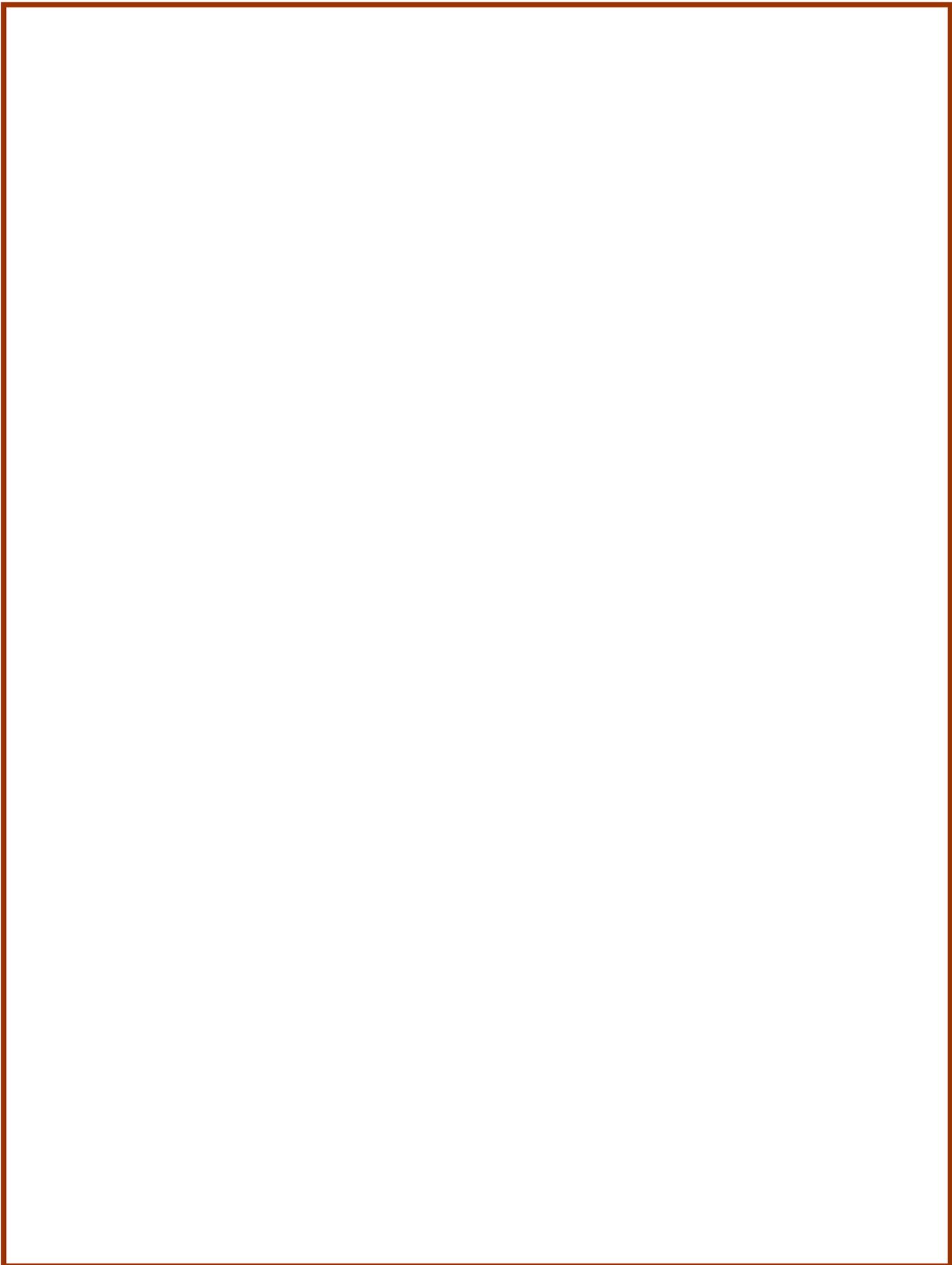


The FreeStore



Annual Report 2008



Mission Statement

We support children and families who have escaped abusive situations. We provide donated furniture and household goods to clients of domestic violence services and other agencies as these families begin new independent, productive lives in safe environments.

