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# DMARC Brings Electronic SNAP Application to Pantry Consumers

By Kristine Frakes, DMARC Development Director

In October 2010, the Des Moines Area Religious Council launched a SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Outreach Project in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Human Services. SNAP is the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program.

Earlier this year, as DMARC explored ways to address potential barriers to SNAP enrollment, the concept emerged to bring the SNAP application process to low-income households in places where consumers already access other services and programs.

And, what better place to start than with DMARC's own Emergency Food Pantry network?

Funded in part by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service and United Way of Central Iowa, the project will place up to ten computerized SNAP application stations in collaborating DMARC pantry sites, community meal sites and other human service agencies. Trained outreach assistants will help consumers onsite with the computerized SNAP application process.

In the first year, this project is expected to increase financial stability for up to 350 families (approximately 875 people) while directing more than \$263,000 in federally funded food assistance to low-income households in Dallas, Polk and Warren counties.



People who qualify for SNAP benefits use an electronic card, pictured here, that works like a debit card, thus ensuring that they can purchase groceries for their families in the same way others do.



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Photo courtesy of DMARC



## Live Among Everyone's "One Person"

These days we're all angry, but I don't think it's always been this way.

When this country began, it probably felt like a wide-open space in which people from different places with different beliefs and customs had a lot of room to live. And there was room too, for grand ideas like religious tolerance and free speech.

But recently we seem to have run out of space. Now our fears keep bumping up against other people's freedoms, and we are once again faced with the need to decide how we will let each other believe and who gets to share our space. And because we all feel threatened and afraid, we get angry.

What will help? I don't know. But I'm pretty clear about what won't: Burning books, yelling when we should be listening, blaming just Republicans or just Democrats for complicated problems, crying, moving to another country, walking away.

What could we do instead? Again, I don't know, but we could try: Meditation or prayer, embracing someone, burying our faces periodically in the

softness of a willing dog or cat, talking to someone who knows how to listen, sharing milk and cookies, stopping to feel the breeze

Or maybe, if these feel too soft and idealistic, we could just recognize that, for all the ways we differ in behavior or belief, each one of us has at least one person in our lives whom we love or care about or respect but who is different from us in some profound way. And we could recognize that since all 310 million of us couldn't possibly share that same "one person," we are literally surrounded by other people's "one person" who is loved or cared for or respected in some way. And we could recognize that we each have to leave room in our own small piece of democracy for everyone else's "one person" to pass safely through our space.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarai".

Sarai Schnucker Rice, DMARC Executive Director

*"The Demands of Love." An Interfaith Service for Peace sponsored by the Ecumenical Peace Committee was held on September 19, 2010, at the Des Moines Peace Garden in Nollen Plaza, downtown Des Moines. The service was led by representatives of various faith traditions, including Bob Shaw, DMARC longtime volunteer, and Sarai Schnucker Rice, DMARC Executive Director. One day prior to the ceremony, a stunning boulder, with the newly displayed Peace Garden Medallion, was installed in the garden with thanks to an industrial crane and the staff from Ted Lare Design Build. The Peace Garden and the medallion were created 30 years ago through the work of Rabbi Jay Goldberg and Bishop Maurice Dingman, beloved local religious leaders who were dedicated to interfaith cooperation. The medallion reads, in part: "In the quiet of this place, may we meditate about the demands of love . . . May all who experience this garden be more loving, merciful and sharing . . ."*

Photo: Robert Brammer



## Electronic SNAP

*continued from cover page*

“As many as 12,000 people who benefit from the DMARC Emergency Food Pantry network have not applied for SNAP benefits. We know some of the most common barriers are language and transportation limitations and misinformation about eligibility,” said Sarai Schnucker Rice, DMARC Executive Director. “DMARC is deeply grateful for the partnerships with the United Way of Central Iowa, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Iowa Department of Human Services—partnerships that increase our community’s capacity to make sure every family and every person have enough to eat.”

