



SUMMER 2021

Phoebe Snydersmith, Daytime Call Room Supervisor for Crisis Intervention, provides direct support to clients experiencing mental health crises via telephone, text, or chat.

COMMUNITY'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sarah Nelson



I'd like to take a moment to reflect on my first few months at CommUnity Crisis Services and Food Bank as the new Executive Director.

I have truly enjoyed taking the time to get to know our amazing programs and staff. The takeaway that has made the greatest impression on me is how deeply the staff at CommUnity care about the work we do on behalf of our neighbors. Each and every person within our organization puts heart behind their work every single day. You don't see that in every organization, and I am proud to join a team that cares so deeply about the clients we serve.

Summer is traditionally a time spent with family and friends enjoying the warm weather, but for many, they are still struggling to put food on the table and pay the bills. The stresses that come with these

financial situations are directly correlated with an individual's mental wellness. This is exactly why each of the services CommUnity provides are deeply intertwined with each other. CommUnity is proud to provide immediate and non-judgmental support for individuals facing emotional, food, or financial crises.

CommUnity has a great team, and a spectrum of services that are critical to the health, well-being and financial security of our neighbors. I am confident that we will continue to do amazing things for this community, and I couldn't be more excited to be a part of this organization. I appreciate your continued support of CommUnity Crisis Services and Food Bank and look forward to sharing our stories and news with you.

In CommUnity,
Sarah A. Nelson
Sarah Nelson

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**Want the latest information?
Sign up for our e-news at
builtbycommunity.org/email**

Join the Fan Club 

As the days grow hotter, it is important to consider how extreme temperatures impact our neighbors who do not have air conditioning in their homes or cannot afford to use it due to high utility bill costs.

The Fan Club provides free box fans to families in our community to help them keep cool and keep utility costs down.

We would like to extend a special thank you to the **Congregational United Church of Christ** for their generous pledge of an **\$8,500 matching gift** to keep our neighbors cool.

Every \$20 donation will be matched by the Congregational United Church of Christ, and two families in need will receive a box fan. Donate today to join the Fan Club!

builtbycommunity.org/fanclub

WELCOME BACK, VOLUNTEERS

Food Bank & Crisis Intervention volunteers return in-person

You can feel the excitement at CommUnity as we watch more and more volunteers walk through the door once again. Familiar faces are returning, and they are met with nothing but smiles! It's been a tough year for our community, and we've felt the impacts of the pandemic too.

Despite our best efforts to maintain high levels of community involvement in our day-to-day operations, enacting necessary safety precautions ultimately reduced our capacity to host volunteers to half of what it had been pre-pandemic.

FY2021	FY2020
14,500 VOLUNTEER HOURS	30,000 VOLUNTEER HOURS
\$365,000 IN SAVINGS	\$725,000 IN SAVINGS

The loss of so many caring people has had a substantial impact on our services. Even as we reflect on the difficult times, we must acknowledge the overwhelming dedication of those who chose to remain with us through the pandemic. We are so grateful.

As we move past the pandemic in Johnson County, CommUnity is welcoming back many who haven't been able to volunteer in the past year. It's a promising sign of renewal, and we truly need all of their support. The financial and emotional impacts of the pandemic are still very much a concern. With your help we can provide families with the food, financial, and emotional support they need.

the services are welcoming and respectful, it's comfortable and fulfilling to volunteer." Doug says he shares his appreciation for his community by volunteering and helping others.

10 years after her first day as a CommUnity volunteer, Jan Barnes is still going strong. She's seen many changes in our agency and says she is impressed with our growth. When asked why she volunteers, she said, "The long-term benefits of creating your own happiness, as well as the community one is surrounded by, outweighs the need for a verbal thank you."

"People in crisis...need to know that someone is paying attention, is leaning in."

Crisis Intervention

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, our Crisis Intervention program is able to provide phone, chat, and text support to clients facing a mental health crisis. "I've learned that people in crisis don't need space," said one Crisis Intervention volunteer. "They need to know that someone is paying attention, is leaning in."

In times of emotional crisis, everyone should have a voice on the other end of the phone who can empathize, validate, and work through their struggles. One phone call or text conversation can make a massive impact on someone's life. As one client commented, "After this talk it made me feel like I do have a reason to live."

We are thrilled to announce that in-person training for new Crisis Intervention volunteers will resume beginning this fall! People like you can help make a real difference in someone's moment of crisis.

We expect the need for emotional, food, and financial crisis support to remain high in the near future as many pandemic-specific services will be ending. You can help CommUnity provide continued support for our neighbors by joining our group of dedicated volunteers. [To sign up to volunteer, simply visit builtbycommunity.org/volunteer.](https://builtbycommunity.org/volunteer)

MOBILE PANTRY HITS THE ROAD

Mobile Pantry services resumed in June

After temporarily closing during the pandemic, Mobile Pantry has resumed service to help provide monthly grocery assistance to residents of underserved and/or rural residential areas in Johnson County. It delivers a variety of fresh and non-perishable food items, as well as baby and household items, to convenient pick-up locations in the community. Food items are different each week depending on what is available. Clients may choose the items that work best for their family, no matter

their income. Reducing obstacles to food has always been a driving force behind the Mobile Pantry program. Many clients who are homebound may not have a car or access to transportation and often need to travel a considerable distance to reach a grocery store or support services.

