



June 2008

The FreeStore Story



The **FreeStore** is an independent non-profit 501(c)3 organization. We have been helping victims of domestic violence and their families for seven years and in that time we have helped hundreds of families! The FreeStore is entirely run by volunteers, with donated goods and money. There is NO paid staff.

To donate goods or,
to learn more about being a FreeStore volunteer, please call
225-2020 ext 4
or
info@thefreestore.org

Visit our website at
www.thefreestore.org

To donate money, send checks to
The FreeStore
1020 24th St.
West Des Moines, IA 50266



The FreeStore loading dock

You Just Never Know . . .

Anna, the daughter of two of the FreeStore volunteers went into a local Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant the other day. She was wearing her FreeStore Sweatshirt.

When she went to pay, the woman behind the counter said, "Oh, I know all about the FreeStore."

"You do," replied Anna. "How do you know about the FreeStore?"

"Well," the woman replied, "A few months ago, I was in a very bad, abusive situation. I finally got up the nerve to leave, but I had to sneak away and was only able to take a little of my clothing. I spent several weeks at the Family Violence Shelter. Then I got a job and an apartment but I didn't have any furniture, or dishes, or any of that stuff."

She continued, "My advocate contacted the FreeStore and a

very nice older couple with grey hair helped me with everything I needed to set up my apartment."

"Well," said Anna, "I'm glad to meet you. I think you probably already know my parents. Sounds like they are the ones who helped you."

"Tell them I'll never forget them," the woman said with tears in her eyes and a smile on her face.

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FreeStore Growing and Expanding Services

“Thank you! Thank you!! Thank You!!! was a phrase heard over and over by FreeStore Greeters in 2007 as they helped 224 families, including 264 adults and 325 children. Our primary charter is still to serve victims of domestic abuse and 168 of the families we served in 2007 came from the Children and Families of Iowa Family Violence Center and 13 came from LUNA (a support group for Latina women who are victims of domestic violence). The rest came from twenty different agencies, including Iowa Homeless Youth

Center, New Directions Shelter, Iowa Area Interfaith Network, AME Church, and Orchard Place Shelter. Each family took an average of \$1500 worth of good, used furniture.

2008 has been equally busy in spite of the snowy winter. Through May of this year, we’ve served over 75 clients.

Thanks to everyone who donated to us this year. You are the backbone of our operation. We made 138 pickups, countless other folks dropped off items, and Mayflower received over 110 donations. You make our work possible. Thank You!

Items We ALWAYS Need

Pots and Pans Bed Frames
Small Kitchen Tables & chairs
Single Beds & Mattresses
Dressers

To drop off items, call
225-2020 ext 4 for times
or
to schedule a pickup

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

“Fill the Mayflower”

Representatives from Select Van and Storage Co. came to Children and Families of Iowa with the desire to help serve some of the needs of victims of domestic violence. When we got together, it was natural to call the event the *Fill the Mayflower* because we wanted to collect enough goods to do so. (And we did—we received over 15,000 lbs of goods!) Rod Ballard and Chris Martin were the “driving force” behind the event providing the van, as well as three paid moving staff during each day of the event. Children and Families of Iowa provided support for the event with volunteers as well as staffing from both the shelter and the Foundation. Diana Smith served as a coordinator for this effort. Trisha Barton Marketing Director for Valley West Mall provided the space for



the event, and a wealth of opportunities with local media representatives. Auntie Anne’s Soft Pretzel shop kept us in coffee. It was also an opportunity for the Governor to help out with some of the unloading of cars as well as photo opportunities.

The FreeStore provided volunteers for the event as well. But the biggest beneficiaries of the event were the many families who were able to make use of all the furniture and household goods that were donated during the four-day

event. Promising that the Mayflower event will return next year, everyone went home with plans to do it all again.

Special Thank You’s

The FreeStore sends special. “Thanks” to

- COG: The West Des Moines Church Opportunity Group, including WDM United Methodist, WDM Christian; Valley United Methodist, Valley Community, St Francis of Assisi, Sacred Heart, Covenant Presbyterian, Ashworth Road Baptist Church, St. Mark’s Lutheran, and St. Timothy’s Episcopal, who contributed money and gift cards.
- DAAC Des Moines Area Abuse Council for their generous gift.
- DMJWC: Des Moines Junior Women’s Club who gave us one of the two 2008 grants they awarded.
- KJJY, KGGO and channel 5 for “Fill the Mayflower” event coverage.
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 347 who put in 2 doorbells, a three way switcher and replaced of the ceiling lamps for us.
- Two Men and a Truck and Select Van and Storage Co. for moving clients.
- St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church who shared the profits from their 2007 fundraiser with us.
- Principal Financial Group employees for kitchen supplies and money.
- All Pro ServiceCenter who, together with an anonymous donor, arranged to repair the oil leaks in one of our trucks.