

# The Echo

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## Letter From the President

Are you beginning to feel that current events are exceeding the capacity of humans to effectively deal with them? Several articles have recently appeared with a new angle on the ongoing story of the BP oil leak off the Gulf coast of Louisiana. The common theme of these articles is that Americans are beginning to question their belief that Americans can solve any problem. Certainly the scope of the Gulf oil spill is enough to cause concern. Can a way be found to stop the oil before even greater, irrevocable damage is done? But wait; there are other crises as well. The domestic economic recovery is moving slowly. There is considerable nervousness over the debt financing of several European countries. The tension surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian face-off has recently sky rocketed. And so it goes.

There is indeed a legitimate question whether any group of people can solve one of these issues let alone deal with all of them at once.

But we know that we can deal with some problems. The Helping Hands Ministry helps people in crisis every day. Resources are found to address immediate needs. Plans are made for the longer term. These problems seem minor compared to those mentioned above. To the people facing them however, all other crises are abstract. Rent for a month, money for utilities or gasoline, these are real issues. Until they are addressed nothing else can be.

Please consider an extra donation to the Helping Hands Ministry of the Ecumenical Center. The number of people seeking help is greater than ever. Please remember the Helping Hands program in your giving and with your help the lives of many people will be changed for the better. If we all do what we can, and with God's help, all things are possible.

**Jim Kennedy**  
ECC Board President

**Looking for  
Office Space?**

**Join the other non-  
profits listed on  
page 5**

**Come to the**

**"Piknik in the Park"**

**Friday, July 23  
(See Page 3)**

# 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  
Barb Kane, HHM Staff Associate



HHM was fortunate to have Kristin Moore as a Mount Mercy Social Work Junior Field Placement for the term that ended May of 2010. Kristin developed and conducted **Client Satisfaction Surveys**. Of those surveyed, a 100% “extremely satisfied” rating was received on the interview process, waiting room environment, volunteers, and location of the office in regards to parking or bus line. 90% felt “extremely satisfied” with the application process of calling for an appointment time and getting information on the phone while 10% were “satisfied”. All reported that they were told what to bring to their appointment and how to find the office. All believed that the assistance received from HHM was helpful. The hours of operation from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday generated a few more comments. It was suggested that HHM be open a littler earlier or a little later for people who work. 70% reported that they were referred to other resources that also provided some assistance. One person even said, “Thank you so much for helping me. I’m doing a little better now, so I’m going to come back in and pay the money back.” Several said, “You guys are great! Keep doing what you are doing! You don’t need to do anything more. Everyone in the office was in a good mood. You are a great help to people who need it!”

**Grant Updates:** A supplementary Housing Fund for Linn County grant was approved in the amount of \$25,000 to pay either first month’s rent, rent deposit, large utility bill keeping client from getting utility placed in their name, utility deposit, or one month’s rent to avoid eviction. These funds are to be utilized during the period of June 1, 2010 through November 30, 2010. It is estimated that 55 households will benefit from this grant!

HHM was also notified that it is the recipient of another \$25,000 Flood 2008 grant from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation to help households impacted by the flood with up to \$300 towards rent, utilities and limited other needs. The first grant helped 102 households/288 persons. It is estimated that 100 households will be helped with this second grant. Unfortunately, the \$5,000 grant to the Cedar Rapids Jaycees was not awarded. However, they were interested in developing a partnership and providing volunteers where needed.

**Senior Field Placement from Mount Mercy Social Work Department:** For the first time, a Senior Social Work student will be joining HHM this Fall. Kiersten Klink will be working 24 hours per week under the supervision of both Lois & Barb and will be attending community development meetings as well as leading group discussions as part of the Zero Poverty Project.

Beginning July 1, 2010, Lois and Barb will be changing hours to provide **coverage of the HHM**. Lois will remain the HHM Director and will work Mondays & Tuesdays as well as the first and third Wednesday of the month. Barb will work Thursdays and Fridays as well as the second and fourth Wednesday of the month. The program continues to be open Monday through Friday (except Holidays) from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Please contact us if you have any questions.

## Helping Hands Ministry Volunteer Highlight . . .

### ZERO POVERTY PROJECT (ZPP) A direct service of the ECC



**Sarah Mason**  
the Volunteer  
of HHM on March

joined ranks 1, 2010. As part of the Promise Jobs program, Sarah was required to obtain office experience to gain the skills and experience necessary to obtain employment. She could choose any non-profit organization and she chose HHM! Sarah came for the Volunteer Training held the last Wednesday of the month from 10:30 to Noon. She completed an application and expressed her desire to volunteer 20 hours per week for four months. You will find her in the office Monday through Thursday. A recent Client Satisfaction survey had this to say about Sarah: "Sarah was great! She was really nice!" "Lady behind the desk (Sarah) talked to us the whole time we were waiting & was really nice."