Over the next several months, DMARC will be working with many community partners to dispel common myths about SNAP eligibility, provide individualized assistance and encourage participation by potentially eligible applicants.

To learn more about the SNAP Outreach Project and for other ways to apply for SNAP benefits, or to make a project donation, visit [www.dmreligious.org/snap](http://www.dmreligious.org/snap). Project Manager, Susan Klein (right) can be reached at [sklein@dmreligious.org](mailto:sklein@dmreligious.org).

## Welcome Susan Klein



*Photo: Terri Mork Speirs, DMARC*

We are pleased to welcome Susan Klein who is managing the DMARC SNAP Outreach Project (see cover story). For over 35 years, Susan Klein worked for University Extension—first in Illinois and then in Iowa. Over this time she was involved in many projects and programs to help Iowans become healthier and make better decisions about nutrition. In 1992 she was recognized by the American Family and Consumer Science Association as Nutrition Educator of the Year. A multi-award winning educator, Susan brings rich experience to DMARC’s commitment to health and nutrition. Susan can be reached at [sklein@dmreligious.org](mailto:sklein@dmreligious.org).

## LADOS Life After Death of Spouse Support

**You are not alone.** The LADOS support group, sponsored by DMARC, is a group of widowed men and women who meets the second Sunday evening of each month at Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, 42nd and Ingersoll, in Des Moines. Meetings begin at 7 p.m. and all are welcome. There is no need to make an appointment or to sign up in advance. LADOS members also gather for social outings such as the dinner get-together in the picture. For more information contact Connie Coy-Walker, LADOS Coordinator, at 515-255-2229, [cocowalk@live.com](mailto:cocowalk@live.com).



*Photo: Courtesy of Connie Coy-Walker*

## Meet Marie Birdsley

*Photo and text by Nicole Morinière, DMARC-based AmeriCorps VISTA*

**We are pleased** to introduce you to Marie Birdsley, one of the neighborhood pantry coordinators in the DMARC Emergency Food Pantry network.

Marie manages the Salvation Army Temple and Salvation Army Citadel Food Pantries, where she has been since May of this year. As Family Services Director of the Salvation Army Des Moines, she oversees the operations of the two pantries and runs three other Salvation Army programs: the Infant Center (which provides families with diapers, formula and other infant needs in partnership with Visiting Nurse Services), Financial Assistance (rent, utilities and mortgage assistant) and the Salvation Army canteen (which provides food to the homeless and at disaster sites).

Marie graduated from Iowa State University this year with a degree in Child, Adult and Family Services and a minor in Family Finance. She originally considered becoming a teacher but after two years decided she wanted to help families as a whole as opposed to children as individuals. She was an avid volunteer during college and completed an internship at the Iowa Department of Human Services, which deepened her interest in the “systems” of poverty—the bureaucracy people served must navigate in order to access the services they need.

In addition to managing the two pantries, Marie is taking Spanish classes at the Des Moines Area Community College and looking forward to getting involved in the Des Moines community.



*Marie likes the job best when there are lots of clients and she gets the opportunity to interact with them. “I love the babies that come in,” said Marie. “And when the whole family comes in and you get to see how they are all benefiting.” Some families come in regularly and see her as a friend, and Marie says she is looking forward to continuing to develop those relationships.*

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**The Salvation Army Temple and Citadel** are two of 11 DMARC neighborhood distribution sites. Salvation Army Temple is open Monday–Friday from 9-11:30 a.m. and 1-3:30 p.m. It is located at 1330 6th Avenue. You may call the pantry at 515-282-3422. Salvation Army Citadel is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; and Wednesday, 9-11:30 a.m. and 12:30-2:50 p.m. It is located at 1216 E. 25th Street Court. You may call the pantry at 515-266-3156.

