

The Echo

Inside This Edition...

Letter From the President

Letter From the President	1
Helping Hands Ministry	2-3
Mount Mercy University Junior Field of Social Work Intern	3
CompuPlace	4
Margaret Bock Housing	6
ECC Board of Directors	6
ECC News & Recognition	7
Wish List for HHM	8
Wish List for CompuPlace	8

There are always opportunities to make a difference, to reduce suffering and improve lives. I find myself returning to those words of Leonard Pitts when he spoke at Coe College last year. Neighborhood churches and community leaders came together in 1994 to create an ecumenical ministry. Designed to serve the surrounding neighborhoods, the effort focused on trying to help people in need. The Ecumenical Community Center Foundation came into existence in 1995.

In 1998 Helping Hands Ministry became ECCF's first program. The Helping Hands Ministry, then as now, provided help through referrals to community resources and also provided direct emergency financial assistance. Starting with one paid staff member and many volunteers, the program helped people find housing and transportation, pay utilities and solve 'unsolvable' problems. Today the program deals with similar issues but with far greater numbers of people seeking its help. Phone requests for help now number near 2,000 per month. Financial assistance averages \$4,000 per month. A recognition of its skill and organization, Helping Hands Ministry has been entrusted several years running to administer area grants that help pay the first month's rent for people in need.

The ECCF also operates the CompuPlace program. First started in 2001 to provide computer access for neighborhood children and adults, the program evolved to provide similar access to people with disabilities. Today the CompuPlace program continues to search for programs that engage, assist and instruct. Specialized computer equipment, innovative software and a trained director open the world of computers to individuals in a program that is unique in Iowa.

One of the missions that has long been a focus of the Ecumenical Center is the housing of other independent programs. By providing low cost office space, the ECCF has helped programs direct resources to their respective missions. A variety of programs have been housed at ECCF: some like Churches United and the African American Heritage Foundation started at the Ecumenical Center and later moved out to their own space. Others, like the Foman Infant Unit which provides help to area woman with infants, continue to operate out of space at the ECCF building.

In 2009, the Ecumenical Center moved from Third Avenue to its present location at 601 Second Avenue SE. The move to a much larger space gave the ECCF the opportunity to provide a home for Greensquare Meals which had lost its original location in Greensquare Park. Coincidentally, the Witwer Senior Center was looking for space for its own meals program lost to the 2008 flood. The Ecumenical Center leased space for \$1 a year to the two programs. In 2010, the programs prepared and provided over 300,000 meals to area residents.

I have stepped down as president of the Ecumenical Center and turn that role over to Don Leonhart. I look forward to being an active member of the ECCF board of directors and thank all the wonderful, dedicated staff members and volunteers, past and present, who found, and find, ways to help. As Mr. Pitts says, the challenge to people of faith is to act on our beliefs, to act out of love. May God bless and guide us as we strive to do so.

Jim Kennedy, Immediate Past President

Helping Hands Ministry

Helping Hands Ministry

601 Second Avenue SE #2
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401
Phone: (319)-366-2651

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



During 2012, Helping Hands Ministry has provided:

Rent to <u>265</u> households (\$26,285.44)	Rent deposit to <u>17</u> households (\$1954.00)
Mortgage Interest to <u>1</u> household (\$150.00)	Electric deposit to <u>7</u> households (\$780.00)
Electric to <u>147</u> households (\$15,426.88)	Gas to <u>19</u> households (\$1,663.45)
Water to <u>31</u> households (\$3,020.78)	Identification/Birth Cert for <u>21</u> HH (\$208.00)
Shelter Rent to <u>38</u> households (\$798.00)	Water deposit to <u>3</u> households (\$275.00)
Local Bus Tickets for <u>739</u> persons (\$2,200.00)	

For a total of **\$ 52,761.55 to 690 households** (141 households received both service & bus tickets).

During 2012, a total of 1,675 unduplicated persons received financial help. Another 6,783 households were referred to other services in the community.

The following grants were received and services provided:

Berthal Fisher Fund through the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation (GCRCF) provided services to 18 households, representing 31 individuals for a total of \$5,000. Help with rent (10), electric (9), gas (3), and water (2) was provided.

Linn County Fund through the GCRCF was approved in the amount of \$10,000 to be utilized to provide first month's rent to rural Linn County residents meeting specific guidelines. This will be disbursed in 2013.

Volunteers are an integral part of providing services through Helping Hands Ministry. During 2012, a total of 12 volunteers contributed 557.7 hours of office support. In addition, Cambridge Tempositions, Inc. donated 8 hours of volunteer office support.

