

The Echo

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Looking for a special kind of gift? Shop the SERRV store at ECC. Open on Thursdays from 11 am—1 pm or by appointment by calling

Karen @ 396-4798

Your purchase enables artisans and farmers around the world to have steady work, earn a living wage and provide for their families. Come & Shop!



See Page 3 for new section on "Community Support"

Letter From the President

Each season is a renewal, a time of endings and new beginnings. Spring focuses our attention on promise and growth while reminding us of the distance we have come.

Most of the recent news stories concerning the Ecumenical Community Center (ECC) focus on ECC's planned relocation. ECC's move will also provide space for the operation of the Green Square Meals program. This relocation, some two years in the making, will truly be cause for celebration. It will be the culmination of the vision and hard work of several dedicated individuals and groups.

And there is so much more to ECC than a planned move. Lois Rude, Director of Helping Hands Ministry, works with her staff and volunteers to provide assistance and counseling to a growing number of people facing extreme financial crisis. Robin Brunner, Director of CompuPlace, has expanded the computer service available to disabled individuals seeking the specialized equipment and software that CompuPlace provides.

Then there are the board members and volunteers who quietly share their time and considerable talents to direct and assist the programs of the Ecumenical Center. Most certainly, we need to remember the individuals and churches providing the funds that make all of ECC's programs possible.

The hope of tomorrow is contained in the seeds you have all planted and continue to nourish.

I thank God for all of you: your work and support make possible a future for the Ecumenical Community Center that is bright with promise.

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



HHM continues to receive many requests for assistance. Incoming telephone calls have averaged 500 per month since January. Financial assistance has been provided as follows:

| <u>Month</u> | <u># Households</u> | <u># Persons</u> | <u>Total Amount</u> | <u>Funds Exhausted Date</u> |
|--------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| January | 74 | 141 | \$4,587.40 | January 25, 2008 |
| February | 86 | 129 | \$4,226.91 | February 26, 2008 |
| March | 90 | 149 | \$5,542.60 | March 26, 2008 |
| April | <u>87</u> | <u>144</u> | <u>\$4,731.26</u> | April 23, 2008 |
| | 337 | 563 | \$19,088.17 | |

Income sources during this same period of time include: churches (\$17,869.66), individuals (\$443.00) and repayments (\$230.00). Each household receiving financial assistance signs a form that tells what service was provided and is encouraged to make a repayment to HHM when their situation improves. The lifetime maximum allocation is \$150 per household.

A new trend is an increased number of requests for help in purchasing automobile gasoline. At this time, HHM only assists up to \$30 for someone who has found a new job and needs transportation to keep the job until they receive their first paycheck. Local bus tickets also are distributed (6 maximum per household) for 5-10 days out of the month. HHM can purchase these tickets at half price. If anyone is looking for a service project, possibly a "spare change collection" could be used and the funds designated for bus tickets when sent to HHM.

One of my responsibilities as Director of HHM is to be an advocate for the population served. It is the reason you see me asking churches, businesses and individuals to think creatively to provide more support. The more financial support received, the more people can be served and/or dollar amounts increased to meet the rising costs of basic needs. In this role, I make myself available to speak to groups, write letters to businesses, answer questions by phone (366-2651) and get actively involved in fundraisers.

Have you ever noticed the umbrellas hanging upside down at the Stuff Etc. check out for customers to drop in spare change? Well, Stuff Etc Inc. matches dollar for dollar the total donated each month. Staff voted to support Helping Hands Ministry during the month of April. A check for \$200 was received in May! (Check out the new section on "Community Support" for more good news.) In addition, HHM received funds from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation from the Claire and Vernon Hudek Fund (\$1,400) and the Vern W. Reeder Fund (\$700). Many good people are partnering with HHM to provide caring support to Linn County residents needing just a little "Helping Hand". Thank you!

Lois Rude, HHM Director

Community Support

How the community has responded to the needs of those seeking help from the ECC:



The local “Mombo” Ring of the International Brotherhood of Magicians contacted Helping Hands Ministry to give a benefit performance on March 29, 2008 at Westminster Presbyterian Church. The 2:30 p.m. matinee found 128 men, women and children having the time of their lives. Popcorn, homemade cookies, bottled water and juice were sold. A total of \$210.75 was made on food sales alone!

Six magicians kept everyone spell-bound. What’s amazing is that they had the same level of enthusiasm at the 7:00 p.m. show where 64 were thoroughly entertained.

TOTAL received to support Helping Hands Ministry = \$1,398.75

Thank you “Mombo” Ring for this wonderful support!!!

Have you heard about the Chrome Divas? No, well don’t feel alone. When they contacted the Ecumenical Community Center to propose a fundraiser, we learned that they are an *enthusiastic* group of women motorcyclists who combine their love of riding with helping raise funds, awareness and support of community programs such as Breast Cancer Awareness, Back-Packing to School ride for schools in Linn County (to name a few), and now the services provided by ECC. On May 10, 2008 a modified poker run was held. HHM Director Lois Rude helped with registration and motivated participants to give generously. And they did! Prior to the ride, HyVee donated four \$25 gift certificates, Staples donated a \$25 gift certificate and Office Max contributed about \$50 worth of office supplies. The TOTAL cash support = \$1,626.00



Thank you Chrome Divas, you are awesome!!!