# Updates from the DMARC Network of Food Pantries

Visit [www.dmreligious.org/pantry](http://www.dmreligious.org/pantry) for a full listing of all 11 food pantry sites in the DMARC Emergency Food Pantry network, including addresses and phone numbers. To get help in finding your neighborhood site, please call the DMARC main office 515-277-6969.

The Urbandale Food Pantry is moving to a larger location, two doors down from its current location. As of Monday, October 4, the new address is 7611 Douglas Avenue, Suite 34/35, Urbandale, IA, 50322. The phone number remains 515-251-6688.

The Ankeny Food Pantry welcomes a new coordinator, Jana Vander Ploeg.

The Johnston Food Pantry is pleased to announce its re-opening at a temporary location at St. Paul Presbyterian Church located at 6426 Merle Hay Road in Johnston. The phone number remains 515-868-1357.

## More Food for Even More People

In addition to providing food via its network of neighborhood pantry sites, the DMARC Emergency Food Pantry warehouse also provides items to other non-profit organizations, including but not limited to Iowa

Homeless Youth Center's Buchanan Transitional Living Center and Lighthouse Host Home, Catholic Worker House, Hope Ministries Bethel Mission, Central Iowa Shelter and Services, The Beacon of Life, JOPPA, Casady Alternative Center, and Community!Youth Concepts.

## Jeff and Daniel Help Move the Food

If you ever want to hear stories of how grateful people are to receive emergency food—especially fresh food—chat with DMARC truck drivers, Jeff McNeely and Daniel Beck. As they make regular rounds to deliver food donations to distribution centers, Jeff and Daniel see first hand what it means when a community ensures that everyone has enough to eat.



photo: Elisabeth Ballstadt, DMARC

## DMARC Emergency Food Pantry Usage:

	July 2010	July 2009	August 2010	August 2009
Number of food items given out by DMARC	125,654	102,858	117,274	84,328
Number of individuals served	8,848	9,396	11,560	8,494

Distribution was made primarily through DMARC's 11 partnering neighborhood pantry sites.

## A Partner in Fresh Food: Turtle Farm

Ben Saunders is Farm Manager with Turtle Farm Certified Organic Fruits and Veggies, one of DMARC's key partners in providing fresh food to our pantry families. We can accommodate the fresh food thanks to generous donors including the W.T. & Edna M. Dahl Trust, who purchased freezers and refrigerators for our central warehouse and most of our partnering food pantry sites.

2,186 . . .

Pounds of fresh food given out by DMARC January-August 2009

72,854 . . .

Pounds of fresh food given out by DMARC January-August 2010



photo: Elisabeth Ballstadt, DMARC

# Give a Few of Your Favorite Things

## Love Helping Others? Reach out.

Here are some examples of what your tax deductible gifts to DMARC can do:

- \$ 15: keeps a toddler in clean diapers for one week
- \$ 35: helps fuel the DMARC truck so we can get food to the people who need it
- \$ 50: provides an emergency five-day supply of food for a newly-arrived immigrant family of four
- \$ 100: keeps the heat on for one month for an elderly couple
- \$ 250: provides child care subsidies to assist a single working father with two young children
- \$ 500: allows DMARC to buy infant formula for ten babies for seven days.
- \$ 1,000: provides the equivalent of 1,250 meals to assist low-income families

## Love Thanksgiving? Give it away.

Invite your neighborhood to a “no-cook” Thanksgiving meal, contributing the ingredients for their favorite holiday dishes to donate to the Emergency Food Pantry. Examples: Canned green beans, canned corn, frozen turkeys, sweet potatoes, stuffing.

## Love Children? Donate diapers, infant formula or baby wipes.

Donations of diapers, infant formula or baby wipes—especially needed are diaper size two and up, including training pull-up diapers. Consider hosting a diaper drive or drop your donation in a Red Barrel in your local Dahl’s, Fareway or Hy-Vee grocery store.

## Love Your School?

## Borrow a Red Barrel.

Encourage your school to hold a DMARC food drive in conjunction with their holiday concert or event. Contact DMARC to request a Red Barrel placement. Ask your school to include the information about the drive on their calendars, newsletters and emails.

