

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.

Quote: "I deeply admire clients' perseverance and desire to work to improve themselves. One could learn much from our clients every day."

Robin Brunner, CompuPlace
Director (pp 3-5)

Letter From the President

Late fall in the mid-west is a transition time. It is a time spent preparing for winter. The fall weather can be very pleasant and certainly the leaves are pretty but the feeling persists that a harsher season is approaching. We take steps to make winter as tolerable, as comfortable as possible.

On behalf of the Ecumenical Community Center, I want to thank you for your support this year. Helping Hands Ministry has provided more financial assistance to people in need than ever before. HHM now has weekly visits to a site in Marion and the southwest side of Cedar Rapids in addition to its presence on Third Avenue.

CompuPlace is providing more service hours to more clients. Recent hardware and software purchases have expanded the computer capacity available to persons with disabilities who use CompuPlace.

The Ecumenical Community Center is growing and trying to anticipate the needs of the future. Your help is required as we try to serve the increasing number of people seeking the services of Helping Hands Ministry and CompuPlace. Please consider a special gift to the Ecumenical Community Center. Your generosity will make winter more tolerable as you grace the life of a stranger with the warmth of knowing someone cares.

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



Helping Hands Ministry (HHM) has provided the following services at its main location to 841 households representing 1,693 persons between January 1, 2007 and October 31, 2007:

Rent, Lot Rent, or Shelter	\$20,060.74	Utility (Electric, Gas, Water)	\$17,989.30
Rent Deposit	\$ 2,972.00	Utility Deposit	\$ 1,580.00
Out of Town Bus Tickets	\$ 2,277.60	City Bus Tickets	\$ 1,468.00
Automobile Gasoline	\$ 2,310.17	Laundry	\$ 396.25
Personal Identification	\$ 668.50	Work related & other	\$ 936.52

(for a total of \$50,659.08 in the first 10 months of 2007)

In all of 2006, HHM helped 825 households and distributed \$46,848.40 in services. The program is only limited by the total donations it receives. A special “thank you” to all who have made it possible to help more in 2007! So far this year, HHM has been supported by 28 Linn County churches, regional church grants, grants from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, Rockwell Collins Employee Fund, Welcome Wagon, Kiwanis and individual donations.

HHM Staff Associate Barb Kane provides services out of the southwest HHM site on Wednesdays. This site opened in May thanks to seed money provided by a local couple who wanted to make HHM more accessible. Their generosity has resulted in helping 83 households representing 181 persons with \$6,100 allocated in services. Several appeals have been sent to the faith community in the southwest quadrant to provide ongoing financial support in 2008.

A special “thanks” goes to all of the following volunteers in 2007 that have contributed to a successful year: Jean Kenison, Beverly Smith, Leanne Burdick, Eldon Pugh, Shari Barden, Sandra Smith, Krista Mutert, Scott Nuss, Amanda Mason, Lisa Phillips, Chris Lumm, Kara Kruse, Tamara Seufferlein, Amber Hildman, and Odissa Junker. The volunteers who serve on the HHM Steering Committee also have done an excellent job in preparing a strategic long range plan for 2007-2010. Members include: Jean Bjorseth (First Pres-CR), Kate Brokaw (St Paul’s U/M), Linda Humbert (Marion-St. Josephs), Joellen Price (St. Pius X), Beverly Smith (Peoples), Mary Vorwerk (Lovely Lane U/M), and ECC Board members Hank Hernandez (Immaculate Conception) and Chuck Scott (Salem U/M). Agency representatives are Jason Fisher (HACAP), Linda Homan and Mary Kay Pinckney (Linn County General Assistance). A huge “thank you” to all for their dedication and support!

Would you like a visit to learn more about HHM or “minute for mission” speaker? I am available. In 2007, I was able to visit, speak and/or participate in a mission fair at the following: First Christian, Good News Baptist, Hus Memorial Presbyterian, Echo Hill Presbyterian, First Presbyterian-CR, Peoples Church Universalist Unitarian, First Lutheran, St. Paul’s U/M, Welcome Wagon Club and Kiwanis Club of Marion Sunrisers.

Thanksgiving is rapidly approaching. Helping Hands Ministry has so much for which to be thankful. Without all of the volunteer support and financial donations, this much needed ministry would not be possible. “Thank you” to all!

