Fighting Hunger
Feeding Hope

We are HACAP - Hawkeye Area Community Action Program

Partner Agency Spotlight 2
Volunteer Opportunities 3
Hunger in East Central Iowa? 3
Connect. Grow. Share a Row. 4
Alliant Energy helps fight child hunger 4
St John of the Cross Catholic Worker House opened in Cedar Rapids in 1987. Since then their mission has been to improve the lives of those less fortunate in our community. The homeless shelter houses up to 25 people at a time. They accept single women, women with children, married two parent families, and married couples with children. Guests receive shelter regardless of religion, ethnicity, age, or reason for homelessness. Most people utilizing the shelter stay for a 30 day period while gaining employment and finding housing. Some stays can be longer, as long as the guest is actively looking for employment, or housing they are welcome to stay. Catholic Worker House believes in providing stepping stones for a better life to their guests. In addition to food and shelter, they also assist them in obtaining employment, and finding housing. They connect them with resources in the community such as education, transportation, child care, health care and social services.

They have faithful volunteers who prepare meals for the guests; some volunteers have been cooking meals for over 20 years! And when no volunteers are available for meals, they cook their own meals from a fully stocked kitchen and pantry. The pantry, fridge and freezers are stocked with food from the HACAP Food Reservoir, and from private donors. The money they save by accessing the Food Reservoir is extremely beneficial. “We LOVE the HACAP FOOD RESERVOIR! The bottled water, amazing fresh produce, canned goods, and meat really help us out tremendously. Also the milk during the milk drive months is of great benefit.” When house guests arrive, typically they have little to nothing. Being able to eat healthy, nutritious meals is critical, and something they no longer have to worry about once they are in the shelter. Also, when house guests leave to move out on their own, the shelter provides them with a stock of food to get them started.

Occasionally (especially during the summer) St John’s Catholic Worker House will provide additional produce to the neighborhood when the HACAP Reservoir provides them an abundance of fresh produce. There are so many in need throughout the neighborhood surrounding the Catholic Worker house, providing the neighborhood kids with a healthy snack such as an apple or a banana goes a long ways, and strengthens relationships in the neighborhood surrounding them.

Larissa Ruffin, House Manager has worked at the house for 10 years now. When asked why she does it she was very honest in her answer. “I was homeless in my past. I know what these people are going through. I am a convicted felon and I was able to change! I have kept this job for 10 years, I have been able to buy my own home, I know resilience, and I know what it takes to make it out. I see the success stories we have had, the excitement when they get a good job, or find a home that they can call their own. It feels good to help others, and for them to learn that they can do it: that it can be done!” In every word Larissa spoke throughout our interview, it was very clear that her primary mission was to help people. “The ideal goal is to be able to provide shelter to anyone who comes to our door, our board strongly believes in that. If we have an open couch, let’s use it!”

Expansion next door will help them get closer to that goal. The house will be able to hold 4 additional families. These four apartments will be specifically set up for families transitioning out of the traditional shelter. They will pay a small fee for the apartments, and when they move out, half of that money will be returned to them so they can invest it into their new home.

Thank you to the Pacesetter’s Youth Camp participants for the volunteer hours they spent helping in the Food Reservoir warehouse this June and generous donation of their $175 which will allow the HACAP Food Reservoir to provide 145.8 meals in East Central Iowa!
Volunteer Opportunities

At the HACAP Food Reservoir, we are dedicated to educating and inspiring our volunteers to help us build strong communities.

Whether volunteering for a one-time activity or event, a regularly scheduled activity or a volunteer opportunity with a team of friends or co-workers, there are many ways you can share your time and talents to fight hunger:

- Sorting food donations & produce
- Driving
- Assembling senior totes or emergency food boxes
- Warehouse cleaning & assistance
- Food or fundraising
- Mobile food pantries
- Special projects

Questions? Go to www.hacap.org or contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Chris, by calling (319) 739-1505 or email cackman@hacap.org.

