now able to work on that mission right here in their own neighborhood.



CompuPlace

1035 Third Avenue SE #105

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Phone: (319)-362-4284

Email: compuplace@ecc-cr.org

Robin Brunner, Director

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

CompuPlace provided over 2509 hours of service to 121 individuals in 2007. A monthly average of 63 clients received 209 client-hours of service requiring 147 paid staff hours. Although most clients are on a limited income, and an increasing number canNOT contribute, clients donated an average of almost \$600 per month last year. We are most flattered by this fact, and we are grateful for the support of churches grantors, and individuals.

The CompuPlace Director has taken on the tasks of Website maintenance and converting and sending the email version of the ECHO newsletter. News and links to add should be emailed to compuplace@ecc-cr.org

Here is a sampling of individual CompuPlace successes:

A.B. has been a client for several years. Reading is difficult, but she is very sentimental and loves to make greeting cards. Our greeting card program makes it worth the effort to work on reading, spelling and typing. These tasks have so often been frustrating, and CompuPlace is a safe haven to wrestle with these skills. It can take a long time to build the trust that will allow someone to let go of insecurities built over a lifetime. A.B.'s trust in the atmosphere of encouragement at CompuPlace is a source of great joy, as is her amazing skill at a strategy game of drop down tiles.

C.D. is a relatively new client. He came with family and staff for the first visit. We tried several programs to see what would work the best for him. In the process of matching pictures of food and grocery store words, his family discovered that he recognized a variety of words that they did not realize he knew. This is a very attentive family, and their astonishment was a bit awkward for a moment. But this is a common occurrence at CompuPlace. We can isolate parts of tasks and thereby provide a way for someone to display their strengths and understanding.

E.F. is a long-time client who has been coming to CompuPlace for many years. Her behavior at home can be difficult. But at CompuPlace she is sweetly polite, expresses her desire for certain programs, and directs her own work here. She will say that she is having a tough day, but smiles and works and plays with grace, mostly leaving troubles at the door. We can be more concerned with the person and with dignity than with any single particular outcome without sacrificing attention to goals. Control and self-determination make a world of difference. In her work here, she has improved with money skills, dexterity, typing and mouse skills, and with expressing herself positively and confidently.

G.H. visits CompuPlace weekly. This Client, his Staff and the Director gather around one computer and play together with a touch screen. We play a fierce game of making 3 jewels in a row. Since this game requires thinking a step or two ahead, and since we play it together, speedily reaching over in “you snooze, you lose” fashion, this helps him to maintain and improve dexterity, quick decisions and confidence. Sometimes one strategy must be quickly exchanged for another. G.H. is very good at this game, and Staff and Director have to pay close attention to keep the beat. This is wonderful fast-paced mental exercise, and we all look forward to this weekly hour of friendly ruckus.

I.J. has been a client for several months. He comes weekly, from a little further away than most clients, and works on spelling and communication through typing. He uses a program that has over 500 words and pictures and gives hints about the next letter. The word list he uses in this program has been especially selected just for him. We can select tools, or animals, or appliances, or combinations of these and many other things. He has also brought pictures from home that we are using to create new ways for him to work on these skills. CompuPlace serves as a “try before you buy” center, and also as a referral and training center for a family member to better assist him. He has been very shy, but is becoming more comfortable with each visit.

CompuPlace has some new CD's, one to work on words that are on signs in the community that tell us where to go and what to do. These are important signs for everyday living. Another allows people to create their own small books. Other CD's provide opportunities for working on Nouns and Verbs in a variety of ways. In addition, a slide show to pique the interests of our many animal lovers is being created in-house. Call and make an appointment to stop by to see the work in progress. Can you donate a few of your own photos for similar projects, with animals, or with nutrition, hygiene, money or short common whole words?

Questions? Can we help you? Can you help us? Call 362-4284 or email compuplace@ecc-cr.org

Please see our “Wish List” on page 8.

Robin Brunner, Director

Do you see yourself in a position to volunteer for ECC? Serve on a steering committee? Volunteer office support to Helping Hands Ministry? Help out at CompuPlace? If so call Lois at Helping Hands (366-2651) or Robin at CompuPlace (362-4284) today!



Margaret Bock Housing Update

“A Home on Third”

1021 Third Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Margaret Bock Housing (MBH) wishes to thank the Community Circle of Care for the generous donation of many blankets for the low income, single adults residing at MBH. MBH has a total of 34 single rooms. Six of the rooms have an adjoining bathroom whereas the remaining 28 share one of several community bathrooms.

Rent varies according to the size of the room from \$225 to \$240 per month including utilities and cleaning of all common areas.

A few of the smaller rooms are available for immediate occupancy. The **minimum** requirements for acceptance are

- Must be single
- Must have a source of income
- Must make a \$100.00 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 1035 3rd Ave SE, Suite 101.

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.

Wish List for Residents:

Single bed fitted & top sheets

Pillows and

Pillowcases

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

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

Linda Bibb, Salem United Methodist

J.D. Combellick, Peoples Unitarian Universalist

Dale Crosier, At-Large

Jim Federer, At-Large

Henry Hernandez, Immaculate Conception Catholic

Ed Holstrom, St. Paul’s United Methodist

David Jiruska, Westminster Presbyterian

Robin Kash, Wellington Heights Neighborhood Association

Scott Olson, At-Large

Jean Oxley, First Congregational

Dave Rogers, Echo Hill Presbyterian

Tom Ryder, At-Large

John vonLackum, First Presbyterian-CR

Mary Evans, First Christian

Vacancy = Lovely Lane United Methodist*

Vacancy = Christ Episcopal Church*

*Would like to have positions filled no later than March 2008

www.GoodSearch.com

Help raise funds for the ECC and our ministries just by surfing the web!