Lois Rude, HHM Director



CompuPlace

1035 Third Avenue SE #105

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Phone: (319)-362-4284

Email: compuplace@ecc-cr.org

Robin Brunner, Director

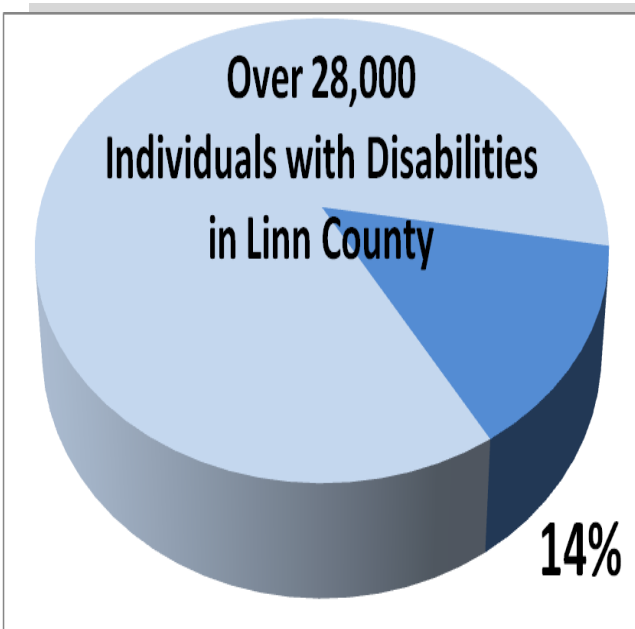
COMPUPLACE: Provides Abilities-Based Computer Access and Training to People with Disabilities

CompuPlace serves over 70 individuals each month, mostly “regulars,” and over 110 individuals come to CompuPlace annually. Most clients visit weekly for one hour. Some visit twice each month. According to US Census Bureau figures, there are over 28,000 people with disabilities in Linn County alone. Though not all will wish or need CompuPlace services, this number indicates an acute need for our kind of center. CompuPlace is a unique learning environment, and is helping to fill a major gap in educational services. These numbers indicate we could indeed do more. We have seen an increase from an average of 157 client-hours of service per month in ‘06 to 215 through October in ‘07. We are in need of increased community assistance in order to continue this growth.

Most (but not all) clients are adults with developmental disabilities. Public school services end at age 21, but our clients still wish to work to improve skills in literacy, math, problem-solving, and using money. They also work to improve social, communication, and information-age computer skills.

These are all necessary for work, every day living, and for leisure. Quality of life is augmented by this balance.

CompuPlace serves individuals, and both small & large groups with 25 computers mostly in 2 rooms, with added space for a few of these in the ECC Conference room. In recent weeks, the ECC has generously offered another room in an adjacent office space vacated by Fair Housing. Because of its shape, this room will be more welcoming for clients who use wheelchairs.



**The usual greeting to a client includes: “What do you want to work on today?”
Services are tailored to the individual AND the moment.**

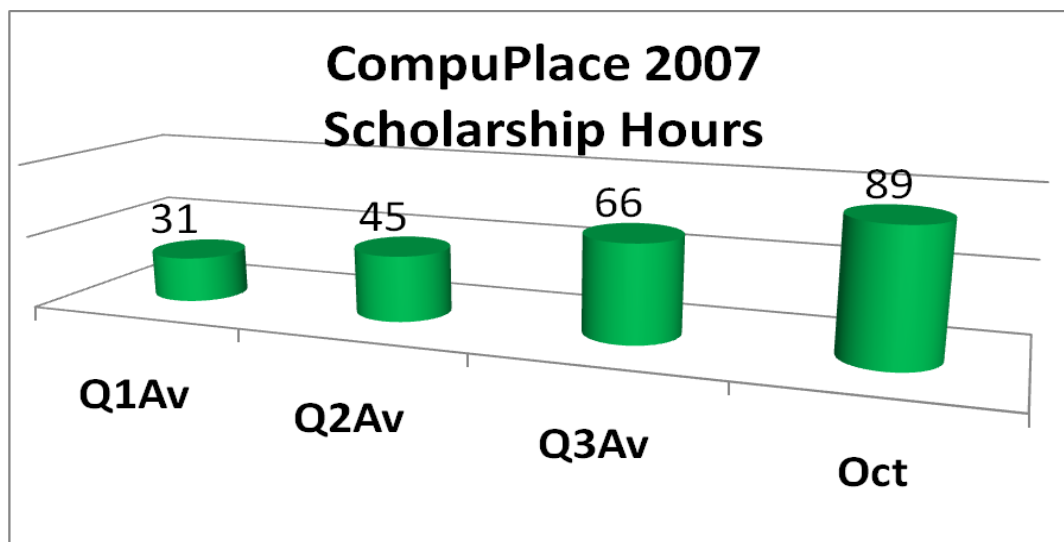
CompuPlace = FUN + WORK!

