



November 2008

The FreeStore Story



In Memoriam

Jim Brown, whose vision led to the FreeStore, died Sept. 16, 2008.

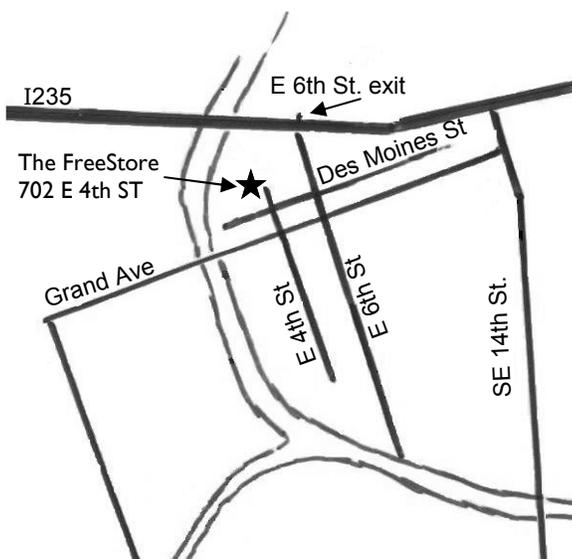
Several years ago, Jim Brown was helping paint some rooms at the Family Violence Center. He asked the director how many women and children were currently living in the shelter.

She replied, "It is full and there is a waiting list. One reason is that even after the women have "no contact" orders, jobs, and apartments, they don't have anything to put in their apartments. They often have to stay in the shelter for an extra month until they can afford furniture and kitchen items."

Jim said, "Why don't I talk to some people and spread the word that we'll collect their used household things when they replace them and we'll give them to the women so they won't have to stay in the shelter longer than necessary."

Thus, the idea of the FreeStore was born—and the idea took root and grew. As a result of Jim's vision, in 2007, 224 families were given furniture valued at over \$312,000 and 325 children had tables to eat on and beds to sleep on.

With your support, we who volunteer at the FreeStore are committed to keeping his vision alive and growing.



**The FreeStore's
3rd Annual
Open House/Fundraiser
702 E. 4th St; Des Moines, IA
Fri. Nov 21 3-7 PM
Sat. Nov 22 9AM—Noon**

**See the warehouse
Meet the volunteers
Have some refreshments
Share the joy**

2008 FreeStore Update

The 2008 winter weather took its toll on FreeStore activity in Jan. and Feb. In Jan/ Feb. 2007 the FreeStore had 47 clients in 2008 we had 28 clients. The lower numbers continued until mid-year when numbers picked up considerably.

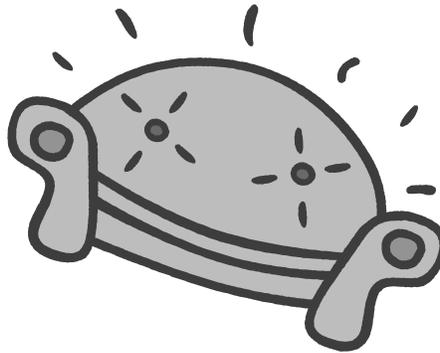
The problem is that many clients do not have the ability to move their selections and we did not have volunteers to move items for them. In August, Judy Bloom agreed to take on the task of marshalling Sat. volunteers so we could commit to moving more clients. From Jan. through June we moved about four clients a month. Since Sept. we've often moved five to six clients a week—and our volunteer base is growing.

Through Sept. 30th of this year, we've helped clients from the following agencies: the Family Violence Center (107), LUNA (2), Iowa Homeless Youth Centers (20), CFIOWA's Elevate Youth (3); 14 other agencies (25).

Sofia Sofa's Story

OOOhhhh! Aaaaaahhhh! What a great day this is. I think it's going to be that wonderful first day that signals the wonderful rest of my life. It started out pretty rough this morning. Those FreeStore volunteers work fast and hard but they aren't real gentle. I'd only been in the warehouse five days—and it's nice enough—but I was happy to move to my new family. Early this morning I was put—crammed is more like it—into that big yellow truck with all that other furniture—nice, friendly pieces and very necessary but we were packed pretty close together. One understands the need for beds and dressers, but really I'm so glad I'm a sofa and get shown off in the living room.

I admit I was pretty nervous when I got here. The apartment wasn't super clean. But Mother got right to work with that cleaning bucket and supplies the FreeStore Greeter gave her. She scrubbed and polished and cleaned until the place was nice and neat. Then she and her friend got down to the really serious work—moving and pushing all us furniture pieces around until we looked just right. I must say I'm so pleased she picked out those maple end tables to compliment my shades of green. She was so happy, giggling like a young girl as she called me Sofia Sofa. (I don't know how she knew my name!)



Items We ALWAYS Need

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

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

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

Then, she went into the kitchen to put up all those pots and pans and dishes and things she picked out. She said it was the first time she'd ever had matching dishes and glasses and that they were going to have a Pizza party that night—on real dishes not paper!

The son, young Jimmy, and I are going to get along so well. He even took his shoes off before he curled up on me with his book. He is such a nice boy, especially considering all the horrible things he's seen and heard in his young life.

Sister was absolutely beaming when she came out of her room. The FreeStore volunteer found her pink and white striped pillows to match her pink bedspread and white dresser. She asked Mother if she could have a new friend from school over on Sat. night. She said she'd never been able to do that when Dad . . . She and Mother hugged and Mother said everything was going to be just fine now. I almost cried—but only because I was so happy for us all.

I just know my previous owner would be happy to know I've found such a nice home. The FreeStore people said they were sure I would make some family very happy and I just know I will. What a wonderful day for all of us!

Special Thanks

Thank you to all the wonderful folks who have supported the work of the FreeStore this year. We could not operate without your help. This year we are especially grateful to the following:

- Acme Printing for their help printing our newsletter.
- All Pro Service Center Inc. for their help in maintaining our trucks.
- Bob Brown Chevrolet, Parts Dept. for their help in defraying the cost of a new mirror for the large truck.
- Drake University for donating 45 twin beds and 41 dressers.
- DWX.com for donating space for our website, www.thefreestore.org.
- Mark Slocum for his "Building Strong Boards" presentation.
- Our truck angels: Dave and Roena and Dick and Donna for donating and maintaining our trucks.
- Select Van & Storage (Mayflower) for the "Fill the Mayflower Drive" and for helping Family Violence Center Clients move.
- Two Men and a Truck moving company for helping Family Violence Center clients moves.