(with a special thanks to Kelly Conrad for suggesting ECC as the benefactor)

Both the ECC and Helping Hands Ministry were blessed with a presentation from First Lutheran Church (1000 Third Avenue SE) as a result of their “Purposeful Giving” campaign. This three year campaign began in the Fall of 2004. One of its goals was to tithe 10% to the local community. James Kennedy, ECC President, was pleased to accept \$25,000 for the Ecumenical Community Center. Lois Rude, HHM Director was thrilled to accept \$25,000 for the Helping Hands Ministry.

Thank you to the members of First Lutheran Church for your generous support now as in the past!



CompuPlace

1035 Third Avenue SE #105
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Phone: (319)-362-4284

Email: compuplace@ecc-cr.org

Robin Brunner, Director

The mission of CompuPlace is to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities by providing a caring, computer based learning environment.

PEOPLE with all kinds of needs use computers. They can be a source of great frustration, but for people with disabilities, computers can be very liberating. The Time Check Drop In group that visits twice a month is a good example of the diversity in computer use here at CompuPlace. A day when they visit might include individuals emailing, games, and surfing the net for music, sports information or other subjects of interest. Clients play games that help refine reading, math, money, communication and problem-solving skills. Time Check's Drip In is the biggest group that comes to CompuPlace. The many computers and expert assistance from Barb Klawiter and the volunteers at the REACT center are appreciated most highly on these days. We have many technologically shy clients, and their staff are often shy with computers as well. We can help staff to help clients. And then, there are the "happy clickers." These individuals, NOT just from the Time Check program, are comfortable using the mouse and occasionally make changes that can require an SOS call to REACT.

Internet security is an important TECHNICAL issue. The CompuPlace Director has been learning about free security programs. Links to many of these helpful programs are available for download at RJ Ender Computers' website. A number of the computers have been completely reprogrammed recently because of viruses and other difficulties. CompuPlace has a new volunteer, Matt Crawford, who will also help with other security, data and network issues. His expertise is greatly appreciated.

CompuPlace operates by appointment only because of the variety of clients' needs, and because the Director is also the Instructor, Record Keeper, Grant Writer, Website Editor, and computer maintenance person. The main cost of the program is the Director's salary. This is the most difficult thing for which to identify funding sources. We get most of our computers from REACT (which is wonderful) or through equipment grants. We do use paper and ink to print successes, interesting information for clients, and for greeting cards clients have made. The ECC provides us with a home including utilities and internet service. We recently received a wonderfully generous donation of adjustable comfortable office chairs from Pioneer Workspace Solutions. Several of these replaced chairs that were wearing out. With the move to the new building fast approaching, there will be needs for some new office furniture like computer desks / tables, and for funds to help with the move.

We are working toward a completely new website (hopefully hosting a website evaluation and design workshop). We are also looking forward to demonstrations for our clients by Christi Rice, a personal chef with Food Happens.

Robin Brunner, CompuPlace Director

Margaret Bock Housing & ECC Update

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

The 34 single occupancy rooms at MBH continue to be used by needy individuals. Currently, we have two vacancies with one reserved for occupancy starting July 1. The list of tenants continues to change from month to month as some tenants, who gain better control of their money move to better equipped housing, while others are forced to move because of nonpayment of rent or continued lease violations. It is the MBH Board of Directors goal to provide a secure, safe facility to live while paying rent at below current market prices for similar housing. We continue to receive applications for tenancy. To qualify, a prospective tenant must have a source of income, pay a \$100 deposit and first month's rent, and not be a felon or sex abuser. A criminal check is made on each application. If you have questions, please contact MBH Manager Ray Pina (361-6871)

ECC Update

Work has not started on the remodeling of the Ecumenical Community Center (ECC) new facility located at 601/605 Second Avenue SE due to the lack of necessary funds to assure the ECC can make the move without incurring additional debt. Contracts have been signed with the Cardiologists PC who will purchase the existing ECC building, the owners of the building the ECC will move into, and Green Square Meals for lease of the space they will use. The only contract left to sign is the one with the prime contractor who will oversee remodeling of the facility. That contract will be signed as soon as we have funds secured to complete the required remodeling. It is hopeful that final gifts will be received or committed to in the near future and work will commence during the month of June.

Response to our solicitation letter has been encouraging. So far we have received \$23,100 from churches, \$10,000 from foundations and \$6,100 from individuals. Our goal is to raise \$450,000 with the bulk of the gifts coming from the business community. Significant gifts have been pledged and will be received once the remodeling is started. In addition, we have received significant pledges of in-kind gifts for materials such as paint, wall board, carpeting, signs, fixtures, etc.

Additional gifts are needed.

ECC 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

Vacancy = Echo Hill Presbyterian*

Tom Ryder, At-Large

John vonLackum, First Presbyterian-CR

Mary Evans, First Christian

Mary Ann Stewart, Lovely Lane United
 Methodist

Beth Robbins, Christ Episcopal Church

*Would like to have position filled no later
 than July 2008

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.



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
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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
- 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)
- Scratch paper (clean, blank on one side)
- Postage Stamps
- Financial donations for general support