By playing, we can gain & reinforce self-confidence and basic, and problem-solving skills. So if we seem to be having too much fun at CompuPlace, please think, listen and watch carefully!

This additional space allocation to CompuPlace will mean less revenue from Agency Housing rent to the ECC as a whole. It is hoped that the community will be able to respond.

The ECC graciously provides a home, utilities, office supplies, internet, and phone. The ECC also pays the director's (now full time) salary with some help from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). In addition to this vast ECC support, funding in recent years is from grants, including the CDBG, the Rockwell Collins Employee United Fund, Christ Episcopal's Bruna Fund, and the WalMart Foundation. We also are grateful for donations from private individuals and some clients. Though it does not cover costs, we have requested a \$7 an hour donation from clients. But this does NOT prevent someone from coming. Over this last year, fewer and fewer clients are able to help us. Almost all wish to donate what they can. The average number of scholarship client-hours per month for the first quarter of '07 was 31. For the second quarter, this number was 45. For the third quarter it was 66, and for the month of October, this number has increased to 89 (see chart below). This is, in part, why we are asking the community for increased financial assistance to our program.

Organizational / Operational support is difficult to find. Rockwell Educational Access to Computer Technology (REACT) provides almost all of our computers, and takes very good care of most of our typical computer equipment needs. CompuPlace provides the level of service it does because of the abundant generosity and jovial genius of Barbara Klawiter and the volunteers at the REACT Center. We are most grateful.



Software designed for adults with disabilities tends to be very expensive. We do use some more typical “off the shelf” software. We have over 400 CDs. Some are designed for kids; we sometimes apologize for this. Most is discount software, for example, Wheel of Fortune, Carmen San Diego, Who Wants to be a Millionaire?, Scattergories, Hoyle Table Games, Bejeweled, Batman card matching, and a Greeting Card program. We also have a few favorite free online internet games. Many clients come to CompuPlace for Internet access and to email family and friends.

Specialized software includes cause and effect, communication, money, word and concept recognition, and spelling and other literacy packages. We use software for non-typical needs from companies like SoftTouch, Conover, Attainment, Laureate and RJ Cooper. We also have typing tutors, Dragon Naturally Speaking (you talk, it types), and IntelliTalk (you type, it talks). We are happy to have ZoomText, recently donated by its author AI Squared, which is a large print and speaking interactive software program for people with low vision or other print-related disabilities.

We use a variety of operating systems, some old and some newer. All of our computers have speakers, as sound accompaniment is very helpful here. We can offer alternative mice, trackballs, switches, and IntelliKeys, an alternative to a typical keyboard. We dearly love our TOUCH SCREENS, which allow a person to use a finger (the original pointing device) to point and click.

For some of our clients, issues of control, choice and cause and effect are most salient. For these individuals, we have programs like RJ’s “Switch Man” that celebrate a single touch or click. For others, success with carefully chosen tasks involving 1 or 2 (or perhaps more) steps, elements, dimensions or layers can cultivate growth. For example, a game that involves both a left and a right click can be very valuable. A game like Bejeweled or Gravity Tiles that can only be played by thinking at least one step ahead is also useful. For another group, games on a computer can open the eyes of, and even astonish, the client, and the people in their lives. Skills and potential may yet be undiscovered. For many, skills are underrepresented by other activities unrelated to computers. Some people do come to CompuPlace to learn very high order skills to overcome things that were once barriers. These people use (and have the opportunity to “try before you buy”) assistive technology that can be quite complicated and / or expensive. These services can help us ALL cope more gracefully, and more economically, with disability. Technology can be astoundingly liberating.

