



## **The Ecumenical Community Center**

1035 Third Avenue SE #201

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Phone: (319)-366-2651

Email: [admin@ecc-cr.net](mailto:admin@ecc-cr.net)

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:

- Small bottles/boxes of laundry soap
- Quarters for laundry needs
- 4-roll packages toilet paper
- Razors/Shaving Cream
- Feminine hygiene products
- Hy-Vee gift cards (special dietary needs)

#### For office:

- Postage Stamps
- Colored 8-1/2 x 11 copier paper
- White 8-1/2 x 11 copier paper
- Letter size/3-tab manila file folders
- Gift cards to purchase ink cartridges
- Financial donations for general support
- Credenza

### **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 2009 conference in MN
- \$ for general operational support
- Postage Stamps
- Scratch paper (clean, blank on one side)
- Avery White Clean Edge business card stock
- One or a few lightweight portable file boxes
- Empty CD cases

# The Echo

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## Website

Check out our website at [www.ecc-cr.net](http://www.ecc-cr.net)! Find out information on offices for rent, volunteer opportunities, upcoming events and general information about ECC.

## Letter From the President

The butterfly effect. I heard a graduation speech recently where the speaker encouraged the graduates to consider the butterfly effect. I liked that speech. You are probably familiar with the notion: an event as small as the flapping of a butterfly's wings can, through a chain of cause and effect, produce a hurricane half a world away. The speaker's point was that the graduates would never know the impact that they would have as a result of the routine interactions of their daily work. "Be a force for good."

During this holiday season, it seems an appropriate idea. At the Ecumenical Community Center, it is central to what we try to do. The Helping Hands Ministry is now 10 years old. The demand for its services continues to rise. The impact of the 2008 flood coupled with a struggling economy has brought more calls from people unable to pay rent and utility bills. Lois Rude and her staff/volunteers work to match local resources to the needs of local citizens.

At CompuPlace, Robin Brunner and her volunteers work to enrich and expand the lives of people with disabilities. Robin relates the story of how CompuPlace's specialized computer equipment and programs have unlocked doors of communication for some clients who had never experienced an exchange of ideas that most of us can take for granted.

In ten years the Ecumenical Center has touched many lives. Today the Center is literally on the move. Work is well underway on a new facility located at 601 & 605 Second Avenue SE. The Ecumenical Center with its current tenants will share its new building with Green Square Meals and the Witwer Senior Center, both vitally important to the community of Cedar Rapids. All three programs should move in January 2009.

Be a force for good. If you have supported the Ecumenical Center in the past, thank you. Your help today is urgently needed. Please consider a donation to the Ecumenical Center and know that your gift will touch the life of someone in need. Consider the butterfly.

**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.net](mailto:helpinghands@ecc-cr.net)

Lois Rude, HHM Director

Barb Kane, HHM Staff Associate



Helping Hands Ministry (HHM) continues to receive many requests for assistance. Incoming telephone calls average 492 per month in 2008. Financial assistance since the last issue of *The Echo* has been provided as follows:

<u>Month</u>	<u># Households</u>	<u># Persons</u>	<u>Total Amount</u>	<u>Funds Exhausted Date</u>
August	69	158	\$ 5,219.52	08/28/08
September	75	167	\$ 5,169.18	09/25/08
October	<u>84</u>	<u>184</u>	<u>\$ 5,729.24</u>	10/24/08
	228	509	\$16,117.94	

The majority of requests are for help with rent, rent deposit, utility or utility deposit. Typically the amount of financial help ranges between \$75 and \$100 per household with a maximum of \$150. Households affected by the loss of jobs due to the flood and those unable to find jobs due to the current economy continue to seek HHM assistance. Being good stewards of the funds donated, HHM ascertains if households are eligible for other local agency help. HHM also serves as an advocate with service providers to work with the households. Donations of items on our "Office Supply Wish List" (even rubber bands) helps control costs.

Some exciting news: HHM has been awarded a \$32,500 grant to provide "first month's rent" for Linn County residents! The award letter ended with "The Housing Fund for Linn County appreciates the efforts of your organization to address the housing needs of low-income households within Linn County. We are pleased to partner with you in this work." This grant plus the \$36,260 City of Marion's Grant to HHM will make it possible to help between 150-200 households. To be eligible, the household must have an income for 3 months minimum that is sufficient to pay ongoing rent. The income must fall within the income and resource eligibility guidelines established by the grants.

HHM and CompuPlace participated in the 11/15/08 Alternative Gift Market and are pleased to report that \$385 was donated to HHM and \$241 to CompuPlace. We are very grateful for these designated gifts. It is only through the continued support of the faith community and individual donations that we have been able to increase the number of households served. We are so thankful! Barb & I wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas!