In Memoriam

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

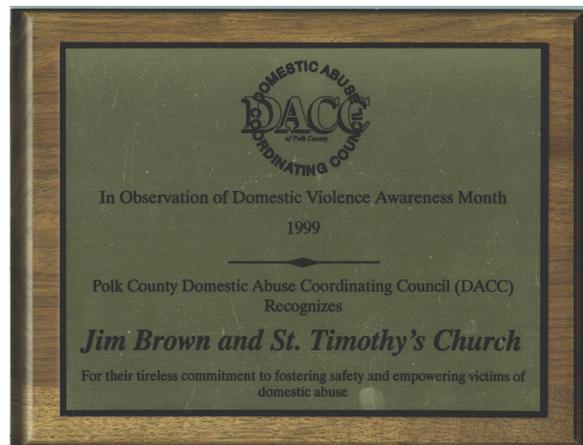
Several years ago, Jim Brown was helping paint some rooms at the Family Violence Center. He asked the director how many women and children were currently living in the shelter.

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 at yearend 2008 FreeStore had filled 858 requests for help. In 2008 alone, 210 families were given furniture valued at over \$341,128, and 287 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.





2008 FreeStore Board



Earl Lemke, Larry Anderson, Bev Blaha, Judy Bloom, Terry Swanson

Board Chair

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Message from the Board Chair

2008 was a year of opportunities and change for the FreeStore.

The early months of January and February were so cold and snow covered that we were not able to make many pick-ups or deliveries. In August Judy Bloom took over the business of managing client moves. With additional volunteers and our two trucks, she set up teams of drivers and movers were able to move from three to five families a week. By the end of the year we had filled an average of 17 requests a month for a total of 210 families helped. This included referrals from 22 different agencies, with most clients coming from the Children and Families of Iowa Domestic Violence Services and other agencies that support domestic abuse victims.

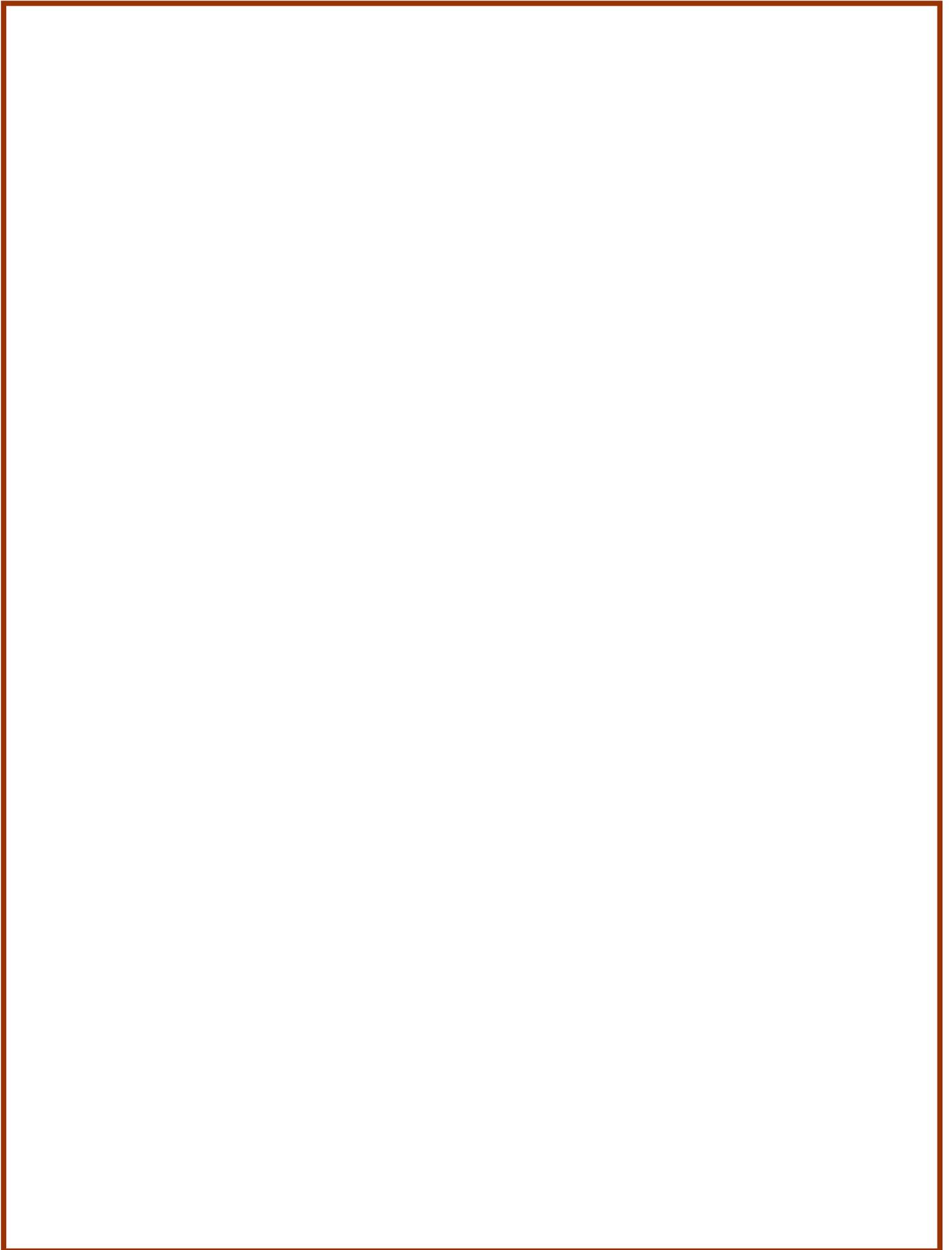
A sad note crept into our year when our founder and chairman developed a brain tumor and died. Jim Brown was a man of great vision and we will miss his wise guidance. But Jim had worked with his board and volunteer coordinators to set a program for the future - a program we will work to implement and improve.