Volunteer Spotlight

Jim VanDevender

Since April 2018, Jim has been a dedicated and reliable member of our volunteer team at HACAP’s Food Reservoir. Every Tuesday he is at the warehouse right away at 8:00am and ready to work hard sorting produce or food drive donations for our partner agencies to pick up. Jim has been a go-getter from day one, and is always willing to help out in any capacity he is needed. When asked what his favorite thing about volunteering is, he said “I like working with and talking to all the other volunteers and seeing the food being picked up by all the different HACAP partners.” When he is not busy volunteering, he keeps busy with yard work and bird hunting with his dog, Omar.

Jim enjoys volunteering because he believes “if everyone helps out in a small way, big things will happen.” All of Jim’s hard work sure doesn’t feel small to the warehouse! Thank you, Jim for all you do to help fight hunger in our community!

Hunger in East Central Iowa?

Are you interested in learning more about hunger in our community? Call us for a tour, meeting or speaking engagement. A HACAP Food Reservoir representative would be honored to talk to your organization, at a service club meeting, in a classroom or at your church. At the HACAP Food Reservoir, we are dedicated to educating and inspiring our community to work together to feed the hungry.

We are happy to talk about the following topics and more:

- How the Food Reservoir reduces waste and increases food safety for our community.
- How feeding the hungry works in our community.
- The facts of food insecurity in Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn and Washington counties.
- Working together to provide healthy options for the hungry.

Questions? Please go to www.hacap.org or contact HACAP Food Reservoir Executive Director, Linda at lgorkow@hacap.org.

Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive

The Letter Carriers’ Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, held on Saturday, May 12, was a resounding success with 78,965 pounds of food collected. The drive provided more than 65,800 meals for people in need of food.

Thank you to everyone who donated food and to all the Letter Carriers and their families who helped collect, deliver and sort food to the HACAP Food Reservoir! All food raised from this 26th annual food drive is collected and distributed locally to help feed the hungry in the communities we serve.

In spring of 2018, the Coolidge Elementary School’s Cougar Student Council presented Linda Gorkow, HACAP Food Reservoir Director, with funds the students collected to help purchase milk for the food insecure. The school joined together to raise enough money to provide 200+ gallons of milk! Congratulations to the Cedar Rapids Coolidge Elementary student council and entire school body on a job well-done!

The Linn County Master Gardeners joined with the HACAP Food Reservoir to invite Master Gardeners and the Linn County gardeners to help in the fight against hunger by planning a garden row of produce to donate to the HACAP Food Reservoir.

The Connect. Grow. Share A Row. grant helped enable the Linn County Master Gardeners to build community gardens with local volunteers as well as invite individual growers to grow much needed produce for the HACAP Food Reservoir to distribute to feed the hungry in Linn County.

The Master Gardeners “Growing Together” project is integral in educating, motivating and activating Linn County gardeners to help grow and donate produce that will help build a stronger community.

Thank you to the Linn County Master Growers, community gardeners and area growers who donate wonderful produce that is distributed to alleviate hunger in the communities we serve!

Alliant Energy helps fight child hunger

Alliant Energy sponsored the Harry Potter Jersey Night at the Cedar Rapids Kernels on Friday, June 22nd to raise funds for the HACAP Food Reservoir Operation BackPack program.

To add to the magic of the event, Alliant Energy Foundation generously matched $5,000 of the money raised from the jersey silent auction. The total raised from the Harry Potter night sponsored by Alliant was $13,345 – all to help feed hungry children through the HACAP Food Reservoir’s program, Operation BackPack.

Proceeds from the Harry Potter Jersey silent auction during the game allowed fans to celebrate their love for Harry Potter and help fight child hunger by bidding on the Kernel Team special Harry Potter baseball “Gryffindor” jerseys and the visiting team, Wisconsin Timber Rattlers “Slytherins” jerseys.

Funds raised from the event will help provide more than 2,600 totes of kid-friendly food to school-aged children who participate in Operation BackPack program in the HACAP Food Reservoir service area (Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn and Washington Counties).

Each week during the school year, HACAP Food Reservoir partners with schools, local organizations, businesses and volunteers to ensure more than 2,700 hungry children receive a bag of food to eat during the weekend when they are not in school. This program works to nourish children in seven counties. Unfortunately, thousands of more Operation BackPack food totes are needed for children living with hunger in East Central Iowa. Please call 319.393.7811 or email foodreservoir@hacap.org to learn more.

A special thank you to our friends at Welsma Lyons! Your partnership is helping feed our community!!