A recent Pizza Hut fundraiser was Sarah's idea. She made the contacts, prepared fliers and coupons and was responsible for distribution of the materials. The May 14, 2010 Pizza Hut day at all Cedar Rapids and Marion locations resulted in \$200.74 for HHM as well as an individual's \$50 check in lieu of buying pizza. A very special "thank you" to Sarah for this endeavor. She also obtained a \$50 gift card from Wal-Mart on Blairs Ferry Road as the result of a written request for donations (used for laundry soap for those eligible for the HHM laundry fund). Sarah specialized in Esthetics at Capri College in Cedar Rapids. Sarah likes to help people and finds this volunteer experience to be very rewarding. On a personal note, Sarah is the proud mother of a 7 year old son, Justin. She also enjoys reading and walking in the park. Her favorite song is by Mercy Me, entitled "I Can Only Imagine".

addresses the needs of low-income individuals in Linn County and engages the Linn County community in working towards the elimination of poverty.

**"Piknik in the Park"**  
**Friday, July 23, 2010**  
**Bever Pavillion; Bever Park**  
**5:00 p.m.—10:00 p.m.**

**Free Swim (6:30—8:30 p.m.) for the first 200 who sign up by calling Teresa at 366-2651.**

**Music, food, fun! It's all FREE!**

For more info, contact Lois Rude at Helping Hands Ministry or AmeriCorps Member Teresa Hedgpeth at 366-2651.

**Note** This project had been under the umbrella of Churches United and was assumed by the Ecumenical Community Center when Churches United disbanded. Contributions to provide financial support to ZPP would be greatly appreciated. A complete "wish list" appears on the [www.ecc-cr.net](http://www.ecc-cr.net) website.

#### **Zero Poverty Project Wish List**

For distribution to clients:

- \$20 gift cards for auto gas to attend meetings
- School supplies (August & February)
- Gift cards to purchase food/beverage for big view meetings
- Hy-Vee gift cards (for special dietary needs)

**For operating expenses, consider recycling beverage cans & donate to Zero Poverty Project.**



## 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**

Games we play at CompuPlace augment our clients' quality of life in many ways. Individuals come here for a mental workout with a shower of encouragement and applause. We exercise memory with matching and clue-finding activities. Money and math skills are increased with a variety of games. We have several CD's to help improve spelling and word recognition. Reading and critical thinking are enhanced with trivia games. We have a new Question & Answer game of our own which can be used as it is and also can be tailored to individuals' needs. Different card games and standard CD's like Wheel of Fortune and I Spy can help increase skills in many areas.

One dear lady who is new to CompuPlace loves playing cards, and according to a family member, maintains her attention to her work here much longer than she usually stays focused on other activities. We have several computer card games to choose from, and other games similar to cards, that strengthen listening and association skills. She has been trying a variety of activities to explore ways we can best use her abilities and interests to help her continue lifelong learning.

One gentleman, who is a long-time CompuPlace "regular," let us know one day by pointing to CompuPlace email, that he wanted to type. We were excited by this expression of his desire. Along with staff, we established his list of spelling words. He initially required a prompt when typing almost every letter. Now he needs a prompt for less than ten percent of the letters in his word list. An ability to spell is huge for him because he does not speak. He works very diligently spelling, during the first part of his weekly visit, and then plays Battleship with great gusto.

With recent and upcoming budget cuts to agencies and county services, CompuPlace clients, like these above, are at risk of losing the staff who bring them here for specialized computer learning. These services are important for them, not only because of the unique post-secondary education they receive here, but also because they practice community living skills with their workers by getting out and about, running errands and practicing social and independent living skills.

## Helping Hands Ministry needs your help...

Donations to Helping Hands Ministry (HHM) have decreased and we need your help!

HHM has a Strategic Long Range Plan that was developed by the HHM Steering Committee and is reviewed on a quarterly basis. In this plan, there are six key issues and action steps to achieve them.

Of highest priority is key issue #1

“Adequate and dependable funding is essential for the delivery of services by HHM.”

The HHM Steering Committee will be undergoing more strategic planning due to current economic challenges. Our donations have decreased and we need your help.

Some churches that have historically provided financial support to HHM were displaced by the flood, rebuilding and/or still looking for homes. Others have responded to the flood and those in need by diverting funds from HHM to other areas. The faith community may also be feeling the effect of our current economy. The bottom line is that donations are falling way below the level received in the last two years. Supporting churches for the first five months of 2010 are listed on page 7.

Financial assistance provided to clients has been at the \$5,200/month level for the last twelve months. This typically helps 65-70 households with rent, utilities and limited transportation. An additional 400 local bus tickets are distributed monthly. The demand for services has recently increased. This means that the funding is exhausted by the third week of the month. Now with the decreased amount of donations, it has been determined that as of June 1, 2010, **HHM will reduce its level of support to \$4,800/month**. Funding will also be exhausted several days earlier as a result of this decision.

