

Challenges and Goals

2012 presented Project Concern with many challenges. Most notably, the Child Care Resource and Referral department at Project Concern transferred to Waterloo-based Exceptional Person's Inc. as a result of the elimination of subcontractors by the Iowa Department of Human Services. With this change, Project Concern lost four staff members, and funding dedicated to rent, operational expenses and administrative services. Unfortunately, Project Concern overhead expenses are fixed and this has led to a significant funding gap that must be filled.

In addition to filling the funding gap, the Project Concern Board and staff would like to accomplish the following goals in 2013: 1.) increase awareness of 2-1-1 in the tri-state area and the number of residents offered services, 2.) increase homelessness prevention efforts, 3.) develop a community outreach program, 4.) expand the number of Foster Grandparents and children who are mentored, and 5.) expand 2-1-1 Information and Referral to include online access.

Project Concern will begin searching for a New Executive Director soon. The Board and staff are excited for what the future holds and we are hopeful that community members will recognize Project Concern's worthy cause and support us in any way possible. Thank you for your support. Together we can make a difference.

— Sherry Leeser, Project Concern Board Chair



Foster Grandparents Mentor Area Students

By Stacy Martin

The Foster Grandparent volunteers at Project Concern support the City of Dubuque's award winning Third Grade Reading Initiative by consistently mentoring children one-on-one, assisting them with their reading skills, and providing them emotional support and encouragement along the way. Additionally, the Foster Grandparents contribute to a decrease in chronic student absence by giving the child something to look forward to. Research states

that when a student has an adult mentor they are less likely to miss school. Project Concern coordinates with the service sites to develop assignment plans for the Foster Grandparents and to measure the progress of the children that they work with.

As of October 31, 2012, Project Concern had 32 Foster Grandparents who serve a minimum of 15 hours per week at 21 community-based organizations such as elementary schools, child care centers, after-school programs and Head Start programs. Approximately 67% of these dedicated volunteers continue to work with children over the summer months to prevent any learning loss.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a Foster Grandparent Volunteer, please contact Stacy Martin at 588-3980, ext. 106, or email fgpcoordinator@project-concern.org.



Homeless Collection Drive a Success

By Amanda Guthmiller

Dubuque's Homeless Advisory Council promoted Homeless Awareness Oct. 21-27, 2012. As part of the initiative, Project Concern hosted a collection drive of supplies to assist area shelters. More than \$1,500 of supplies were collected and distributed to area shelters.

Homelessness is an issue that largely goes unseen in Dubuque. According to Jamie Covell, an Americorps volunteer with Project Concern who coordinated the campaign, "Each year, hundreds of adults and children seek refuge at Dubuque's homeless shelters. The supplies collected will assist shelters in serving the needs of this growing population."

Items collected included:

- Toilet paper and paper towels used daily at each shelter.
- Laundry soap to help shelters wash sheets, towels, etc.
- Personal hygiene product kits for homeless clients to use daily.
- Cleaning supplies to help shelters maintain a clean environment.

Project Concern extends a heartfelt thank you to the numerous donors who contributed to the drives success.

Project Concern Fills Gaps and Assists Clients in Transition

The homeless assistant and prevention assistance provided by Project Concern is a one-of-a-kind service in the Dubuque area. Each year, through this program, Project Concern serves approximately 80 individuals and families who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Project Concern serves clients who are chronically homeless, and those who have a serious mental illness and/or have chronic substance abuse issues. These sectors of Dubuque's homeless population have increased this past year.

Project Concern is unique and helps to fill the service gaps. Project Concern provides hotel vouchers for waiting list clients so they do not have to sleep out on the streets, and transportation to other cities within Iowa when shelters are full or if another shelter is a better fit for the client.

For shelter and transitional clients ready for permanent housing, Project Concern assists qualified clients with the housing search, provides financial support towards short term rent assistance and utilities, and connects the client to community resources, including furniture.

Project Concern also prevents at-risk clients from becoming homeless by: consulting with the client to help them become self sustaining, connecting the client to community resources, and offering rent assistance on a case by case basis.

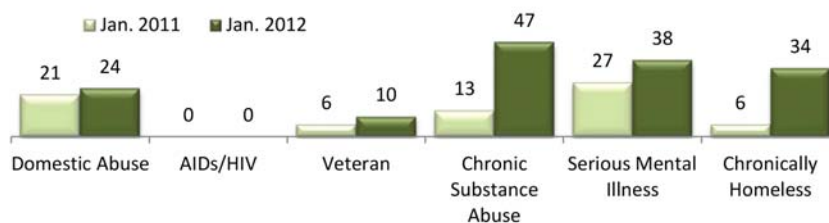
Dubuque Continuum of Care Committee

A group of community members working together to organize and deliver housing and supportive services to those who are homeless¹. Activities of the committee include:

- Develop action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness.
- Assess capacity and identify gaps in an effort to develop proactive solutions rather than reactive stop-gaps.
- Identify common goals for which to advocate.