Celebrate the Holiday Season by Donating in Ways You



## Love Holiday Parties? Make them even more special.

For family, workplace and other holiday parties—make a donation to DMARC in honor of your party host, your secret Santa, your boss or your colleagues. DMARC will be happy to give you a recognition certificate that you can present to them. Your honoree will also be listed in the next issue of The Voice!

## Love Sweets? Share your favorite dessert.

While the DMARC Emergency Food Pantry food is health based, we also believe it is good for the soul to indulge for special occasions. Consider donating boxed brownie, cake, or muffin mixes; cookies; or packaged sweet breads and desserts.

## Love Family Traditions? Start a new one.

As part of your holiday celebration, bring your family together . . . at the grocery store. Give each person a pre-determined amount of money and the list of DMARC's most needed food items. Send family members out to select the food they would like to buy for other families in the community. Make a special delivery to the DMARC warehouse together.

## Love To Make Wishes Come True? Here is DMARC's wish list.

Grocery Carts. 2-wheel dollies. Refrigerated truck. Shelving. Packing tape. Paper sacks. Black Sharpie markers. Box cutters. Work gloves. Diapers. Baby formula. Personal hygiene products. UHT Shelf Stable Milk. Helping hands. Healthy, nutritious shelf-stable food. Fresh produce.

## Thank You

In a season when so many of us feel especially grateful for all that we have, DMARC extends its deepest gratitude for the many ways people give time, talents, and treasures to support our work to help each other. DMARC supporters provided more than one million meals to people who asked for food from January-August, 2010. We give thanks for our circle of love.



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## Greek Orthodox Church of Saint George

By Terri Mork Speirs,  
DMARC Communications Manager

### *All Are Welcome*

The Greek word “Philoptochos” means friend of the poor. Since 1954, the Greek Orthodox Church of Saint George has befriended vulnerable people in Greater Des Moines through its membership in DMARC and constant support of the Emergency Food Pantry.

“Our St. George Church Community sees its participation in the work of DMARC as an important way for us to respond to the call of our Lord as he expressed in Matthew 25,” said Father Basil Hickman, Parish Priest at St. George. “We are impressed by DMARC’s effectiveness in helping those in need.”

The congregation was originally established as a purely Greek Orthodox parish in 1928. Today, as the community evolves, St. George serves as a spiritual home for Orthodox Christians of numerous backgrounds. Yet the Greek language, along with English, is still utilized in the worship services. The most recent new



Photo: Jim Zeller



photo: Jim Zeller

*Father Basil Hickman is shown here preparing for the Divine Liturgy, the chief Greek Orthodox worship service. Father Basil serves on the DMARC Board of Directors and has been parish priest at St. George since 2005.*

*The Eritrean Orthodox community in Greater Des Moines feels comfortable at St. George.*

# DMARC Soup Supper



Save the date: February 20, 2010  
Watch our website for more details for the 5th annual DMARC Soup Supper, a community-wide event to support the Emergency Food Pantry. Please visit: [www.dmreligious.org/soupsupper](http://www.dmreligious.org/soupsupper).

## Gifts Given in Honor & in Memory

Between July and September, DMARC and the DMARC Foundation received gifts in honor of and in memory of the following people and occasions:

### In Honor of:

Karen Graber  
Donnafred Hinman  
Sr. Sandra Rodemeyer, RVM  
Re Nae Vanden Broek's 70th birthday

### In Memory of:

David Bear  
Gary Glanzer  
Lee & Norma Gorden  
Earl Holst  
Tom Huber  
Eva M. Light  
Larry Long  
Jack Rogers  
Randall & Kaitlyn Schabacker  
Sherry Schultz's brother Gary



Photo: Jim Zeller

*"Come for a visit!" said Jim Zeller, member and parish historian. "I think that the Des Moines Christian community should see St. George as a part of their cultural heritage and should feel welcome here." Pictured here are twins, Nicholas and Teddy, with their mother Kathy Triantafyllos.*

members are from the Eritrean Orthodox tradition (see photo page 8).

