

# HOSPITALITY

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Des Moines Area  
Interfaith  
Hospitality  
Network™

An Affiliate of Family Promise™

## FROM JIM CAIN, NETWORK DIRECTOR

Two aspects of the Interfaith Hospitality Network weighed heavily in my decision to accept the position of Network Director last October. First was the description of the program as “a community response to homelessness”. Having spent the last 14 years assisting nonprofit organizations in developing and financing programs to assist people experiencing homelessness, I was acutely aware of the trend of dwindling amounts of government funding and increasing demand for those same funds. In 2006, 75% of our operating funds came from annual contributions made by the Host Congregations, Support Congregations, and individual donors. In the last year, the 14 Host Congregations in our Network have amassed over 13,000 volunteer hours, provided over 3,300 nights of lodging and served over 9,800 meals. Now that’s a COMMUNITY RESPONSE to homelessness!

Second was the spirit of respect, kindness, and caring that I saw in the three members of the DMIHN Board of Directors with whom I interviewed. From day one, I saw this spirit in action. The way Mary Jo would stop what she was doing, look a mom, dad or child in the eye giving them her undivided attention as they spoke. The way the coordinators would double and triple check the spelling of the kids’ and parent’s names because they were making welcome signs and name plates for the sleeping room doors. A coordinator calling me and asking, “We have some extra funds in our IHN account. Can we buy some clothes for this family who has none?” A gentleman from Central Iowa Safe/Lock refusing to accept payment for fixing a file cabinet lock because, “Clair Austin was a good friend of mine.” I never had the privilege of meeting Clair Austin, but it’s evident in the tangential stories about him that have come up in conversation these last six months that he was a passionate supporter of DMIHN and a man who embodied this spirit of respect, kindness, and caring.

If you’re not actively involved with the Des Moines Area Interfaith Hospitality Network, I invite you to become a part of our “community response to homelessness”. If your church is a Host Congregation, volunteer during their host week. Volunteers are also needed at the Day Center so that I might have more time to be out in the community promoting the work of DMIHN. Enclosed in this newsletter is a donor envelope. Your financial support is critical to our future success! THANK YOU!

### GOODBYE, MARY JO!

It was with sad hearts that we bid Mary Jo Hudson goodbye in late December. Mary Jo came to DMIHN in October 2004 as the Day Center Supervisor. Mary Jo oversaw activities at the Day Center during the morning hours Monday through Friday. This freed up the Network Director to attend community meetings, meet with host congregations, and write grants.

Susan J., a former DMIHN guest said of Mary Jo, “Mary Jo made sure each morning was a happy morning, even if it did not feel like a happy morning. She made sure she had a big smile on her face to bring happiness to our faces.”

Thank you Mary Jo for your service to the Des Moines Area Interfaith Hospitality Network.

# Random Acts of Kindness

Volunteers from **Grimes United Methodist Church**, including one with access to electronic bulletin boards at Principal Financial Group, and employees from **Principal** practically furnished **Thomas** and **Classie's** house in one day. Imagine **Johnny**, **Jaylan**, **Jasmine** and **Josh's** surprise when they came home from school and day care to a house full of furniture and other household items.

Two kind men from **Walnut Hills United Methodist Church** made **Katie** and **Johnny's** bus ride to their new home a little extra special. The night before their departure, one gentleman gave each child a \$2 bill. The next morning, as they were getting off the van at the Day Center, the gentleman driving the van gave each child a \$10 bill.

Guests of DMIHN often make personal sacrifices in their transition from shelter to permanent housing. The sacrifice that **Tom**, **Jennie** and **Cheyenne** had to make

in order to move into their apartment did not go unnoticed by four churches in our Network. **Tom** contributed over 80% of his monthly Social Security check toward paying off an outstanding utility bill that was a barrier to the family being approved for an apartment with affordable rent and support services. Combined assistance from **West Des Moines Christian Church**, **Windsor Heights Lutheran Church**, **Lutheran Church of Hope** and **Westminster Presbyterian Church** made up the difference and opened the door for the family to move in.

**Families** were showered with Christmas cheer and gifts by employees at **Nationwide Advantage Mortgage**, by a family from **Walnut Hills United Methodist**, a family from **Grimes United Methodist**, and a family from **Westminster Presbyterian**; by the **Aldersgate United Methodist** and the **Faith Lutheran congregations**; and by **Ms. Drustrup's 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Class** from **Clive Elementary School**.

## Shoes in Church

I showered and shaved  
I adjusted my tie.  
I got there and sat  
In a pew just in time.

Bowing my head in prayer  
As I closed my eyes.  
I saw the shoe of the man next to me  
Touching my own. I sighed.