The HHM Steering Committee meets monthly to provide guidance and support to the program. Ten volunteer members and three agency representatives contribute a total of 143 hours on an average.

A volunteer recognition dinner was held on December 6, 2012 at St. Paul's United Methodist Church. The HHM Marketing and Recognition Committee did an excellent job! Mt. Vernon Road HyVee catered a meal and two volunteers addressed the group with their experiences. Round table discussions yielded valuable information and direction for 2013. A big "thank you" to all the amazing volunteers! We are looking forward to a great 2013!

We wish to thank Jim Kennedy for his excellent leadership and commitment to HHM,

Lois Ann Rude, Director

Kristin Moore

Jessica Stamper

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

Many thanks to the youth program of First Lutheran Church for decorating the reception area of Helping Hands Ministry and conference room for the Ecumenical Community Center over the Christmas holiday. It made the area festive and welcoming!



Thanks

Marta

Alison &

Griffin

Junior Field of Social Work Intern:

Good day, my name is Melissa Carter and I am a Junior at Mount Mercy University. I gratefully have been picked by Helping Hands Ministry to work along side the staff and volunteers at HHM. I wish to learn new concepts as well as expand my knowledge of Social Work while working with people in our community. By the end of 2014, I will receive my Bachelor's degree. During the last 6 years, I have had opportunities to perform one-on-one interviews with clients as well as in groups which has prepared me for this internship. Other experiences include AmeriCorps, Family Team Meetings, 2008 Flood Recovery, Parent Partner Program as well as the Family Night Out program at the Partnership for Safe Families.

I am currently a single mother that has been blessed with two children, ages 16 and 8. My sons are the best thing that has ever happened in my life! I hope to continue to grow and improve my life for them. I have two dogs and love to spend time with my family bike riding, doing yard work, going to the beach and simply relaxing at home watching movies. I am looking forward to the time that I get to spend here at Helping Hands Ministry growing professionally with all of the clients and co-workers in our area.



Melissa Carter



CompuPlace

601 Second Avenue SE #3

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401

Phone: (319)-362-4284

Email: 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 “achieving ourselves” in old and new ways with courage of which even James Baldwin surely would have been proud. With great COURAGE, many adults admit here that reading is difficult. With honorable COMMITMENT, individuals work hard to express ideas even as straightforward as the desire for a drink of water. In a COMMUNITY atmosphere, our clients often encourage others. CREATIVITY is brought to the forefront by teacher and learner alike as we COLLABORATE to exercise clients’ skills. We CAN at COMPUPLACE!

As we open doors to lifelong learning, our clients gain access to information, develop skills and grow. One client is beginning to assert herself with new confidence in many aspects of her life. She checks her e-mail and makes greeting cards, bravely navigating a complex card making program with increasing independence. Another lady is learning to be somewhat more reserved than has been her habit, and this is the right direction for her. She is choosing increasingly polite communication, and is learning to notice the tone of her own voice. She also enjoys making greeting cards as well as working on spelling. One gentleman who does not talk but is learning to spell puts his hands around his head and pulls them out to tell me that his brain is getting bigger!

In 2012, a total of 130 individuals came to learn at CompuPlace. An average of 63 clients received 163 hours of service per month. This is an annual total of 1953 hours of service, more than in any previous year.

On February 7, 2013, we had 19 individuals and 3 staff plus the CompuPlace Director in our lab — all at once! It was exciting! During that group session, there were 5 hard-working individuals spelling with the game that we have developed here.

A group of New Life Community Church members gathered images necessary for this CompuPlace spelling game – Thank You! A new math game is almost ready for action. Math and money activities are nearly as popular as spelling and reading games.

Our clients also enjoy puzzles, and amaze and astound staff and family when we find games that exercise and showcase their particular talents. A large number of music lovers play YouTube sampling feasts for one another. Our clients love to search the Internet in all the typical ways. They search out of necessity for a doctor's phone number, or out of curiosity for how cashews grow. They look for things to do in the community and at church, and for news and events world-wide.

Several clients look up recipes for easy cooking and better health. Others hunt for a favorite sports team or animal. One dear lady has learned to type without looking at her hands and can even visit a bit as she is practicing her typing skills. She enjoys looking up biographies and American history as well. We have a new client remarkably learning the basics of authoring web pages by hand-coding HTML. He loves computers and is thrilled!