Although we usually WORK at CompuPlace, we do not discount the importance of FUN. Play is the way we all began learning. Encouragement and success are paramount. We can gain and reinforce self-confidence and basic and problem-solving skills by playing. There is indeed recent focus in scientific literature on the value of epistemic gaming. So, if we seem to be having too much fun at CompuPlace, please think, listen and watch carefully!

The director deeply admires clients' perseverance and desires to work to improve themselves. One could learn much from our clients every day.

Q's? Can we help you or can you help us? Call 362-4284 or email compuplace@ecc-cr.org

Please see our Wish List on page 8!

Margaret Bock Housing Update

“A Home on Third”

1021 Third Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Margaret Bock Housing (MBH) continues to serve low income single adults with affordable housing. A total of 34 single rooms are available. 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 one month 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.

Dick Sojka, the Margaret Bock Housing Property Manager for many years has resigned after a dedicated and productive tenure. We are appreciative of Dick’s work ethics and the stabilization he brought to the job. We wish the best for Dick and his wife Nadine as they move onto a new venture in their life.

The new MBH Property Manager is Raymond Pina who will be working a few more hours than his predecessor. His duties will include minor maintenance projects. Raymond Pina’s hours will be from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday through Friday. Welcome aboard!

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

Chuck Scott, ECCF Board Member

A note of special thanks to Chuck Scott for assuming the role of MBH Property Manager (as a volunteer) in the interim. Great job!

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

Karen Young, Lovely Lane United Methodist

Vacancy = Christ Episcopal Church*

*Would like to have this position filled no later than January 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

ECC says “goodbye” ...

Jan Alderton resigned as Fair Housing Investigator for the City of Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission on October 31, 2007. She says, “Thank you for a fun & productive 8 years in the ECC building and 11 years doing Fair Housing.” Jan also served on the Margaret Bock Housing Board of Directors and will be missed by all. For now, she has returned to her home town.

“Please let me know when you can come visit Storm Lake and try our great new indoor & outdoor water parks. I’ll show you around my wonderful town! Keep doing great work...I’m glad to have been a part of our grand efforts for Cedar Rapids citizens. I’ll miss everyone!”

Jan Alderton; 900 E 1st Street; P.O. Box 1113; Storm Lake, IA 50588 Phone: (712) 732-5259

Helping Hands says “goodbye” ...

Leanne Burdick, member of First Lutheran Church, and data entry volunteer at Helping Hands Ministry for the past four years, is resigning in November. She has decided to return to college to pursue another degree. She will maintain her full time job at St. Luke’s Hospital as well.

Leanne volunteered every Wednesday between 2 and 4 p.m. to enter all the Helping Hands Ministry interviews onto the HHM database. She has been a blessing to the program and will be missed.

On behalf of the Helping Hands Ministry Steering Committee and staff, we wish Leanne the very best in her studies and her future.

Do you see yourself in a position to volunteer for the ECC? Call Lois at Helping Hands Ministry (366-2651) or Robin at CompuPlace (362-4284) today!

A Big Thanks to...

Ascension Lutheran
 Gloria Dei Lutheran
 Immaculate Conception Catholic
 St. Joseph’s Catholic
 St. Ludmila’s Catholic
 St. Matthew’s Catholic
 St. Pius Catholic
 Community of Christ
 Christ Episcopal
 First Baptist—Marion
 First Congregational
 First Congregational Women
 First Lutheran
 St. Stephen’s Lutheran
 Oakland Church of the Nazarene
 Echo Hill Presbyterian
 First Presbyterian - CR
 First Presbyterian Women
 Kenwood Park Presbyterian
 Our Savior’s Lutheran
 Peoples Unitarian Universalist
 Westminster Presbyterian
 Westminster Presbyterian Women
 Lutheran Church of the Resurrection
 Mission of Hope
 Living Waters United Methodist
 Lovely Lane United Methodist
 Prairie Chapel United Methodist
 St. Paul’s United Methodist
 Salem United Methodist
 Troy Mills Christian
 Kiwanis Club of Marion Sunrisers
 Welcome Wagon Club
 2007 Contributors



The Ecumenical Community Center

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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
- \$350 for one more MagicTouch touch screen
- \$ to attend October 2008 conference in MN
- \$ for general operational support
- White copy paper
- Scratch paper (clean, blank on one side)
- Avery White Clean Edge business card stock
- One or a few lightweight portable file boxes