With plenty of room on either side  
I thought, "Why must our soles touch?"  
It bothered me, his shoe touching mine  
But it didn't bother him much.

A prayer began: "Our Father"  
I thought, "This man with the shoes has no pride.  
They're dusty, worn, and scratched. Even  
worse, there are holes on the side!"

"Thank You for blessings," the prayer went on.  
The shoe man said a quiet "Amen."  
I tried to focus on the prayer  
But my thoughts were on his shoes again.

Aren't we supposed to look our best when walking  
through that door?  
"Well, this certainly isn't it," I thought, Glancing  
toward the floor.

Then the prayer was ended  
And the songs of praise began.  
The shoe man was certainly loud  
Sounding proud as he sang.

His voice lifted the rafters  
His hands were raised high.

The Lord could surely hear  
The shoe man's voice from the sky.

It was time for the offering  
And what I threw in was steep.  
I watched as the shoe man reached  
Into his pockets so deep.

I saw what was pulled out  
What the shoe man put in.  
Then I heard a soft "clink"  
as when silver hits tin.

The sermon really bored me  
To tears, and that's no lie.  
It was the same for the shoe man  
For tears fell from his eyes.

At the end of the service as is the custom here,  
We must greet new visitors and show them all  
good cheer.  
But I felt moved somehow  
And wanted to meet the shoe man.

So after the closing prayer  
I reached over and shook his hand.  
He was old and his skin was dark  
And his hair was truly a mess.

But I thanked him for coming  
For being our guest.  
He said, "My name is Charlie.  
I'm glad to meet you, my friend."

There were tears in his eyes  
But he had a large, wide grin.  
"Let me explain," he said

Wiping tears from his eyes.

"I've been coming here for months  
And you're the first to say 'hi.'  
"I know that my appearance is not like all the rest.  
But I really do try to always look my best."

"I always clean and polish my shoes  
Before my very long walk.  
But by the time I get here, they're dirty and dusty,  
like chalk."

My heart filled with pain  
and I swallowed to hide my tears.  
As he continued to apologize  
For daring to sit so near.

He said, "When I get here I know I must look a  
sight.  
But I thought if I could touch you  
Then maybe our souls might unite."

I was silent for a moment  
Knowing whatever was said, would pale in com-  
parison  
I spoke from my heart, not my head.

"Oh, you've touched me," I said  
"And taught me, in part,  
That the best of any man  
Is what is found in his heart."

The rest, I thought, this shoe man will never know,  
Like just how thankful I really am  
That his dirty old shoe touched my soul.

### IHN Board of Directors

**Angie Arthur** *President*  
**Bob Shaw** *Vice-President*  
**Jane Alderman** *Secretary*  
**Ann Sandve** *Treasurer*  
**Linda Albaugh**  
**Diane Hawbaker**  
**Deidre Henriquez**  
**Jason Walke**  
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### IHN Advisory Board

**Darrell Ball**  
**Mary Brubaker**  
**Donald F. Lambert**  
**Bishop Gregory Palmer**  
**Jeff Segin**  
**Carmen Lampe Zeidler**

### Host Congregations

**Walnut Hills UMC** *Des Moines*  
**Grimes UMC** *Grimes*  
**Windsor Heights Lutheran** *Windsor Hts.*  
**Faith Lutheran** *Clive*  
**Grace West** *West Des Moines*  
**St. Paul A.M.E.** *Des Moines*  
**St. John & Paul Church** *Altoona*  
**West Des Moines Christian** *WDM*  
**Lutheran Church of Hope** *WDM*  
**Our Lady's Immaculate Heart** *Ankeny*  
**St. Stephens Lutheran** *Urbandale*  
**Aldersgate UMC** *Urbandale*  
**Urbandale U.C.** *Urbandale*  
**Ankeny First UMC** *Ankeny*

### Support Congregations

**Jordan Creek UMC** *West Des Moines*  
**Easton Place UMC** *Des Moines*  
**Cornerstone Family Church** *Des Moines*  
**College Ave. Christian Church** *DSM*  
**Tifareth Israel Synagogue** *Des Moines*  
**St. Catherine of Siena** *Des Moines*  
**Valley Evangelical Free** *West Des Moines*  
**Sacred Heart Catholic** *West Des Moines*  
**New Hope UMC** *Des Moines*  
**Westminster Presbyterian** *Des Moines*  
**St. John's UMC** *Des Moines*  
**Hope UMC Parrish** *Tale*  
**Oakwood UMC** *Pleasant Hill*  
**Granger UMC** *Granger*

**MISSION STATEMENT:** To mobilize our community to help homeless families achieve and sustain their independence through compassionate care, shelter, meals and case management.