# ECC News

<b><u>THANKS for 2008 support from:</u></b>	First Christian	Westminster Presbyterian
First Baptist Marion	First Congregational	Ascension Lutheran
Immaculate Conception Catholic	Peoples Unitarian Universalist	Lutheran Church of the Resurrection
St Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic	Bethany Lutheran	Our Savior's Lutheran
St John XXIII Catholic	First Lutheran	Asbury U/Methodist
St Joseph Catholic	Gloria Dei Lutheran	Living Water U/Methodist
St Jude Catholic	Hope Lutheran	Lovely Lane U/Methodist
St Ludmila Catholic	St Stephens Lutheran	New Creation U/Methodist
St Matthew Catholic	Women of Hope Lutheran	Prairie Chapel U/Methodist
St Pius X Catholic	First Church of the Nazarene	Salem U/Methodist
St Steven Catholic	Oakland Church of the Nazarene	St. Paul U/Methodist
Community of Christ	Echo Hill Presbyterian	Church Women United
Christ Episcopal	First Presbyterian, C.R.	
Grace Episcopal	First Presbyterian Women	
	Calvin Sinclair Presbyterian	

## **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. It is currently at full capacity with a waiting list for acceptance. Thirty-four (34) single rooms are available to be occupied. Six of the rooms have an adjoining bathroom where as the remaining 28 share one of several community bathrooms. Rent varies according to the size of the room from \$235 to \$255 per month including utilities and cleaning of all common areas.

The minimum requirements for acceptance are: must be single, have a source of income, pay a \$100 security deposit, pay one month rent in advance and 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. Raymond Pina is the MBH Property Manager. His hours are between 8 am - Noon, Monday through Friday. Wish list: twin sheets & pillows

## **Service Project:**

Linn-Mar High School's Key Club is a service organization made up of students at Linn Mar-High School. The group arranges volunteer opportunities and service projects for the Linn-Mar students to participate in. The Key Club has chosen Helping Hands Ministry to be the recipient of their latest community service project. The students will collect cold weather wear, such as hats, gloves and coats, as well as hygiene items. The students will collect items at the school until Christmas break. We look forward to the donations, and the chance to share them with our clients! **Thanks Linn-Mar High School Key Club! HHM Staff**



**CompuPlace**

1035 Third Avenue SE #105  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403  
Phone: (319)-362-4284  
Email: [compuplace@ecc-cr.net](mailto:compuplace@ecc-cr.net)

Robin Switzer Brunner, Director

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

CompuPlace currently serves between 50 and 70 individuals each month and about 110 different individuals annually. Most are “regulars” with developmental disabilities, and represent only a small fraction of the over 28,000 Linn Countians who have disabilities. The need for CompuPlace-type services is great, both in our area and around the United States. There is no other learning environment like CompuPlace in Iowa, and we help fill a major gap in educational services.

Most clients are adults with developmental disabilities who come weekly or twice a month for 1 hour visits. They have few other options for continuing their education appropriately after public school services end at age 21. We work mainly on recognizing and spelling words, money skills, communication, and problem-solving. Some of the software is specially designed for people with disabilities and can be quite expensive. Other programs we use are less costly “off the shelf” games that teach these skills during play. We often use the internet for everyday email, information and music searches. We use a program donated by AI Squared called ZoomText, which can magnify and read web pages aloud, and even highlight each word as it is read.

CD Games such as Wheel of Fortune, Scattergories, Yahtzee, Zoo-opolis, Batman, Bejewelled, Scooby-Doo and I Spy are well-loved. We also enjoy a greeting card program. They are fun ways to strengthen problem-solving, observation, typing, reading, mouse skills and more. The director and clients’ staff often join in for ruckus teamwork. We do have several clients with communication goals, and programs that will speak what the client types are especially valuable.

Clients usually know what it is that they need most to work on. The greeting to clients usually includes, “What do you want to work on today?” Services are tailored to the individual and to the moment. The director endeavors to find not only teachable moments, but also skills that can be applauded, reinforced and built upon. Successes, large and small, are celebrated.

Both the number of clients and the hours of service they enjoy are down a bit from 2007 levels. Transportation can be a huge issue for CompuPlace clients. Many of

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their agencies are reducing the assistance they provide to clients in getting to and from CompuPlace.

Since numbers have been down a bit from last year, the Director has been using some time to learn skills necessary to author websites by writing the HTML code from scratch.

Our current web site [www.ecc-cr.net](http://www.ecc-cr.net) has been constructed using a web authoring program. Though some improvements are being made, it is not really good enough. A revamped test site is under construction. If you are interested in reviewing this site, and especially if you use assistive technology, please email [compuplace@ecc-cr.net](mailto:compuplace@ecc-cr.net). The next step is to learn coding for styles of presentation so that the web page can be more easily accessed by people with different abilities and disabilities using a variety of technologies. A third step will be learning to make both the coding, and the web sites created with that code, more efficient. Many thanks to the volunteer who has been helping with Web Programming!

Besides authoring two versions of the ECC web site, the CompuPlace Director has been attempting to author our own learning materials. After using some special options in PowerPoint and some other authoring tools, we have more personalized learning materials. At this point, our in-house creations are mostly focused on literacy. But other things like health and hygiene, food, cooking and nutrition, appropriate social behaviors, and math and money are important. We look forward to tailoring more activities to our clients and their needs.

If you would like to see CompuPlace in action, please call 362-4284 for an appointment. It would be my pleasure to demonstrate the services provided.

Robin Switzer Brunner, CompuPlace Director

## ECCF Board of Directors

Jim Kennedy, President, First Lutheran

Charles Scott, Vice President, Salem United Methodist

Peter Riley, Treasurer, At-Large

Lois Nosek, Secretary, Mound View Neighborhood Association

Vacancy, Salem United Methodist

J.D. Combellick, Peoples Unitarian Universalist

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Scott Olson, At-Large

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Carolyn Schmidt, Echo Hill Presbyterian

Tom Ryder, At-Large

John vonLackum, First Presbyterian-CR

Mary Ann Stewart, Lovely Lane United Methodist

Beth Robbins = Christ Episcopal Church

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