An assessment alone for each the 130 individuals we served in 2012 would have totaled over \$25,000 at a local brain training business. Although our clients try to contribute a small portion of the cost of providing CompuPlace services, most could not afford higher priced training. To help support CompuPlace, we are offering training and services to other groups for a fee. We can offer

- Basic installation and maintenance of free anti-virus
and other cleaning and anti-malware software for your computer

- Image editing

- Using spreadsheets like Excel for your address book

- Basic web site design, how to get a domain name of your own,
web site and other document accessibility surveys
web site usability reviews

- Other how-to's, tips and tricks

Call 362-4284 or e-mail compuplace@ecc-cr.net to plan and schedule an event.

Margaret Bock Housing Update

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

Margaret Bock Housing at a Glance

Margaret Bock Housing (MBH) continues to stand out as the only building remaining on the block NE of 10th Street and Third Ave. next to the Cardiologists facility. We made a significant \$32,000 emergency improvement to our building in 2012, but unfortunately the improvement can only be seen from the sky. Our new flat roof will keep the melting snow and rain from leaking into any of about 40 interior rooms. Due to maintaining about 95% average occupancy, we have been able to save enough from rent over the past 13 years to pay for the roof during 2013. Of course, any financial help from the community is much appreciated as additional expenses keep arising. Our very low income tenants appreciate our facility and fair rental rates.

Any financial assistance or request for a tour should be addressed to: Margaret Bock Housing, 601 Second Ave. SE, Suite 9, Cedar Rapids IA 52401.

Our five dedicated board members are active almost daily to provide assistance to our 34 tenants. Mike Williams, board member and excellent property manager, works on the premises half time. Our cleaning person works part of three days per week. We will try to feature our board members in future issues of the ECHO.

Jim Federer, MBH President

Order your White Lights Soy Candles from Helping Hands Ministry today!

Choose from 15 scents in a 16-ounce glass jar for just \$14 each...what a great gift idea (for yourself or others). Stop by the office to see the candles and make your selection!

ECCF Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Don Leonhart, President, St. Pius X Parish

David Jiruska, Vice-President, Westminster Presbyterian

J.D. Combellick, Secretary, Peoples Unitarian Universalist

Conrad Baumler, Treasurer, At-Large

Jim Kennedy, Past President, 1st Lutheran

Scott Olson, Development & At-Large

Board Members

Peter Riley, At-Large

Vacancy, Mound View Neighborhood Association

Mark Mintzer, Salem United Methodist

Dale Crosier, At-Large

Jim Federer, At-Large

Don Boland, At-Large

Vacancy, Immaculate Conception Catholic

Ed Holstrom, St. Paul's United Methodist

Vacancy, Wellington Heights Neighborhood Association

Jean Oxley, First Congregational

Darlene Schrimper, Echo Hill Presbyterian

Donna Fernandes Jiruska, At-Large

John vonLackum, First Presbyterian, Cedar Rapids

Vacancy, First Christian

Mary Ann Stewart, Lovely Lane United Methodist

Vacancy, Christ Episcopal Church

Vacancy, At-Large

Meet: Last Thursday/mo @ 7:00 pm at Ecumenical Community Center Conference Room

ECC News:

Contributions received between January 1 & December 31, 2012 (not including private donations and agency rent)

St Pius X Catholic

Immaculate Conception Catholic

Echo Hill Presbyterian Deacons

Our Savior Lutheran

St. Andrew Lutheran

Living Water U/Methodist

St. Stephen's Lutheran

Peace Christian Reformed

St. Paul's U/Methodist

Lovely Lane U/Methodist

Prairie Chapel U/Methodist

Peoples Unitarian Universalists

Unity Center

King of Kings Lutheran

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic

Oakland Church of the Nazarene

First Lutheran

Salem U/Methodist

Westminster Presbyterian

Buffalo U/Methodist

Mission of Hope

St. Paul U/Methodist Women

Gloria Dei Lutheran

Ascension Lutheran

Echo Hill Presbyterian

Christ Episcopal

St. George Orthodox

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

Business Partners:

Adcraft Printing

Philipp Trucking, Inc.

Family Psychology Associates, PC

Clark's Pharmacy

Paulson Electric Company

Yellowbook

Mt. Vernon Road HyVee

Cambridge Tempositions, Inc.

Network Computer Solutions

Pioneer Workspace Solutions

The REACT Center

Rockwell Collins Employee United Fund

WalMart Foundation

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

To receive **The Echo** electronically, go to
www.ecc-cr.net or call (319) 366-2651

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

Return Service Requested

HHM Wish List

For distribution to clients:

- Shampoo/Conditioner
- 4-roll packages toilet paper
- Feminine hygiene products
- Razors and shaving cream
- 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

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
- Postage Stamps (just a few each month)

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.