

# The Echo

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### Tools for Learning

Thank you Bryon Wiscons! CompuPlace clients are enjoying learning games tailored to their own unique interests and needs. New jigsaw puzzle games are being tested! We make spelling, matching, and question & answer games to help isolate the complex tasks of reading and problem-solving. Could you sponsor or help with a game? Call or E-mail Robin.

## Letter From the President

Writer and columnist Leonard Pitts recently spoke at Coe College in Cedar Rapids. He talked of the need for people of faith to act on their beliefs. Mr. Pitts cited the example of the Freedom Riders of the 1960s who confronted discrimination against blacks in the South. While the individual Freedom Riders risked beatings and death to support civil rights for all persons regardless of color or race, many churches and religious bodies maintained silence. Some religious groups have since made formal apologies for their failures to take timely action on the issues of the day.

Leonard Pitts went on to say that there are always opportunities to make a difference, to shorten suffering and improve lives. He challenged people of faith to act on their beliefs, to act out of love.

As I listened to these words I thought about the Ecumenical Community Center. I am especially thankful for all the concerned, involved persons of faith in our community. The Ecumenical Community Center owes its existence to the vision and commitment of such people. Since 1998 the Helping Hands Ministry has been providing referrals, counseling and emergency financial assistance to people of Linn County who have been unable to find help elsewhere. The Ecumenical Center also provides a unique program of computer access to people with disabilities. The CompuPlace Center uses adaptive hardware and special software to open the world of computers to its clients. The Ecumenical Community Center aids several other nonprofit agencies by providing them with reduced-cost office space. The reduced expense helps agencies such as the Foman Infant Care program to maximize the dollars they can direct to their programs.

I thank all of you who have supported the Ecumenical Community Center with your time and donations and I ask your help. The Ecumenical Center is committed to addressing the growing needs and numbers of people seeking help. We need your support. Many people are counting on us. Let us be a reflection of God's love and act now so that we have no reason later to wish we had done more.

**Jim Kennedy, ECC President**

# Helping Hands Ministry

## Helping Hands Ministry

601 Second Avenue SE #2  
 Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401  
 Phone: (319)-366-2651  
 Email: [helpinghands@ecc-cr.net](mailto:helpinghands@ecc-cr.net)

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



**In 2011, Helping Hands Ministry assisted 808 households/1,804 persons financially and 959 persons with bus tickets for a total of 2,763 persons.**

The 2011 Service Utilization by category is as follows:

Rent	\$34,705.94	310 households
Mortgage Interest	\$ 100.00	1 household
Rent Deposit	\$ 1,045.00	12 households
Shelter Rent	\$ 462.00	23 persons
Electric	\$18,331.81	152 households
Electric Deposit	\$ 1,625.00	14 households
Gas	\$ 2,042.13	21 households
Gas Deposit	\$ 42.00	1 household
Water	\$ 4,119.54	35 households
Water Deposit	\$ 50.00	1 household
Storage	\$ 60.00	1 household
Auto Gas	\$ 20.00	1 household
Birth Cert/ID	\$ 178.00	20 households
Bus – Local	\$ 2,700.00	
Bus – out of town	\$ 136.00	1 person
Laundry	<u>\$ 54.00</u>	<u>10 persons</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$65,671.42</b>	<b>603 households/1,361 persons (not counting bus tickets)</b>



**Lois Rude, Director**



**Kristin Moore,  
Staff Associate**

959 persons (can be duplicates)

The Flood 2008 Grant funds assisted 108 households/205 persons financially in 2011. The Housing Fund for Linn County helped 97 households/238 persons financially with first month rent in 2011.

Volunteers are an integral part of Helping Hands Ministry. The volunteer Steering Committee is actively involved and meets the third Wednesday of the month from Noon to 1 p.m. During the next quarter, this committee will be developing a strategic long range plan to replace the one that just ended. More volunteers to serve on sub-committees (Marketing & Recognition; Fundraising; Public Relations & Grant Development) would be greatly appreciated. If you would be interested in serving, call the office at 366-2651 to be linked with the Steering Committee Chairperson for that sub-committee.

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

Current Helping Hands Ministry Steering Committee Members:

Kate Buroker, Chair	St Paul United Methodist
Bob Sowadski	St Joseph Catholic
Joellen Price	St Pius X Parish
Beverly Smith	Peoples Church Universalist Unitarian
Judy McDowell	Lovely Lane United Methodist
Hank Hernandez	Immaculate Conception Catholic
Melissa Wagner-Kingery	Christ Episcopal
LaWanda Clay	First Lutheran
Kim McIrvin	Grace Episcopal
Spering Scott	Our Savior Lutheran
Sheryl Hansen	Salem United Methodist
Agency Representatives:	
Lorna Golson	Hawkeye Area Community Action Program
Linda Homan	Linn County General Assistance
Janean Hajek	Linn County General Assistance Alternate

**During 2011, 11 volunteers contributed 778 hours of office work (receptionist, filing, computer data base updating, etc). Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers!**

## Helping Hands Ministry Junior Intern Highlight

**Jennifer Simmen** is the Mount Mercy University Junior Intern assigned to Helping Hands for the spring semester (February 6–May 11, 2012). She will be contributing 12 hours per week through May 11, 2012. Jen is majoring in Social Work with a minor in Psychology.