HHM does have the staff and volunteer base to continue operating from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Good community collaborations have been maintained and community awareness is also high. The HHM Steering Committee is active and committed to providing this much needed service to the low income residents of Linn County.

We truly ask for your continued prayer support and financial support to assist those who need it the most in our community. We are available to speak at any size group by calling 366-2651. Thank you!

### Non-profit organizations housed in the Ecumenical Community Center:

Inter-Religious Council-works together to foster awareness of religious diversity and to promote inter religious understanding

SERRV Store-promotes the social and economic progress of people in developing regions of the world by purchasing and marketing their crafts

Muslim American Society-a charitable, religious, social, cultural and educational Islamic non-profit organization

C.R. Aquatics Association-trains its swimmers according to age, gender & ability and encourages them to compete in meets throughout the year

Foman Infant Unit-committed to the improvement of the nutritional management of infants through scientific investigation and education

## Margaret Bock Housing Update

### “A Home on Third”

1021 Third Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Margaret Bock Housing (MBH) continues to operate as well as can be expected. Occupancy has been 100% over the past couple of months. We continue to receive applications at the ECC office.

With our latest grant, all major maintenance problems have been corrected. Electrical problems were resolved and two additional surveillance cameras were installed. The vending washing machines and dryers have been replaced with new commercial grade units which are owned by MBH.

The MBH Board of Directors continues to meet monthly. The Board is in the process of replacing the members lost during the last two years. Tim Wilson of the Willis Dady Emergency Shelter was invited in April to observe our Board meeting in the hope he or someone from his staff would consider joining our Board. We plan to continue recruiting additional members. If you would like more information, please contact me at 364-1339.

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.

Contributions for day-to-day operations to help cover mortgage payments, property insurance, utilities, and other expenses are always welcome and needed since no grants provide this help.

Please see our “Wish List” on the Ecumenical Community Center’s website. Your continued support of the Margaret Bock Housing is greatly appreciated.

Hank Hernandez, MBH & ECC Board Member.

## 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

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  
Vacancy, Wellington Heights  
Neighborhood Association

Scott Olson, At-Large

Jean Oxley, First Congregational

Carolyn Schmidt, Echo Hill Presbyterian

Donna Fernandes Jiruska, At-Large

John vonLackum, First Presbyterian-CR

Mary Evans, First Christian

Mary Ann Stewart, Lovely Lane United  
Methodist

Claudia Whitney, Christ Episcopal Church  
Vacancy, At-Large

ECC Board Meetings are held the last  
Thursday of each month beginning at  
7:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.

If you would like more information on  
serving as a member at-large, please  
contact President Jim Kennedy at 366  
-2651.

# ECC News:

Contributions received between January 1 and May 31, 2010  
(not including private donations and agency rent):

Calvin Sinclair Presbyterian  
Echo Hill Presbyterian  
First Baptist—Marion  
First Lutheran Special Offering  
Living Water United Methodist  
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection  
Mission of Hope  
Oakland Church of the Nazarene  
Our Savior's Lutheran  
Peoples Church Unitarian Universalist

Gloria Dei Lutheran  
Immaculate Conception Catholic  
Salem United Methodist  
St. Ludmila Catholic  
St. Pius X Catholic  
St. Stephen's Lutheran  
St. Paul's United Methodist Women  
Westminster Presbyterian  
Westminster Presbyterian Women

Rockwell Collins Employees' United Fund provided a technology grant to CompuPlace!

**If your church contributed during this 5-month period and is not recognized above, please contact the ECC office at 366-2651.**



Ecumenical Community Center Board Member Chuck Scott,  
2010 Freedom Fest Hero!

We are now able to make a reservation for the Freedom Fest luncheon that will honor Chuck Scott and four other Community HEROS selected by the Freedom Festival 2010 committee. The luncheon is on **Friday June 25 at 11:30 AM at the Crown Plaza downtown Cedar Rapids**. Here is how to reserve: Simply call 319-365-8318 and tell them to reserve a place at a table reserved for Chuck Scott friends. They will ask you how you want to pay the \$30 for the reservation, either credit card or mail in a check, or stop-in. Even if we fill a table for 10, any extras can start another table for Chuck. We are extremely thankful for all the many ways Chuck Scott serves the Ecumenical Community Center and its direct services of CompuPlace and Helping Hands Ministry. This recognition is well deserved!

**Congratulations, Chuck!**



## The Ecumenical Community Center

601 Second Avenue SE #1  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401  
Phone: (319)-366-2651

On the Web: [www.ecc-cr.net](http://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:

- 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
- 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
- White Card or Cover stock (for clients to make nice greeting cards)
- A-2 (invitation sized) envelopes for quarter-fold greeting cards
- White copy paper (any weight)
- 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 in Minnesota this October
- Postage Stamps (just a few each month)
- Financial donations for general support