We continue to add agencies to our list that support domestic abuse victims. And as our donations increase we also invite other agencies to use our services for a small fee of \$60. This small amount gets needy families an average of 1500 lbs of good used furniture, valued at well over \$1500.

We were warned early on that we could not solve all the problems of the world and we understand this admonition. But as we partner with other social service agencies that help families with housing, jobs, schooling, etc. we find that indeed we can be part of a process that solves all the problems of the world for one family at a time.

We dream of a future when we will fold because families will no longer need us but until that time we work in a present to meet the needs we can.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry Swanson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned in the lower right area of the page.



2008 FreeStore Activities

Background

The FreeStore was started as an outreach ministry of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in July of 2001. Due to the growth of this ministry and its operational readiness, the FreeStore was incorporated in March of 2005, and was designated as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization in September of 2005.

The FreeStore provides household items (furniture, bedding, tableware, etc.) to families who have escaped abusive situations. These families are usually comprised of a single mother with small children who sought safety at Children and Families of Iowa's Domestic Abuse Services. Many times the family owns little but the clothes they are wearing when they fled their abusive situation. Once the family is stabilized and has secured housing and employment, the FreeStore steps in to provide necessary household items at no charge as they leave the Center and transition into the community.

Without the services the FreeStore provides, many women and their children either would have to remain at Children and Families of Iowa's Domestic Abuse Services for a longer time; or they would move into apartments without the most basic household necessities such as beds, linen, or kitchen items. Helping these women and their children establish comfortable homes is often an important factor in securing their independence and is a deterrent from going back to an abusive situation if they think they have no other option. The FreeStore works to provide these women with good quality items because an essential ingredient in their service is to help restore dignity and a sense of self worth that has been taken from them by the abusive partner.

**Our volunteers are unpaid not because they are worthless,
but because they're priceless!**

The FreeStore has no paid staff and operates solely through the efforts of very dedicated volunteers:

- Volunteers pick up household goods donated by community members from throughout the Des Moines area, which are then warehoused at the FreeStore.
- An advocate from Children and Families of Iowa's Domestic Abuse Services helps the client fill out a *FreeStore Needs Request* form then emails it to the FreeStore Greeter Coordinator. Typically, the woman will be just starting a job and only recently secured housing. She will be without furniture, bedding, linens, and kitchen items.
- Depending on whether or not the woman has any moving resources the FreeStore Greeter Coordinator and the woman will set up a time for her to come and select her items. If she needs help moving items, the FreeStore Greeter Coordinator will arrange for volunteers to help her move, using one of the FreeStore trucks.
- The woman is welcome to select any household items she needs at no charge.

During 2008, the number of FreeStore volunteers grew by 28%, from 49 to 63 individuals who gave generously of their time while picking up their own expenses (e.g.: gasoline, etc.) to work at the FreeStore

Operations

Over the past five years, the FreeStore has furnished household items to help establish a growing number of households.

| Year | Number of Households Furnished Annually |
|------|---|
| 2008 | 210 |
| 2007 | 224 |
| 2006 | 177 |
| 2005 | 84 |
| 2004 | 87 |
| 2003 | 42 |

The slight decline in the number of households furnished in 2008 was a result of the bad weather in January and February when we weren't able to make any deliveries. Even though the number of client requests was down a little, the total value of goods and total tonnage increased in 2008 because we received a second, larger truck.