The parish woman's organization, the Ladies Philoptochos Society, generously responds to human need in a number of ways: hosting dinner fundraisers for charitable organizations, knitting prayer shawls for the sick, providing business attire for women entering the workforce and donating emergency food.

"These women are powerhouses of love and support," said Dr. Chrystalla Daly, President of the Society. On a nationwide level, the Ladies Philoptochos Society has given millions in the U.S. and abroad.

One excellent time to visit St. George would be during its famous Greek Food Fair, hosted annually on the first weekend in June. Guests are invited to "Be Greek for a day!"

DMARC is deeply grateful for the long-standing partnership with the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George.

## Member Features

The Voice features a different DMARC Member Congregation in each issue. Next issue, we will profile the Muslim Community Organization. Previous profiles include Tifereth Israel Synagogue and St. John's Lutheran Church. Visit the DMARC website: [www.dmreligious.org/congregations](http://www.dmreligious.org/congregations) for a complete listing of member congregations.



## Become a DMARC Pantry Partner

Businesses and groups may sign up to become a DMARC Pantry Partner, collecting food and raising awareness about the Emergency Food Pantry on a year long basis. It's as simple as placing a Red Barrel in a prominent spot in your building. It's as innovative as you make it. Engage your colleagues, your customers or your members.

"Meredith Corporation employees are very involved in the community, so it was a natural fit for our company to become a Pantry Partner," said Jenny McCoy, Director, Corporate Communications, Meredith Corporation. "By asking employees to donate a 'most needed' item each month, we've been able to help keep food on the shelves at the DMARC Emergency Food Pantry warehouse. It's such an easy way to help, and does so much for so many."

For more information on how your company can become a Pantry Partner, contact Cindy Morton, DMARC Red Barrel Coordinator, call: 515-277-6969 or email: [cmorton@dmreligious.org](mailto:cmorton@dmreligious.org).

"We encourage other companies, large or small, to join us as Pantry Partners."

— *Jenny McCoy, Director,  
Corporate Communications,  
Meredith Corporation*



photo: Terri Mork Speirs, DMARC

## Meet Kelly Sparks DMARC Events Coordinator

We are pleased to welcome Kelly Sparks as DMARC's new events coordinator. In this photo, Kelly is at the kick-off for the Hy-Vee Colossal Cookie Sale, an event which yielded a food donation valued at \$8,233 to the Emergency Food Pantry in September 2010. We are ever so grateful for our vast community support and we stand by to help with your projects to uphold DMARC's commitment to ensure basic human needs in Greater Des Moines. Does your business or group have an event idea? Contact Kelly at [ksparks@dmreligious.org](mailto:ksparks@dmreligious.org), 515-277-6969.

## Making A Difference

For the 16th consecutive year the Emergency Food Pantry and Red Barrel Program joined the nation in the October celebration of Make A Difference Day by holding multiple Sack Saturdays in Des Moines Metro grocery stores. In over 20 stores on two Saturdays in October volunteers asked shoppers to purchase hunger sacks, make cash contributions or shop for items from the "most needed" list.

Not only on Make A Difference Day but on any day, placing food items in the Red Barrels located in Dahl's, Hy-Vee and Fareway stores helps the Emergency Food Pantry make a difference in the community.



