

Thanks, But I Gave at the Office

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

One of the chief responsibilities of DMARC's Executive Committee is to look for the additional income required to allow us to meet the ever-increasing community need for our services and to grow DMARC as an organization. Today, our nation faces incredibly challenging economic times which make this task harder than ever. 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 focused campaign to grow a sizable base of new individual contributors is extremely time consuming, very expensive in terms of cost per dollar raised, and often unsuccessful if targeted improperly. Where does this leave us, besides knowing that we need to grow DMARC's financial base in smarter, more efficient ways?

Corporate America today is increasingly familiar with fundraising campaigns for charitable causes. In fact, community giving has become an important part of why companies succeed. One reason for this is that internal fundraising campaigns can effectively unite employees across entire organizations in a common cause.

While DMARC has had a few very valuable successes with businesses such as Citigroup, First American Bank, and Wells Fargo, local businesses remain a largely underdeveloped source of income. For our last fiscal year, cash contributions from area businesses represented less than 5% of DMARC's total revenue.

Some of you may have already participated in United Way fundraising at your office, maybe even designating DMARC as a recipient of funds through this campaign. With a 2007 national survey finding that 56% of corporate giving went to programs associated with health, social services, or education we find that our Emergency Food Pantry, Compassion in Action, and Project Connect programs are already extremely well aligned with current priorities for corporate giving.

The model that DMARC needs to replicate and build upon is this year's partnership with Wells Fargo for its local "Can's 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 themselves, with guidance from DMARC staff. Wells Fargo sent out multiple e-communications to literally thousands of area employees with information on where to bring food items, how to volunteer for one of their two Sack Saturdays, and DMARC's amazing staff coordinated the volunteer participation with area Dahl's stores and food pickup from local Wells Fargo buildings.

These types of 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. The cost of a similarly sized mail campaign alone would be staggering. Additionally, each employee's first experience with DMARC, through their employer has the possibility of leading to a lifetime of participation with our organization, especially where many of these individuals may not be reached through our member congregations.

As DMARC embarks on this new challenge, we are aggressively beginning to build what we hope will be long-term relationships with many of the area's largest, and most active corporations. Our goal is that eventually, as many of our relationships develop, other businesses will come to us first when thinking of community assistance opportunities. In return we will provide them with a successful model for running a broad-based campaign where we make things as easy as possible.

If DMARC is to grow over the next few years into the organization that we all wish it to be, the *interfaith* leader in the provision of direct services to Des Moines' needy, the *interfaith* voice for Des Moines, these are the opportunities that we must most actively pursue.

Ross Daniels

DMARC President