A generous donor provided funds in late 2007 for us to add this 2004 GMC 15' cube truck.

In July of 2008 we were able to establish a regular procedure for moving clients which increased our weekend deliveries. We recruited an additional number of weekend drivers and volunteers to run the second truck. Our average value shipped per client grew 11% to \$1,624 per client.



Agencies Served in 2008:

In 2008, the FreeStore also become a valuable partner to additional social service agencies helping individuals and families in need. We ask agencies that are not providing domestic violence support for a small fee of \$60 and the client/agency is responsible for moving the client's selections. Agencies we helped for the first time in 2008 are listed in bold.

| Agency | Requests filled |
|---|-----------------|
| CFI Domestic Abuse Shelter | 150 |
| Iowa Homeless Youth | 24 |
| Interfaith Hospitality Network | 6 |
| New Directions | 4 |
| CFI Elevate Youth | 3 |
| ELPIS Ministries Inc | 3 |
| Holy Trinity Church | 2 |
| L.U.N.A. Crisis Line | 2 |
| Lutheran Church of Hope | 2 |
| YWCA | 2 |
| Beacon of Life | 1 |
| CFlowa | 1 |
| Child Serve | 1 |
| Craig's List | 1 |
| Cross Train Fitness | 1 |
| Deaf Women Of Iowa Against Abuse | 1 |
| Des Moines PD Homeless help (25 blankets) | 1 |
| Hands of Help | 1 |
| Hope Ministries – Bethel Mission | 1 |
| Lutheran Church of the Cross | 1 |
| Lutheran Refugee Services | 1 |
| Parkersburg Tornado Victims (100 blankets) | 1 |
| Total | 210 |

In 2008 FreeStore had a large inventory of blankets - more than we needed for our clients. We gave large donations of these blankets to tornado victims in Parkersburg, IA, to the Des Moines Police Department for winter distribution to homeless, and to the Salvation Army to help the needy they serve in Des Moines.

Special Awards and Donations

Fill the Mayflower Event

Select Van and Storage Co. sponsored a furniture drive to fill one of their over-the-road vans with items for the FreeStore. (And we did—we received over 15,000 lbs of goods!) Children and Families of Iowa provided support for the event with volunteers and staff 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.



Truck Repair

Generous donors joined with All Pro Service to rebuild the engine on "Franny" our 19 year old refurbished delivery truck

Principal Financial Group

Principal Financial Group furnishes us with warehouse space at 700 and 702 E. 4th St. in the River Hills Business Park. We pay no rent and are only responsible for utilities.

DWX Internet Services

DWX is a local internet and web service company. They donate our web space and maintenance (www.thefreestore.org) as a community service.

Diane Tvrdik Award

DACC (Domestic Abuse Coordinating Council) and the Children and Families of Iowa Family Violence Center selected the FreeStore as the 2008 recipient of the Diane Tvrdik award. The award is presented each year to a person or organization to honor their work supporting domestic abuse victims. Diane Tvrdik was a great supporter of the FVC and when she was dying, she told her family they were to carry on the tradition she started. Her son Steve presented the award.

Hidden Heros Award

Elpis Ministries, Inc honored Terry Swanson and the FreeStore at their 2008 Hidden Heroes Banquet citing “despite obstacles, you strive to improve your life and the lives of others. You are a role model and inspiration – a true hero.”

Drake Donations

FreeStore volunteers with Mayflower assistance picked up the last 44 beds and 38 dressers from the Drake University dormitory redecorating project.



LWBJ Financial

LWBJ Financial provides us with accounting services and help with inventory.

Covenant Presbyterian Church

The FreeStore was the recipient of the Covenant Presbyterian Church’s “Decorate a Table Top” luncheon fund raiser.

St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church

St. Timothy’s provides the FreeStore with a telephone mail box and office support.

Financial Statement

FreeStore, Inc.