Homeless¹ Populations Served in Dubuque

The Dubuque Continuum of Care Committee analyzed the Dubuque homeless¹ population served in Jan. 2011 compared to Jan. 2012. According to their research, the chronically homeless population increased from 6 to 34 and the chronic substance abuse population increased from 13 to 47. The veteran population and domestic abuse populations increased as well.



Emergency Shelter² and Transitional Housing³

The Dubuque Continuum of Care Committee analyzed the number of clients served compared to capacity at Dubuque area shelters and transitional housing homes in January 2012 and again, 10-months later, in October 2012. According to their research: the number of clients served in Dubuque's emergency shelters rose from 53 to 70 and the number of clients served in Dubuque's transitional shelters increased from 37 to 47. Furthermore, the emergency shelters were operating near capacity, serving 70 clients with the ability to serve 72.



1. Homeless: According to Housing and Urban Development (HUD): "In general, a person is considered homeless if, without HUD assistance, he or she would have to spend the night in a homeless shelter or in a place not meant for human habitation."
2. Emergency Shelter: According to Housing and Urban Development (HUD): "any facility with overnight sleeping accommodations, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless."
3. Transitional Housing: According to Housing and Urban Development (HUD): "a project that is designed to provide housing and appropriate supportive services to homeless persons to facilitate movement to independent living within 24 months, or a longer period approved by HUD."

"Thanks to you and Project Concern for being the drop site for the generosity of our community. After having a full house for so long, the paper products are a must have! Each and every item is greatly needed and appreciated."

– Sister Charla and Staff at the Domestic Violence Shelter

Boots Allow Mother to Walk into Employment

By Dawn DeMaio

An unemployed mother of two young daughters recently received a job offer. In order to start that job she was required to have steel toe boots. Unfortunately this mother did not own a pair and she could not afford to purchase a pair. Project Concern purchased boots for the mother and now she is gainfully employed.

“This is only one example of the countless individuals assisted by Project Concern,” said Kate Schmerbach, an AmeriCorps volunteer with Project Concern. “Through our 2-1-1 Information & Referral program, we field approximately 20 requests for information each day. Often times, we discover that a family is experiencing a hardship and not able to meet their basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter.”

When funding is available, Project Concern assists homeless and low-income clients in meeting basic needs, making ends meet to prevent eviction, and transitioning into permanent housing.

Holiday Helpers Sponsor 135 Families

Each year, Project Concern coordinates efforts to align area donors with struggling tri-state families. In 2012, over 81 generous donors served as Holiday Helpers, providing gifts to 125 families consisting of basic necessities (such as clothing, shoes, and bedding), and gifts for the children. Plus, another 10 families received \$100 gift cards.

Participating families in need are identified by area agency referrals and through Project Concern’s 2-1-1 Information and Referral Center. Since the number of families requesting assistance exceeds the number of donors, families are ranked in order of priority based on their situation.

Project Concern thanks all the generous Holiday Helper donors, including, but not limited to: the employees of John Deere Dubuque Works, Eagle Window & Door, McGladrey, Honkamp & Krueger, Flexsteel, Heartland Financial, Dubuque Internal Medicine, and Fidelity Bank & Trust.



Fidelity Bank & Trust employee, Randy Schmerbach, presents Project Concern employees Dawn DeMaio (left) and Kate Schmerbach (center) with a Holiday Helper donation collected through an employee fundraiser at Fidelity in Dubuque, IA.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”
 — Margaret Mead

I WANT TO HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

How Can Your Donation Help?

- Transportation: \$10 Donation**
A \$10 donation provides 1 bus pass which allows for 10 rides for a homeless/low income client to get to their medical/mental health appointments or new job.
- Necessary Medication: \$25 Donation**
Provide one month of necessary medication to someone in need.
- Dental Care: \$40 Donation**
Provide dental care to a homeless/low income client.
- Overnight Shelter: \$50 Donation**
Provide overnight shelter for a homeless person when emergency shelters are full.
- Cleaning Kit: \$100 Donation**
Provide a kit of cleaning supplies and hygiene items for a homeless person moving into permanent housing.
- Mentoring: \$150 Donation**
Provide 8 special needs students with 8 -hours each of one-on-one mentoring by a Foster Grandparent for a total of 64 hours.
- Prevent Homelessness: \$200 Donation**
Prevent a family from becoming homeless by helping with rent payment.
- Place Homeless in Housing: \$500 Donation**
Allow a homeless person to transition to permanent housing, by helping with their apartment and utility deposits.

Please accept a \$ _____ donation.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Donations may be mailed to:
 Project Concern, 1789 Elm St., #B
 Dubuque, IA 52001

*Project Concern is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization.
 Donations are deductible to the extent provided by law.*