

## IN THIS ISSUE:

New Website Launch  
The Traveling Green Beans  
DMARC Remembers Dean Wright  
Five Days of Food


# New Help for the Hungry in Urbandale

*"More than 650 families are helped each week, comprising more than 8,200 unique families every year."*

We're pleased to announce that the city and churches of Urbandale are sponsoring a newly established DMARC-affiliated food pantry to serve those living in their community.

The new Urbandale pantry brings the total number of DMARC pantries to nine. As with the other DMARC pantries, those in need can receive from the Urbandale pantry a five-day supply at no cost once per month. Located at 7611 Douglas Avenue, Suite 31 in Urbandale, the pantry is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The telephone number for the Urbandale pantry is 515-251-6688; its Director is Eileen Boggess.

All DMARC Food Pantries exist to help meet the short-term needs of hungry people in the Des Moines area. More than 650 families are helped each week, comprising more than 8,200 unique families every year, receiving a total of more than one million food items annually.

In addition to providing food they offer assistance information to those in need and refer them to other area agencies depending on their specific needs. 

# President's Letter

– Ross Daniels  
DMARC President

## Thanks, But I Gave at the Office

“The Cans from the Heart”  
initiative brought in over  
\$20,000 in food and cash for  
the Emergency Food Pantry

For the past 56 years, DMARC has relied on contributions from our member congregations and individual donors for over 50% of our revenue. When excluding non-cash, food contributions, this number soars to nearly 75%.

Unfortunately, in these challenging economic times when both congregational and household budgets are stretched to their limits, asking for additional funding from our member congregations is not a realistic option. Additionally, a campaign to attract new contributors would be very expensive in terms of cost per dollar raised, and often unsuccessful if targeted improperly.

Instead, the model that DMARC needs to replicate and build upon is this year's partnership with Wells Fargo for its local “Cans from the Heart” initiative that brought in over \$20,000 in food and cash for the Emergency Food Pantry. Much of the legwork for this campaign, from logo design to volunteer recruitment to publicity, was done by Wells Fargo with guidance from DMARC staff.

Corporate partnerships offer DMARC a simple and easy way for businesses to help us accomplish our organization's mission at nearly no cost to us. With a single click of a mouse, each new area business partner is able to reach out to hundreds or even thousands of area employees, many of whom have never given to, or even heard of, DMARC. The power of reaching out to so many new, potential donors would be nearly impossible for an organization of our size through any other means.

If DMARC is to grow into the *interfaith* leader in the provision of direct services to Des Moines' needy and the *interfaith* voice for Des Moines, we must actively build long-term relationships with many of the area's largest and most active corporations. ➤



# New Website to Bring New Understanding



At its heart, DMARC is a multi-faith collaboration of more than 150 member congregations, and we are committed to encouraging interaction between the different faith traditions in Des Moines. By recognizing our religious roots, sharing our faiths with one another and working toward common interests, we can truly impact our community and our world.

With the launch of our newly redesigned website at [DMReligious.org](http://DMReligious.org), DMARC now has

a powerful tool in bringing these different faith traditions together. Different clergy members from around the city have been asked to contribute to the website and, in time, we will have a broad sample of perspectives on issues that are relevant to the Des Moines community.

The website also helps us impact our community with the inclusion of an online donation area, offering visitors the ability to make convenient, tax-deductible contributions to DMARC by credit card.

## A Week in the Life of a Can of Green Beans



Our heroic can of green beans arrives at the Emergency Food Pantry after being placed in a Red Barrel, donated on food pantry

Sundays in churches, provided through a business food drive or donated by an individual. Food placed in the Red Barrel is picked up at local grocery stores by volunteers at least once a week. Food that is donated by churches is delivered by volunteers from each church.

Upon arrival at the Emergency Food Pantry Warehouse, located

behind the DMARC offices at 3816 36th Street, volunteers check our can and all the other foodstuffs for their expiration dates. With a thumbs up on date, the food is then packaged and placed in the warehouse to await distribution to one of the nine food pantries in the Des Moines metro area.

Each week the food pantries fax or e-mail their orders to the Emergency Food Pantry Warehouse. Volunteers assemble the orders, each of which includes several thousand items, one of which is our can of beans, and gives them to the pantries at no cost. DMARC volunteers from the local food pantries come to the warehouse to load the food and

transport it to their pantry.

Upon arrival at the local pantry, another group of volunteers boxes the food, making it easy for recipients to take away. Boxes are prepared according to the size of the family. For instance, a family of four receives a box containing 40 items (like green beans), considered to be a five-day supply of food. Recipients may receive a five-day supply once a month.

So in the course of one week our can of green beans goes from the grocery store shelf to the Emergency Food Pantry Warehouse to the local food pantry, where it finally ends up on the table of a family in need.



# DMARC Remembers: Dean Wright


“Sitting with a person under a bridge or in the woods near a river bank, sharing a cup of coffee and talking about their lives, at least that part that they were willing to share, brought the opportunity for understanding what those who had never been there could not share.”

