



**President's Report 2008**  
**Ross Daniels, DMARC President**

First of all, I wanted to take a moment to thank each of you for taking the time to join us tonight. Without the commitment of each of you, and the personal pride of ownership that each of you takes in this amazing organization, so much of what we accomplish for the community would not be possible. Please take a moment to congratulate yourselves for all that you have accomplished in the past year.

For those of you that attended this meeting a year ago, you heard Faith Ferre speak of our having completed a “year of transition” for the Council as we prepared to usher in Sarai Rice as DMARC’s new Executive Director. I spoke of Fiscal Year 2009, which we have just completed, as a “year of foundation building”, where, as an organization, we were to begin taking the steps necessary to refocus our efforts on the core goals of the Council and ensure that DMARC had in place the people and the tools necessary to not only survive, but also to grow and thrive into the future.

In the face of historically difficult financial conditions over the past year, DMARC has been able to be successful not only in building a foundation for our future, but also in substantially increasing our levels of direct services provided to the community while not sacrificing our long-term financial stability.

Among the foundational changes that we have made over the past year:

- Not only have we had a full year’s benefit of Sarai’s tremendous leadership as our Executive Director, but we have also seen turnover in other key DMARC positions. With the additions of Jim Trotter as our Food Pantry Director, Cindy Morton running the Red Barrel program, Laura DeLong as our Financial Secretary, and Matthew Phelps as our Communications Director and Office Manager, as well as the continued support from Mary Beth Williams coordinating Project Connect and Marshall Grabau leading development, we now have a staff in place that is providing truly excellent customer service to our business partners. The increase in service levels, accountability, professionalism, and general “can do” attitude has already been widely noticed by many of partners.
- With the help of our Vice-President John Ayers, DMARC Foundation President Bob Shaw, and the rest of the Foundation Board, we have made significant changes to the by-laws of the Foundation to better align them with the ongoing needs of DMARC as a whole. We are currently beginning a similar review of the by-laws for DMARC’s Administrative Cabinet, and I know that you will be hearing more on the progress of those changes over the next year.

- We have built upon our success in partnering with area businesses, understanding that these relationships are crucial to our organization's future. As you may remember, last year DMARC partnered with Wells Fargo for its citywide "Cans from the Heart" campaign, resulting in over \$20,000 worth of food and cash contributions for the Emergency Food Pantry. This was our largest single event ever with a corporate partner, and hopefully just the first of many on the horizon.
- No doubt you have noticed the changes that have been made to DMARC's quarterly publication, *The Voice*, now in full color with a completely new and exciting design. *The Voice*, I believe, now does a far better job of conferring the image that we wish to convey as an organization...that of a community leader in Des Moines.
- Next, as you will remember from our last Business Assembly, we were just a few days away from the rollout of DMARC's totally redesigned website at [www.dmreligious.org](http://www.dmreligious.org), made possible by a grant from the DMARC Foundation. Since our official launch on November 10, barely 3 months ago, we have collected well over \$16,000 through the website, with well over 50% of the donations coming from donors who have never before contributed to DMARC. This \$16,000 represents payback of nearly 2/3 of the total \$25,000 initial investment in the site in just over 3 months. Projects are currently underway from our education committee to add new and exciting multimedia content to the site on many of the different faith traditions in Des Moines.
- Finally, in one of our most exciting announcements of the year, our Executive Committee in partnership with the DMARC Foundation, has just this week authorized Sarai to move forward with a search for a full-time Director of Development. This position, to be funded equally by DMARC and the Foundation will be tasked with raising money for both entities through direct appeals to donors, through grants, and through legacy giving. This position represents one of the final bricks of the strengthened foundation upon which DMARC hopes to build in the years to come and in many ways represents a "greater maturity" for us as an organization.

As I mentioned earlier, this past year has been one of historical economic challenges, both for non-profit organizations in general, as well as for the economy as a whole. Despite these challenges, DMARC has largely bucked the difficult trends felt by so many other organizations. In fiscal year 2009, we have seen our highest level of giving in the past 5 years, with nearly \$1.5 million in total revenue, a 12% increase over last year, and still an 8% increase over last year when removing the one-time \$40,000 grant from the foundation. We have been able to maintain our level of congregational giving, our single largest source of revenue, from last year while seeing a 31% increase in cash contributions from individuals and a 26% increase in value of donated food. As an organization, we have been very, very fortunate.

Not surprisingly, these economic difficulties have also led to unprecedented need for our services. Over the past year DMARC has seen over a 20% increase in visits to our local food pantries. Over the past 4 months alone, we have seen over 1600 new, unduplicated individuals, make first time visits to one of our partner pantries. We have no indications at this time of this trend softening. On the contrary, we have every reason to believe that need will continue to increase in the next year.

The result of this increased demand for our services, and historic increases prices of food staples resulted in a 23% increase in food pantry expense over the past year. While we have been able to maintain our level of Childcare Assistance, we have needed to reduce our commitment to Compassion in Action by approximately \$11k over the past year to help us meet the additional Food Pantry demand.

Looking purely at the bottom line excess/deficit for the year, we came in approximately \$50,000 under budget, with a \$12,000 deficit for the year, less than 1% of total revenue. While we would prefer to have been running a surplus, it was the feeling of both the Cabinet and the Executive Committee that we would rather run a manageable deficit for the year, than be forced leave emergency needs unmet in our community. While we have not officially closed our books for the year, despite this annual deficit, we will, as an organization, still have over \$500,000 in cash reserves to allow us to continue to meet these emergency needs and we are committed to utilizing these reserves as necessary to ensure that our partner pantries are not turning people away.