



Nov. 2014

Update By Jeanie Smith, FreeStore Board Chair

Whew!! It's been a busy time recently! Over the past three months, we have served 81 client families! Of these, 48 have been DV victims and their families and 33 have been other needy families.

We completed our third year partnering with United Way of Central Iowa in its Day of Caring and received 300 new dressers for kids. We just received some excellent local publicity through a great domestic violence story that featured the FreeStore on Fox17 early in November. Check it out on our website www.thefreestore.org!

What all this says is that we are getting better known all the time. And that's a good thing. But it doesn't come without challenges. As we do more, we have to have

more furniture, more pots and pans, more household goods. And we have to have more volunteers to help with pick-ups, with deliveries, with sorting and packaging, with volunteer management and with grant writing.

The FreeStore exists on the power of you—you who volunteer and you who support. Your hard work and your dollars are the engines that make us go. Your support helps us grow.

So we say, again and again, "Thank you for all you do for the FreeStore and for the people we serve."



Another kid's dresser finished

No More By Judy Bloom

No More "I'm sorry! It won't happen again."

No More "But she was asking for it."

No More "He just has a bit of a temper."

No More "Boys will be boys."

No More "Tired of being hurt, please help."

You might recognize the first four of these scripts from hearing them on TV as part of the charge against domestic violence that was precipitated

by actions of pro-football players. But not that last one. I discovered it last week while helping a client.

She was a small woman in her late thirties and I could see she was still awfully bruised up. She wasn't taking much and had an old beat up van to haul stuff in

I was helping her load the van when I saw a sign on the floor of the van. The sign said

"tired of being hurt, please help." I asked her about it and she said she had been pan handling on a corner to get enough money to keep her small efficiency apartment. We loaded up the van, and she drove off, very grateful for what we gave her. I wished her well as she drove off.

Not a success story by any means, but a darn good start. I dream of the day when there are NO MORE DV clients!

FreeStore Update: Whom Do We Help? By Terry Swanson

Most of you know that the FreeStore began as a place, DV (Domestic violence) victims could come for furniture when they were ready to leave DV shelters.

First, we were only able to help women from the Children and Families of Iowa Domestic Violence Services Shelter. Within a few years we were able to offer our services to other DV shelters in central Iowa including the ones in Ames, Marshalltown, and Adel.

After a few more years, our donations had grown to a point where we had more than was needed for DV victims. At that time, we invited local human services agencies and churches to sponsor families that they had identified as having needs. We do ask the referring agency for a small fee, that the advocate come with the family, and the family or the agency must provide moving help and transportation for the items.

That assures and strengthens our partnership with sponsors and clients.

Over the years we've often had a surplus of some items such as blankets, sheets, yard furniture, and delicate knick-knacks. We've shared these items with other groups in the greater DSM area. Blankets go to Open Doors Ministry for people sleeping under the bridges. Knick-knacks go to St Vincent de Paul. Sheets go to St John's Lutheran Church to make quilts for local homeless shelters.

Last month we took on another group to help. We now will serve referrals from the local VA hospital and outreach. This has been in the works for a while and we were planning to serve these veterans for free. Then, as so often happens, we received a windfall. A WWII veteran, who has long been a FreeStore supporter, has offered to pay the fee that

we had waived. We will move the items with our trucks and volunteers.

This fall, 50 pillowcases went from Polk County IA to Polk County AR. A sewing class there made dresses out of them, dresses that will go to South Sudan via a church here in Des Moines.



Pillowcase dress for Sudan

All this growth is a credit to you, our supporters. Thank you! Remember, you are always welcome to tour the warehouses. Call 515 282 3733 to set up a time.

For the Record By Harry Swanson

I've been keeping statistics and records for the FreeStore for a long time, since the beginning actually. Last week I wondered about one thing we tell folks as we talk about the problems facing domestic violence victims. We say that statistics tell us the average DV victim goes back to her abuser 3 to 7 times. I wondered how many DV victims that used the FreeStore came back more than once.

I wondered if being able to access the FreeStore had some

how improved this statistic for the women we served. Here are the results I found.

Number of visits	Number of clients
1	895
2	98
3	29
4	3
5	2

These numbers cannot really be interpreted because we don't follow our clients. We don't know for sure if they re-

turned to the shelter but didn't use our services again. We do know that while in shelters, victims get help in many areas so they can be more successful when they leave. We know we only offer a small supplement to what the shelters provide.

Still the numbers look pretty good don't they? We can only hope we've helped these women put their lives back together. We can only hope they now live their lives free of fear, free of domestic violence.