If you are interested in volunteering with the Mobile Pantry, please visit builtbycommunity.org/mobilepantryvolunteers.

Many helpful hands are needed to accomplish the following tasks:

- Load the pantry vehicle
- Set up pantry
- Check-in & interview new clients
- Help people shop & check out
- Clean up & reload the vehicle

"One of the most fulfilling parts of being an MCO counselor is knowing that someone is

seeking us out and trusting us

with their struggle."

—Andrea Courtney,
MCO On-Call Counselor



Read our blog on a day in the life of a Mobile Crisis Outreach Counselor at builtbycommunity.org/dayinthelife

"When you want to help, there doesn't need to be hesitation."

Food Bank

Doug and Jill B. are a dynamic duo who volunteer in the Food Bank. They provide assistance anyway they can, including answering questions for families who visit the pantry. "There is no intimidation in volunteering," explains Doug. "When you want to help, there doesn't need to be hesitation. When an organization like CommUnity, as well as the people utilizing



A Food Bank volunteer stocks fresh dairy products for clients provided thanks to grant funding from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Become a volunteer

See all of our volunteer opportunities and sign up for a shift at builtbycommunity.org/volunteer



Sami Therme (DDH Supervisor), Phoebe Snydersmith (Daytime Call Room Supervisor), and Ryan Dickson (Crisis Intervention Program Manager) answer crisis line calls, chats, and texts.

5TH ANNUAL HUNGER BANQUET

CommUnity's largest annual fundraiser goes virtual

On June 11, many of our generous supporters came together virtually to learn about the state of food insecurity in our community at the 5th Annual Hunger Banquet. During this year's program, attendees heard from Omaira, a Food Bank client who has relied on our services since immigrating from Sudan with her three children. She visits the Food Bank each week to shop for herself and other families in her neighborhood. "Now I can get fresh produce, tomatoes, green peppers, and meat," said Omaira. "This place is changing lives."

Nearly 15% of Iowans are experiencing food insecurity right now. That means, as you read this page, about 22,500 community members in Johnson County are struggling to meet their food needs.

The challenge of meeting the need for food in Johnson County is substantial, but together we can fight hunger. We want to give a special thanks to those who attended the 5th Annual Hunger Banquet or donated through the event. Because of you, we've raised more than \$57,000 for CommUnity's Food Bank! Your generosity helps keep the Food Bank shelves stocked, giving families like Omaira's peace of mind as they consider their next meal.

Though the next Hunger Banquet is a year away, hunger affects our community all year-round. [To make a contribution to help fight hunger in Johnson County, visit builtbycommunity.org/donate.](https://builtbycommunity.org/donate)

Many thanks to the sponsors who made this year's Hunger Banquet possible!



Hills Bank
Holmes Semken
GreenState Credit Union
Jeff Sears & Dr. Aaron Bossler
Lensing Funeral & Cremation Services
Two Rivers Bank & Trust



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Iowa City, IA 52240

 Find us on Facebook!

 @builtxcommunity

 @builtbycommunity

Crisis Line: 1-855-325-4296

Food Bank: 319-351-0128

Business Line: 319-351-2726

Mobile Crisis: 1-855-800-1239

builtbycommunity.org



DID YOU KNOW?



4 OUT OF 10
CommUnity Food Bank clients are children

//////

The equivalent of



13
LOCAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
could be filled exclusively with Johnson County children experiencing food insecurity

LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP BY VISITING
BUILTBYCOMMUNITY.ORG/STRIKEOUTHUNGER



UPCOMING EVENTS

Strike Out Hunger

June - August, 2021

Hunger doesn't take a break! During the summer months, children are out of school and have access to fewer resources. Help provide a stable source of nutrition by participating in this summer-long food drive!
builtbycommunity.org/strikeouthunger

Fan Club

June - July, 2021

Utility bills can be a real struggle. Help keep our neighbors cool this summer! A box fan keeps cool air moving and reduces hefty utility bills. Each \$20 donation toward the fan club provides a box fan for a family in need
builtbycommunity.org/fanclub

TP CommUnity

October, 2021

Toilet paper is in high demand at the Food Bank because it is not covered in what can be purchased with SNAP benefits. For many of the families that visit our Food Bank, receiving a few rolls of toilet paper means one less expense they have to worry about on a tight budget.
builtbycommunity.org/tpcommunity

50th Anniversary

October 22, 2021

Join us in celebrating 50 + one years of service to the community!




SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

CommUnity Crisis Services and Food Bank offers a variety of trauma-informed care, suicide prevention, and suicide intervention trainings. Visit the site below to learn more about our training options.

builtbycommunity.org/training