



May 2009

The FreeStore Story

Success or Failure?

A couple of months ago I received a phone call from Diana of the CFI Domestic Violence Services Shelter. She asked if the FreeStore pickup volunteers could go to Jane Doe's (name changed to protect the innocent) apartment the next day and pick up the furniture we had given her just a couple of months before.

I said we usually schedule pick-ups seven to ten days out. Diana told me Jane's abuser had found her, and she had to leave her apartment and return to the shelter. I said we'd work it out.

I called the pickup volunteers, we moved around some appointments we had already made, and they went to get Jane's furnishings. What they found greatly upset them. When they got to the apartment,

every piece of furniture had been broken and/or vandalized. The abuser had found Jane's apartment and broken all the furniture. She wasn't there so he took it out on her things.

When the volunteers called me a little later, they told me what happened and asked if their trip had been a big waste of their time. "No," I replied, "It was not a waste of time; we've just gotten a real-life lesson in how violent domestic violence really is."

I did swear a little after I hung up, then I rejoiced that Jane was safe. After all, God willing, "things are just things and can be replaced."

Success or failure? You decide.

\$\$\$ for Dressers Drive: \$45 for a Dresser; \$10 for a Drawer

High on the shortages list at the FreeStore is dressers. Some shortages we can work around, but dressers are a big problem—every family, actually every family member, needs one. Even when we limit them to one for every two family members, we're always short.

So Earl Lemke, the FreeStore Vice-chair, found plans for sturdy



dressers that we we could make ourselves. They are solid, four-drawer dressers, made of medium density fiberboard, plywood, many staples of 5/8, 1 and 1 1/2 inches, and an astonishing amount of glue!

Wouldn't you like to have your initials hidden inside one of these lovely dressers? A \$45 donation to the \$\$ for Dressers Drive will get you just that!"

2009 FreeStore Update

2009 has been a busy one for the FreeStore. The process Judy Bloom has set up for greeting and moving CFI Domestic Violence Services clients is going very well. Through the middle of May, this time last year, we had a total of 84 client requests and moved 103,000 lbs of furniture. So far this year, we've had 109 requests, including 164 children, who have received 151,000 lbs of furniture worth \$165,000.

Our volunteer list is also growing, but we still have a need for strong people who can pick up furniture on Mon., Wed., and Fri. mornings and help move furniture for clients on Sat. mornings. So far this year our volunteers have put in 1,654 hours of donated time!

If you can help, call 225-2020 ext 4 and leave a message. I guarantee you'll get a call back to see when you can volunteer.

Items We ALWAYS Need

Pots and Pans
Bed Frames
Small Kitchen Tables & Chairs
Bunk Beds,
Single, Full, &
Queen Mattresses
Dressers

Call 225-2020 ext 4
for times to schedule
a pickup or drop off

(Check with your neighbors,
they may have donations, too.
Maybe we can schedule a
neighborhood pickup!)

Blankets for Veterans

The families we meet at the FreeStore with are almost always working their way through many challenges. Though they thank us profusely as they leave the FreeStore warehouse, we seldom hear from them again. And that's okay. We understand what they have to deal with.

However, occasionally we hear back when we're able to share the bounty you have donated. Last winter, we received several donations of blankets and comforters from several different motels so we had a large cache of them on hand. As one of our board members says, "We are in the business to share goods not to store them." So we sent a large number of blankets out to local shelters. We received the following letter from one of these shelters.

I worked as the receptionist at the Central Iowa Shelter today. Two Des Moines Police Officers came to the Shelter in a pickup truck with about 100 blankets for the Veterans Stand Down which is set for tomorrow morning at the Shelter. I asked one of the officers who sewed all of the blankets. He said they were a donation from the Free Store.

I want to tell you how much we appreciate the blankets. About 10 days ago when it was -18 degrees for a couple of days, several people ask us for blankets and we had none to give out. During the coldest nights, we had all of the shelter beds filled and we had people sleeping in the chairs in the dining room. Please tell your volunteers that the blankets you donated to the shelter are a real blessing to Veterans who desperately needed them. We still have a lot of cold nights left in this winter season.

Thank you for your help. May God bless you.



Special Thanks

Creative Kids Stuff
Domestic Abuse Coordinating
Council
Select Van and Storage (Fill the
Mayflower)

All-Pro Auto Repair
BWA Foundation
Principal Financial Group
Hardware Distributors Limited of
Minnesota (dresser hardware)

Embassy Suites
Econolodge
Holiday Inn South
WDM Church Opportunity Group