Bookmark it and search for the Ecumenical Community Center today! Go Surf!

ECC News - 2007 Donations & Thanks:

Jan Alderton	Margo Anders	Albert Aossey	CR Aquatics Assoc
Gregg & Susan Austin	First Baptist, Marion	David/Judy Pedersen Benn	1st Congregation Women
Timothy & Mary Bennington	Carol Berg	Jonathan & Susan Benya	Theodore/Marlene Bey
Jim & Diane Bradbury	Scott & Eileen Britten	Charles & Kate Brokaw	Robin Brunner
James Burlingham	Immaculate Conception	St John XXIII Catholic	St Joseph Catholic
St Jude Catholic	St Ludmila Catholic	St Matthews Catholic	St Pius X Catholic
Steven & Mary Chamberlin	Ashok & Purnima Chawla	Community of Christ	Christ Episcopal
Encounter Christian Church	First Christian	First Congregational	Peoples Unitarian
Troy Mills Christian	Trish & Richard Bruxvoort Colligan	Civil Rights Commission	Linda & Walter Corey
Brimmer Associates Corp	Inter Religious Council	Dale & Alice Crosier	Janice Cuffel
H. T. Decker	Robert & Karen Doyle	Roberty/Nadine Drahozal	Gary Donnermeyer
William & Zmira Earley	Mark & Dorothy Eckman	Douglas & Gayle Elliott	Mary Alice Ericson
Michael & Patricia Esker	Jim & Janet Federer	Chada-Pautz Fellowship	Alan & Susan Fletcher
GCRCF—Tokheim Fund	Rockwell Collins United Fund	Nations Financial Group	La Vern Gordon
Stephen & Sharon Geppert	Kathleen Hall	Doris Hamilton	Harlan/Barbara Hanson
Mark & Sue Hartung	Churches United	City of Cedar Rapids	City of Marion
Ann & Eric Hearn	Henry Hernandez	Jeraldine Hewitt	Dave & Dorothy Higdon
Ruth Holm	Ed & Rebecca Holstrom	Mission of Hope	Margaret Bock
Vicki Hughes	Karla Ice	United Way of E Central IA	B Diane Jacobs
David Jiruska	Cynthia & John White Johnson	Douglas & Anita Johnson	Thelma Johnston
David & Janiese Karpa	James & Connie Kennedy	David & Deann King	Kiwanis Club, Marion
Daniel & Nova Kolander	Kenneth & Virginia Kolek	Richard/Marjorie Koolbeck	Lisa LaDue
Phyllis Lindsay	Chris Lumm	Ascension Lutheran	Bethany Lutheran
First Lutheran	Gloria Dei Lutheran	Our Savior's Lutheran	St John's Lutheran
St Stephens Lutheran	Peg Maher	Francis & Judith Mclaskey	Brenda McMillan
Gwenn Meek	Sisters of Mercy	Andrew Meyer	Brian Middleswarth
Gladys Millen	Dora Mueller	Bess Naujoks	Sandy Nelson
Oakland Church of Nazerene	Joyce Nielson	Lois & Joe Nosek	Shartier Ntanyungu
Foman Nutrition	Scott Olson	Jean Oxley	Thomas Pietz
Richard & Marion Patterson	Lynda & Robert Payne	Carley & Delores Pisel	Echo Hill Presbyterian
First Presbyterian	Hus Memorial Presbyterian	Westminster Presbyterian	Apollo Data Processing
Grace Pruss	Eldon & Margaret Pugh	Peter Riley	Lois & Ronald Rude
Lutheran Church of Resurrection	Carol & David Rogers	Mary & Louis Roman	Robert & Kathryn Roys
Mileneo Runnyugu	James & Dianna Russo	Tom Ryder	Matthew/Karla Sander
Chad & Kandy Sands	Vernon Middle School, Marion	Darlene Schrimper	Jenny Schulz
Charles Scott	Thomas & Margaret Sears	Deborah Sedlacek	Jack & Joyce Sedlacek
Donald & Marilyn Shahan	Wm & Winifred Shuttleworth	Kay Slocum	Sandra Smith
Randall & Sarah Smedstad	Muslim American Society	Sashi Solomon	Mary Stalker
Opal Stout	Stephen & Marcia Swift	Janene Thompson	Living Water Methodist
Lovely Lane U/Methodist	Prairie Chapel U/Methodist	Salem U/Methodist	Sharon U/Methodist
St. Paul's U/Methodist	Gregory & Bonnie Van Sloten	Michael & Jan Vlasak	John Vonlackum
Welcome Wagon	Janice & Roy Watkins	Marcie Watson	Edward Winter
Brett & Marita Wolgast	1st Presbyterian Women	Westminster Women	Keith & Gretchen Wright
Leonard Wright	Karen Young	Narcotic Anonymous Groups	(Excuse Typos Please)



The Ecumenical Community Center

1035 Third Avenue SE #201

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Phone: (319)-366-2651

Email: admin@ecc-cr.org

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
- Small bottles/boxes of laundry soap
- 4-roll packages toilet paper
- Feminine hygiene products
- Hy-Vee gift cards (special dietary needs)
- Quarters for laundry needs

For office:

- Postage Stamps
- Colored 8-1/2 x 11 copier paper
- White 8-1/2 x 11 copier paper
- Avery labels (style 8160)
- 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
- 3 to 4 lightweight portable file boxes
- \$ to attend "Closing the Gap" conference in Minnesota this October
- White copy paper
- Scratch paper (clean, blank on one side)
- Postage Stamps
- Financial donations for general support