— Professor Dean Wright, Paul Morrison Relays Lecture

These words from a lecture delivered in 2001 became a mantra for Dean Wright, retired Drake University Professor of Sociology. He earned Bachelor and Master of Education degrees from Pittsburg University and Kansas State University respectively, then a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Missouri. While at Missouri, he also served a stint in the U.S. Army. Upon graduation, Dean joined the faculty at Virginia Tech University. Later, he and his wife Sue moved to Des Moines where Dean accepted a faculty position at Drake University and Sue secured her doctorate degree at Iowa State University.

At Virginia Tech, Dean’s initial field of interest had been criminology. At Drake, that interest broadened to also include poverty and homelessness, and Dean became an activist. He became a champion for struggling people, sharing his research and findings with decision makers. As he told *The Des Moines Register* in 1994, “a lot of people believe that homelessness is a natural condition. I believe it’s an unnatural condition—one that we have imposed upon people.”

Dean’s involvement with the Des Moines Area Religious Council began in 1990 when he asked Director Forrest Harms to speak to one of his Drake classes about how DMARC responded to the needs of poor people in our community. At the time, Dean was serving on the Salvation Army Board of Directors, and with the early success of DMARC’s Compassion in Action program, we looked to Dean and the Salvation Army for help administering the funds raised. Soon, Dean was chairing our Compassion in Action committee. He later joined the DMARC Foundation Board of Directors as well, and eventually became Chair. Dean served on the Foundation board until his recent death.

We at DMARC salute all that our friend and colleague Dean Wright did on behalf of the less fortunate in our community. We are truly proud to have recognized Dean with our own DMARC Service Award, emblematic of outstanding service to the community. Rest assured that we will continue to fulfill our mission of serving people in need by reaching out to those who mattered so much to Dean. 

---

**He became a champion for struggling people, sharing his research and findings with decision makers.**

---

# Mentors Wanted



The poverty rate in Des Moines Public Schools last spring was 62%, with some schools reporting poverty rates as high as 80 to 90%. This is reflected in the poor academic performance, disciplinary problems and early dropout rates of the children affected.

To intercede, Project Connect was created, a collaborative mentoring program between the Des Moines Area Religious Council and the Des Moines Public Schools. The program provides at-risk children one hour per week with an adult mentor.

Statistics show that this one hour

per week of consistent one-on-one face time with a caring adult raises these children's self-esteem. Their attitude and academics show significant improvement, and their absentee and suspension rates are cut by almost 50%.

We have close to 200 mentors in place, but hundreds of children are waiting. If you have one hour per week, you could change a child's life forever. No college degree is required, just a caring heart, listening ear and non-judgmental attitude. You can choose the day of the week, time of

the day, and the age of the child and the school. We supply games in all the schools and suggestions for ways to spend time with the children.

Project Connect mentors find the program very rewarding, not to mention enjoyable. We have retirees, college students and professionals who love our program. One hour a week with a child allows a child's hopes and dreams to soar. You can be a very important part of that.

## Help Families Bridge the Childcare Gap

One of DMARC's lesser-known programs is Childcare Assistance, in which we partner with Polk County to subsidize the cost of childcare for some families. The average cost of childcare in Des Moines is \$350 per child which, for many families, is prohibitive. Worse, families who raise their incomes can lose their government assistance long before they make enough to cover childcare costs themselves. The purpose of the Childcare Assistance program is to assist these "gap" families so that they can continue raising their incomes to the point where they don't need to rely on any childcare assistance at all.

In 2007-2008, 34 families and 44 children received childcare assistance from DMARC. Nineteen children participated in the program, and the average subsidy per child was \$70 per week. Single-parent families comprised 86 percent of those receiving assistance. Parents seeking to enroll their child or children in this program need to contact Shelly Helm with Polk County at 515-286-3611.

Due to low household income, many families qualify financially for DMARC Childcare Assistance; however, we are forced to place them on a waiting list

due to a lack of funds. We encourage you to consider contributing to DMARC's Childcare Assistance program, a program that fills a vital need for those families seeking to improve their situations.

### A Looming Challenge You Can Help!

With all of the natural and financial challenges to Iowa, the Des Moines Religious Council has seen increased demand for our public service initiatives, be it help with utility and rent costs, or greater need for subsidized daycare. But this exploding need has been most evident in the DMARC Emergency Food Pantry effort to feed hungry people.



# Emergency Food Pantry



The Emergency Food Pantry is located behind the DMARC offices at 3816 36th Street.

# 5

# Days of Food

The tremendous amount of food donations we receive at the Des Moines Area Religious Council's Emergency Food Pantry speaks volumes about the citizens of the Des Moines metropolitan area and their general understanding of the ongoing need of the hungry residents of our community. After all that food reaches DMARC, however, it still needs to be put into the hand of those who most need it. That's the job of the nine Emergency Food Pantry sites around the metro area.

Each pantry distribution site is equipped with guidelines provided by DMARC concerning the type and quantity of food that is given to those seeking assistance. To develop these guidelines, DMARC sought the assistance of Susan Klein, a nutrition expert with Iowa State Extension Offices in Polk County, who based them on two things: first, the food's nutritional value, and second, whether the quantity given, based on family size, is sufficient to provide a family with five days' worth of food.