Hobbies include outdoor activities such as biking (plans to bike a segment in this year's RAGBRAI), boating, participating in 5 K's, and hiking.

In addition to being a full-time student and interning at Helping Hands Ministry, Jen has a job and volunteers at the American Cancer Society (since 2010).

Helping Hands Ministry is pleased to have Jen join our team! Stop by to say "hello". Welcome, Jen!



Saying "hello" to Jen, means saying "goodbye" to Mount Mercy University Senior Social Work Intern, Whitney Boyenga. Whitney was an asset to Helping Hands Ministry and contributed 312 hours. We wish her well in her continued studies and in the future. Thank you, Whitney, from all of us at Helping Hands Ministry!



## 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,  
Director**

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

At CompuPlace, we are on a Freedom Ride of our own. Through specialized instruction and carefully selected computer activities, we open doors to learning for individuals who overcome obstacles every day. Equal Access to Information can be a struggle when it's hard to read. Many of our clients are working hard to navigate the web and to stay connected and informed. Many benefit from puzzles and games that exercise their minds in certain ways. Our Freedom Ride however is a safer one. At CompuPlace, it is safe to guess, and to learn through mistakes and successes. We recognize that we are sitting on the shoulders of all who have gone before us, insisting on full participation in community life for people with disabilities.

At CompuPlace, we are advocating for the elimination of the "R" word because it has become hurtful to people with intellectual disabilities. We bet you know the word to which this refers. It has been used so unkindly so often that it is no longer taken as a respectful label. We have in the past changed our language to respect our neighbors and the beautiful fabric of America we all weave. If you haven't eliminated the "R" word yet, it is time.

- Assistive Technology at CompuPlace includes Touch Screens, special mice, switches and other hardware. Our specialized software includes programs that will read aloud what is on the computer screen. Often these programs are very expensive. But we recently discovered some very good programs that are FREE! There is a free screen reader called Thunder available at <http://screenreader.net/>

You can download a free magnifier with speech called DesktopZoom from [www.download.com](http://www.download.com) or from <http://users.telenet.be/littlegems/MySoft/Index.html>

## Curious about how a web site measures up?

You don't need to be an expert to evaluate one aspect of the quality of a web document. Check your chosen site against standards developed by the World Wide Web Consortium, the W3C. Go to the web site, and click inside the address field at the top of your browser window. (<http://WhateverWebsiteYouAreOn.com>) The web page's address should be highlighted after you click somewhere along it. Copy it by holding down the CTRL key while you tap the "C" key once. Now your computer is remembering it on its "clipboard." Then type <http://validator.w3.org/>

into the address field at the top of your browser window. Tap the ENTER key once. You should arrive at the W3C's Markup Validation Service web page, with another Address field under a heading that says, "Validate by URI." Click inside that Address field. When you see the blinking vertical line, you can paste the address of the page you want to "test" into the validator by holding the CTRL key while you tap the "V" key once.

If you have no errors, NIFTY! The vast majority of web sites unfortunately do not validate. Sites that validate will be viewed more consistently across different browsers like Internet Explorer (the big blue e), FireFox, Chrome, Safari and others. They also tend to be viewed better no matter what device or screen size is being used by a visitor to the site. They tend to be more accessible to screen readers and search engines.

Don't feel like you should understand or worry about every error that might be generated. A few errors may be made on purpose by web developers. Even Shakespeare broke the "rules" of a sonnet occasionally to make a point. Some errors are just typing mistakes. There are lots of reasons for these errors. Sometimes a hundred of them can be fixed by changing a few characters in the lines of code that make the page.

There are additional tools to check web pages and other documents. They indicate how well a web page conforms to standards and "best practices." Use them as guides and as learning tools.

Use this error report as one tool to develop or insist upon a quality web page. Look at your web site on every browser you have available. Look at it on every device you can get your hands on. Change the screen size and look again. Ask others to navigate to your web site and tell you about how they were able to use it. Tell others about your experience after you visit their web sites.

CompuPlace is seeking support in return for more detailed web site evaluations. We could also develop and provide similarly straightforward training on other subjects to help fund the CompuPlace program. Call or e-mail CompuPlace to arrange a session.