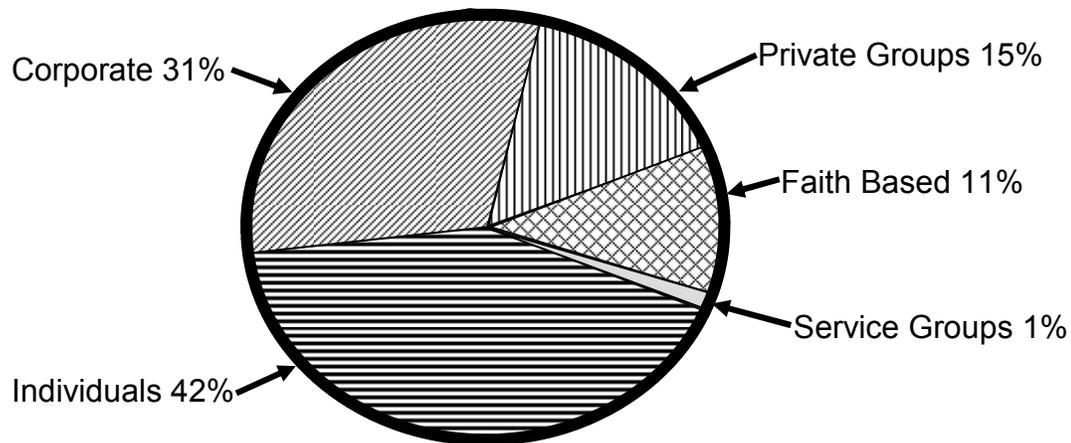
Statements of Financial Activities

For the years ended December 31, 2008, 2007, 2006 and 2005

| | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 | 2005 |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Unrestricted net assets: | | | | |
| Revenue and other support: | | | | |
| Contributions: | | | | |
| Noncash support | \$373,266 | \$361,565 | \$237,187 | \$18,888 |
| Cash support | \$35,839 | \$40,071 | \$19,971 | \$5,000 |
| Restricted | \$0 | \$2,500 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Other income | \$627 | \$202 | \$21 | \$1 |
| Services & shirt sales | \$2,867 | \$1,472 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Release Temporarily Re- stricted Contributions | \$11,121 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total revenue/other support | <u>\$423,720</u> | <u>\$405,810</u> | <u>\$257,179</u> | <u>\$23,889</u> |
| Expenses: | | | | |
| Program services | \$342,860 | \$324,707 | \$202,316 | \$23,443 |
| Management and general | \$17,139 | \$15,632 | \$15,067 | \$515 |
| Fund-raising | \$4,686 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total expenses | <u>\$364,685</u> | <u>\$342,986</u> | <u>\$217,383</u> | <u>\$23,958</u> |
| Inc in unrestricted net assets | \$59,034 | \$59,076 | \$39,796 | (\$69) |
| Changes in temporarily restricted net assets: | | | | |
| Temporarily restricted con- tributions | \$4,102 | \$11,121 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Release Temporarily Re- stricted Contributions | (\$11,121) | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Inc in unrestricted net assets | <u>(\$7,019)</u> | <u>\$11,121</u> | <u>\$0</u> | <u>\$0</u> |
| Increase in net assets | \$52,015 | \$59,076 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Net assets at beginning of year | <u>\$112,250</u> | <u>\$53,174</u> | <u>\$13,378</u> | <u>\$13,447</u> |
| Net assets at end of year | <u>\$164,265</u> | <u>\$112,250</u> | <u>\$53,174</u> | <u>\$13,378</u> |

Sources of Funds

Since its beginning as a 501c3 non-profit organization the FreeStore has been fortunate to be supported by the entire Des Moines-area community. Our most consistent support has come from individuals who understand our mission and want to help us be successful. Local corporations, organizations, churches, and service groups have also supported us with money and other donations. This broad base of support ensures our continued success as we go forward with our mission. The 2008 open house and fund drives generated donations of over \$35,000.



Balance Sheet

Years ending Dec. 31: 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005

| Assets | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 | 2005 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Current assets: | | | | |
| Cash and cash equivalents | \$41,255 | \$33,596 | \$17,946 | \$944 |
| Investments | \$25,524 | \$11,121 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Inventory | \$85,606 | \$53,618 | \$31,628 | \$12,434 |
| Total current assets | \$152,385 | \$98,335 | \$49,574 | \$13,378 |
| Transportation equip net of dep | \$11,880 | \$13,915 | \$3,600 | \$0 |
| Total assets | \$164,265 | \$112,250 | \$53,174 | \$13,378 |
| Liabilities and net assets | | | | |
| Current liabilities: | | | | |
| Acc. Pay and accrued exp | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total current liabilities | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Net assets: | | | | |
| Unrestricted | \$160,163 | \$101,129 | \$53,174 | \$13,378 |
| Temporarily restricted | \$4,102 | \$11,121 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Permanently restricted | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total net assets | \$164,265 | \$112,250 | \$53,174 | \$13,378 |
| Total liabilities and net assets | \$164,265 | \$112,250 | \$53,174 | \$13,378 |

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