Imagine you are part of a family of two people, two adults or a single parent and a child, and you need food assistance. After going through the Emergency Food Pantry intake process, you would receive a box containing twenty items: one can of juice, one box of cereal, one box of muffin mix, one box of saltine crackers, one can or package of beans, one box of macaroni and cheese, one package of pasta or rice, one jar of peanut butter, three cans of fruit, three cans of soup, one can of pasta, stew or chili, two cans of tuna and three cans of vegetables. The challenge becomes making this food actually provide meals for five days: five breakfasts, five lunches and five dinners for two.

We hope that seeing the limited amount of food that each family receives serves to highlight the true nature of the need in our communities. ➤



## Even More Colossal!

Each year, Hy-Vee holds a cookie sale at all of its Des Moines stores to support our Emergency Food Pantry, with DMARC receiving 1¢ of every cookie sold. Last year, Hy-Vee sold almost 900,000 cookies, yielding nearly \$9,000 for food at our Pantry. As impressive as this was, this year's sale, which ran September 23 through October 6, surpassed that mark with more than one million cookies sold.

Thank you, Hy-Vee, and everyone who purchased cookies. Your generous support is of tremendous help to the DMARC Emergency Food Pantry.

# Help Wanted

## Iowa's Disasters Strain DMARC Services



With its devastating tornadoes and disastrous flooding, 2008 has upended the lives and tested the limits of many Iowans. Add record high gasoline prices, rising food costs and a national recession to our natural disasters, and together, these conditions have formed a perfect storm in creating a crisis in emergency services.

The Des Moines Religious Council has seen increased demand for all of our public service initiatives, from help with residents' utility and rent costs to a greater need for subsidized daycare. However, nowhere is this great, unexpected demand for humanitarian services more evident than in the DMARC Emergency Food Pantry's effort to feed hungry people.

In 2007, DMARC helped more than 670 families each week from our neighborhood pantry sites. This year, economic conditions have created a dramatic increase in that number, with several of our pantries

experiencing at least 10-20% more families requesting food.

DMARC has also seen a dramatic increase in prices for the food we provide to each family. In early 2008, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) reflected a projected 4.5% increase in the price of food, the highest projected annual increase in seventeen years. We are now told that the number may increase to



more than 7%. For the Emergency Food Pantry, this means we must pay higher prices for food items we purchase. This alone we could

perhaps weather, but poor economic conditions have led to a leveling in food donations received by DMARC and reduced pantry cash reserves.

With your help, however, we can meet this looming challenge, and keep serving those in our communities who are in greatest need. Help us meet the rising need in one of two ways:

### **Make a cash donation.**

Food donations are appreciated, but cash donations are what drives the Emergency Food Pantry. That's because the food DMARC purchases for our pantries is bought in bulk and at discount, enabling us to stretch donations further to feed more people. Every \$25 we receive now makes a huge difference to one more family. \$100 allows us to feed four families for five days.

### **Hold a charitable holiday party.**

Giving to others is a holiday tradition; so is charity. Hosting a DMARC Emergency Food Pantry holiday party is an excellent way to help us feed more people. Please refer to our website for details.

For more than 30 years, the DMARC Emergency Food Pantry has been a boon to hungry families. With your help we can meet this looming challenge. Help us to meet the rising need as more and more families turn to the Emergency Food Pantry for help.



3816 36th Street, Suite 202  
Des Moines, IA 50310

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
DES MOINES, IOWA  
Permit No. 762

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

# D-marc your calendar

Please refer to DMARC's e-Bulletin for a more current schedule of events. To receive the e-Bulletin, please e-mail us at [info@DMReligious.org](mailto:info@DMReligious.org).

## NOVEMBER

**November 9**  
**LADOS MEETINGS** (Life After Death Of Spouse)  
LADOS meetings are held at 7:00 p.m.  
at Plymouth Congregational Church.

**November 11**  
**COMPASSION IN ACTION**  
Compassion in Action committee meetings  
are held at 11:30 a.m. in the DMARC  
conference room.

## WINTER HOLIDAYS

**Baha'i**  
**November 12** - Birth of Baha'u'llah  
**November 28** - Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha

**Christianity**  
**December 25** - Christmas

## DECEMBER

**December 9**  
**COMPASSION IN ACTION**  
Compassion in Action committee meetings  
are held at 11:30 a.m. in the DMARC  
conference room.

**December 14**  
**LADOS MEETINGS** (Life After Death Of Spouse)  
LADOS meetings are held at 7:00 p.m.  
at Plymouth Congregational Church.

**Islam**  
**December 7** - Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca)  
**December 8** - 'Id al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice)

**Janism**  
**December 9** - Maunajiyaras

## JANUARY

**January 11**  
**LADOS MEETINGS** (Life After Death Of Spouse)  
LADOS meetings are held at 7:00 p.m.  
at Plymouth Congregational Church.

**January 13**  
**COMPASSION IN ACTION**  
Compassion in Action committee meetings  
are held at 11:30 a.m. in the DMARC  
conference room.

**Judaism**  
**December 22-29** - Hanukkah  
**African-American**  
**December 26-January 1** - Kwanzaa