**A total of 118 individuals received over 2060 client-hours of computer learning services at CompuPlace in 2011. This number is higher than ever before! Monthly, an average of 58 individuals received 172 client hours of service.**

## Margaret Bock Housing Update

**“A Home on Third” = Margaret Bock Housing  
1021 Third Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403**

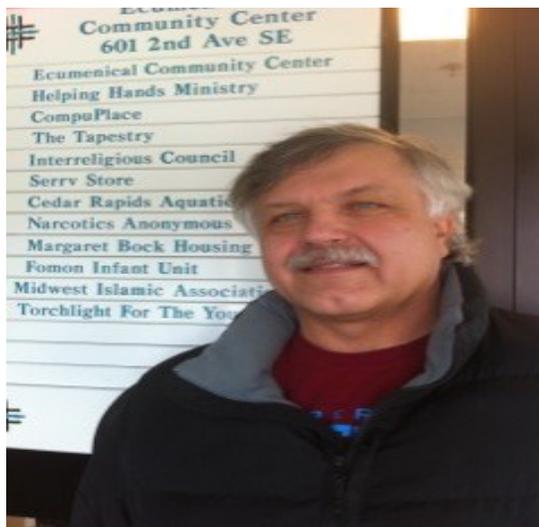
Our community is fortunate to have the Margaret Bock Housing (MBH) program. Many ministries, agencies, non-profits, and facilities work together to provide affordable housing for people in transition that have fallen between the cracks. The MBH project was birthed to fill the gap and meet the needs of the troubled and needy that the local housing community has abandoned. These “most at-risk” individuals are served in 34 single-occupancy rooms at Margaret Bock.

Our rooms have varying sizes and accommodations, including cable TV and a community room. The rent is set below standard rates and our residents are able to live here without the burden of signing a one-year lease, to which many are currently unable to commit. For potential renters, MBH Board Members and Building Manager, Mike Williams, make referrals to agencies and churches. Representatives then provide mentoring, resources and assistance, especially for paying rent and budgeting in general. MBH continues to provide a secure, safe facility for struggling individuals to call home.

Our wish list includes single beds and sheets, pillows, and MENTORS.

If you can help, please call 981-3389. Thank you!

Mike Williams



## ECCF Board of Directors

Jim Kennedy, President, First Lutheran

David Jiruska, Vice-President,  
Westminster Presbyterian

J.D. Combellick, Secretary, Peoples  
Unitarian Universalist

Conrad Baumler, Treasurer, At-Large

Peter Riley, At-Large

Vacancy, Mound View  
Neighborhood Association

Gary Novak, Salem United Methodist

Dale Crosier, At-Large

Jim Federer, At-Large

Don Boland, At-Large

Henry Hernandez, Immaculate  
Conception Catholic

Ed Holstrom, St. Paul’s United Methodist

Vacancy, Wellington Heights  
Neighborhood Association

Scott Olson, At-Large

Jean Oxley, First Congregational

Darlene Schrimper, Echo Hill Presbyterian

Donna Fernandes Jiruska, At-Large

John vonLackum, First Presbyterian-CR

Mary Evans, First Christian

Mary Ann Stewart, Lovely Lane United  
Methodist

Martha Rogers, Christ Episcopal Church

Vacancy, At-Large

Meet: Last Thurs/mo @ 7:00 pm at  
Ecumenical Community Center’s  
Conference Room

# ECC News:

## Contributions received between January 1 & December 31, 2011 (not including private donations and agency rent)

St Pius X Catholic	St. Ludmila Catholic
First Baptist Marion	Immaculate Conception Catholic
First Congregational	Kiwanis Marion Sunrisers
Oakland Church of the Nazarene	First Presbyterian, C.R.
Echo Hill Presbyterian	Echo Hill Presbyterian Deacons
First Lutheran	Our Savior Lutheran
Salem U/Methodist	Asbury U/Methodist
St. Paul's U/Methodist Women	Westminster Presbyterian
Living Water U/Methodist	Lovely Lane U/Methodist
Buffalo U/Methodist	Christ Episcopal
Lutheran Church of Resurrection	Gloria Dei Lutheran
St. Stephen's Lutheran	Mission of Hope
Prairie Chapel U/Methodist Marion	Peace Christian Reformed
People's Church Unitarian	Westminster Presbyterian Women
St. Paul's Lutheran Marion	St. Joseph Catholic Marion
St. Matthew Catholic	Grace Episcopal
Bethany Lutheran	St. Mark Lutheran Marion
Hus Memorial Presbyterian	Knox Presbyterian
St. Paul U/Methodist	First Christian/New Disciples of CR
Jefferson Davis Associates	Beaton Inc. Burger King
Colony Heating	Rockwell Collins Employees United Fund

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

**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!**

### **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

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
- 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
- Paper Shredder

### 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
- \$ to attend "Closing the Gap" conference

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.