



# The FreeStore Story



Nov. 2012

## Not Better—Just Luckier

By Jeanie Smith

My family (my husband, two daughters, two sons-in-law, various “helpful” grandchildren who are all 4½ and younger, and I) and some friends volunteer at the FreeStore once a month by helping domestic violence clients. We help them select their furniture and then we move their items into their apartments for them. When we get a client, as we did earlier this year, who not only has a large family (in this case four children) but also lives in a third floor walk-up, we groan! I want to tell you about this client, but also about some really great volunteers.

This client arrived at the warehouse with all of her children. Again, that normally elicits a groan from the volunteers. Occasionally the children are underfoot because it’s extraordinarily difficult for a client to supervise her children and select furniture and household

items at the same time. We tell our clients, if at all possible, to leave their children at home. But sometimes it’s not possible – and we recognize that.

So here comes this client with four kids in tow. The boys were 12 and 4½ and the girls, 9 and 9 mos. What a delightful family. I have rarely seen children so well-behaved and helpful! They helped to carry and load the truck. None of them, not even the 4½ year old, ran around or got in the way. Another huge reminder that our clients are just like we are – and sometimes better. The only difference is that they have fallen on hard times in ways that are difficult for us to imagine. What has happened to them could happen to us. We aren’t better –just luckier!

And what a great delivery crew! The only reason the beautiful sectional sofa this client selected fit into her apart-

ment was because one of our volunteers refused to admit that it wouldn’t fit. He supervised the effort to remove the apartment’s front door in order to get the couch through. Re-attaching the door was no mean feat either!

Another of our crew will not leave a client’s apartment before all beds are set up. In this case, that meant building a bunk frame and two other bed frames, loading mattresses and box springs onto the frames, and making sure the beds are placed in the rooms as the client wishes.

We must remember to be grateful for what we have in our lives – our health, loving and respectful relationships, warm homes, enough food, and beds to sleep on. We must remember, also, to be grateful to you for your dollars, time, talent, and support for the work of the FreeStore.

Meet the volunteers

**FreeStore Open House**  
**Nov 16 from 4PM to 7 PM**

See the inventory

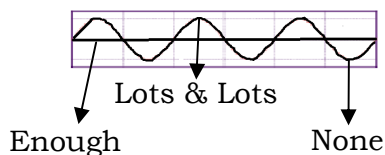
Come to the back door, which is next to 841 11th St. DSM  
Come see what the FreeStore does for families who need furniture!

# FreeStore Update

By Terry Swanson

As always, I can report things are busy at the FreeStore—unfortunately. I think I've mentioned that one of our volunteers said, "I believe God created the sine curve just so I'd have a way to represent the FreeStore inventory. For those of you who haven't thought about sine curves since Jr. High, here's how one looks when applied to FreeStore inventory

Sine Curve



For the most part though, we're really blessed to have "enough" of most of the major items that families need like

couches, dishes, glasses sheets, chairs, blankets, and kitchen items. And right now, thanks to some big donations we have lots of bunk beds—we never can have too many. They satisfy both bunk and twin bed needs. (Moms really appreciate bunks when they have several children and small bedrooms.)

Our dresser supply is also very healthy. The BWA Foundation granted us funds for 50 adult dressers and 50 kids dressers. Many thanks for all their support. We're also grateful to United Way for it's "Dressers for Kids" project that brought us 300 dressers for kids. How grateful the youngsters are to have "a dresser all my own?"

Things we need include microwaves and vacuum cleaners, and currently we are in serious need of pillows, twin sheets, and pans and skillets, especially pans and skillets.

Our service numbers are up a little compared to last year. Through Oct. we've served 190 families up from 175 in 2011, including 212 adults and 250 children.

So far this year 101 of our families have been either DV (domestic violence) or SA (sexual assault) victims. (Some brutalities just never go away.) See below for some DV and SA numbers.) The rest of the clients came from 31 different social service agencies in the greater DSM area.

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## Did You Know This About Domestic Violence?

Iowa averages 15 deaths a year due to domestic violence.

Every 9 seconds in the US a woman is assaulted or beaten.

The FBI reports more than 3 women a day are beaten to death by their partners in the US.

An estimated 3 to 4 million American women are battered each year by their partners.

Women between 20 and 24 years old are at greatest risk of nonfatal attacks.

95% of all victims of domestic violence are women.

30% to 60% of perpetrators of intimate partner violence also abuse the children in the household.

90% of battered women reported that their children were present when they were beaten.

About 1/3 of female homicide victims that are reported in police records are killed by an intimate partner

81% of women stalked by a current or former intimate partner are also physically assaulted by that partner; 31% are also sexually assaulted by that partner.

More than 18.5 million mental health care visits are results of domestic violence each year.

Major results of Domestic violence include injury and homicide, children who witness the violence, sexual assault and stalking, and poverty-level economic status for mothers and children.

Police receive reports on only 1/4 of all physical assaults, 1/5 of all rapes, and 1/2 of all stalkings.

Physical and Sexual Abuse characteristics include coercion, physical threats, economic power, threats of children, intimidation, isolation, etc.

1 in 4 women in the US will experience domestic violence.

Around the world, at least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused during her lifetime.