photo: Courtesy of DMARC



## DMARC Staff

Sarai Schnucker Rice  
Executive Director

Elisabeth Ballstadt  
Food Pantry Director

Daniel Beck  
Warehouse Associate

Laura DeLong  
Financial Secretary

Kristine Frakes  
Development Director

Jeff McNeeley  
Warehouse Associate

Cindy Morton  
Red Barrel Coordinator

Kelly Sparks  
Events Coordinator

Terri Mork Speirs  
Communications Manager

## DMARC Board of Directors Executive Officers

John Ayers, President  
St. Boniface Catholic Church

Brenden Comito, President-Elect  
St. Catherine of Sienna Catholic Church

Susie Paloma, Vice-President  
St. Catherine of Sienna Catholic Church

Linda Harvey, Recording Secretary  
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Chuck Kuba, Treasurer  
Temple B'nai Jeshurun

John Holcombe, Past President  
Highland Park Christian Church

# Who is DMARC?

The Des Moines Area Religious Council is an interfaith organization with a core membership of about 150 congregations from 10 faith traditions. DMARC exists to provide a common means of responding to basic human needs and, in so doing, offers a context for interfaith dialogue, education, fellowship and support while serving as a liaison between member congregations and the greater Des Moines community.

The DMARC Emergency Food Pantry network is the largest in Iowa, made up of a centralized warehouse and 11 partnering distribution sites. The DMARC Emergency Food Pantry helps meet short-term food needs when families do not have enough to eat. In 2009, DMARC assisted more than 11,600 different families in the Greater Des Moines community and provided the food equivalent of nearly 1.5 million meals.

# A Recipe for Comfort

Our goal is to provide emergency food that is free, nutritious, and satisfying. This recipe is currently being featured in the DMARC emergency food boxes; along with more recipes and nutrition information. In the season of comfort food, we invite the entire DMARC community to enjoy.

## Mashed Sweet Potatoes and Pears

### Ingredients:

- 2 cans (15 ounces each) sweet potatoes, drained
- 1 can (15 ounces) pears, drained
- 1/3 cup brown sugar or 1/3 cup granular sugar
- 1/4 cup margarine, softened
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

### Directions:

1. Wash hands.
2. Place sweet potatoes in a large mixing bowl.
3. Add pears, sugar, margarine, and cinnamon and mix until combined.
4. Mash completely using a fork.
5. Place in microwave-safe dish with lid and heat on high for about 4 minutes, stir.
6. Heat on high for another 1 to 3 minutes or until heated evenly. Can be heated in regular oven for about 30 minutes at 350 degrees.

Makes 8 servings with 95 mg sodium.

Nutrition information per serving: 276 calories, 6 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 1 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 95 mg sodium, 56 g carbohydrate, 6 g fiber, 32 g sugar, 32 g protein, 193% vitamin A; 21% vitamin C; 3% calcium, 7% iron.

Source: USDA-CSFP. Used by permission.



DMARC and Iowa Homeless Youth Centers wish to say **thank you** to over 1,000 Reggie's Sleepout campers and donors for raising community awareness and \$150,000 to fight hunger and homelessness. Donations are being accepted through December at [www.regiessleepout.org](http://www.regiessleepout.org).



Photo: Terri Mork Speirs, DMARC



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photo: Terri Mork Speirs, DMARC

*International guests recently volunteered to sort food in the Emergency Food Pantry warehouse. Pictured here are visitors from the Middle East who included service time in their itinerary. The delegation toured Iowa as part of the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program and was hosted locally by the Iowa Council for International Understanding. Photo used by permission of ICIU.*

## DMARC Needs Volunteers

Can you help? We need volunteers to:

- Welcome people who stop by the warehouse to donate food.
- Count, sort and pack food in the main warehouse.
- Help in one of the 11 neighborhood food pantry sites.
- Promote DMARC in local grocery stores through a "Sack Saturday" event.
- Drive, load or unload our truck (or your truck).
- Take on other duties as necessary.

You may volunteer one time or create a regular schedule. It's a fun way to make a difference! Visit our website: [www.dmreligious.org/volunteer](http://www.dmreligious.org/volunteer) for more information.

### Food for Thought

We are re-vamping and re-launching the DMARC Awards Dinner in spring 2011. If you are interested in helping to plan it, please call the DMARC main office at 515-277-6969.