



In a few short weeks, CommUnity will welcome a new Executive Director, and I will hand over the reigns of an organization that has been a true highlight of my career. In 2008, I was given one charge when I was hired: “take us to the next level,” and I was excited to come and see the possibilities.

No one does these things alone, though, and I came to work alongside a small, but mighty staff and several hundred volunteers. There were only seven regular staff back then; however in 2008, you all remember we were just beginning programming for flood recovery. In the chaos of building the flood recovery programs, staff and the board developed a strategic plan that strengthened our operations. We then started to dream of the possibilities for our programs and what a time we had!

You know all this, but indulge me one last time. We became one of the first agencies in the country to provide crisis chat and we remain a national leader in crisis chat services. I’m so proud that our staff had a part in helping to develop these national services and crisis chat protocol nearly a decade ago.

CommUnity is recognized and respected at the national level and last year the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline selected us to pilot its new national text service. Additionally, our experience in disaster

services led to us securing one of two national disaster text lines.

We became a local leader in fighting food insecurity in Johnson County and facilitated discussions with community leaders. These discussions led to the creation of the Johnson County Hunger Task Force, which funded new food relief programs to address quality and accessibility in our local hunger system. I’m proud that we began collaborations with food rescue and food pantries in our county and continue to work alongside those partners to address food insecurity issues.

As a provider in our mental health region, we began offering mobile crisis services and will now be working to develop a co-responding police and mental health team with the Iowa City Police Department. We are also at the very beginning of plans to further develop crisis response teams to continue our work in Iowa City and Johnson County law enforcement agencies.

We have been at the table to develop the access center for nearly a decade. Because of the support and leadership of the county and municipalities, the GuideLink Access Center opened its doors in February of this year. I’m not only proud, but very excited to see the increased access and much needed quality mental health care this facility will provide for our community.

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Somewhere in there, we bought an old health department building. Along with community support, the 1105 Project is a true example of the benefit of collaborative effort as a home for three nonprofit agencies.

I’m grateful for all of the support we have received over the years because none of what we’ve done would have been possible without you. I worked among talented staff, board members, volunteers and local leaders, and each of you have made CommUnity one of the best organizations in our community. It has been my honor to be a part of CommUnity’s journey. And for that, I thank you for entrusting me to be its leader for the past 13 years. I look forward to witnessing its future accomplishments.



Want to wish Becci a fond farewell?
Visit builtbycommunity.org/farewell-becci

AN UPDATE ON THE FOOD PANTRY AT PEPPERWOOD PLAZA

The Food Pantry at Pepperwood Plaza is quickly becoming a staple in the community. This new facility has provided a bright spot of hope for our organization and our neighbors in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have now officially assisted with over 10,000 visits for food at Pepperwood, providing groceries and other necessities for local families experiencing food insecurity during these difficult economic times.

The Food Pantry at Pepperwood Plaza was initially conceived of as a solution to implement enhanced safety measures for our clients, volunteers and staff. It has also lifted our spirits, allowing us to welcome volunteers and clients back into our doors to share in the satisfaction of selflessly giving and receiving. We are so grateful for the opportunity to spend time with each person who walks through our doors, even with

the necessity of masks and social distancing between us.

For those who cannot make it into the Food Bank in person, we continue to offer food delivery. More information about this program is available at builtbycommunity.org/food-delivery.

For a video tour of Pepperwood Plaza, visit youtu.be/LTmWHaOqj3A.

10,532

VISITS FOR FOOD

6,611

UNIQUE
INDIVIDUALS SERVED

542,648

POUNDS
OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED

APRIL IS VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION MONTH!

Volunteers are the heart of CommUnity. In FY20, volunteers invested 22,457 hours of their time in the Food Bank and 7,245 hours on the crisis lines. We are so grateful for all that our volunteers do to support our neighbors experiencing crisis.

“The Food Bank runs smoothly because of our volunteers. Without them, we would not be able to operate the way that we do. Many volunteers helped with the transition to Pepperwood and donated a significant amount of their time to help us get the site up and running, it was unbelievable. Volunteers are our sunshine. Seeing volunteers return for shifts is equivalent to seeing your friends or family come through the door. I always love to see our volunteers!”

Krystal Kabelka, Food Bank Manager

“I appreciate our volunteers deeply for their ability to engage with our clients and meet them where they are at emotionally. Empathizing with someone who is hurting is not easy and I am always humbled by their ability to do this so willingly.”

Steven Groom,
Crisis Intervention Overnight Coordinator

“We simply couldn't do what we do without our volunteers. They show up week after week, ready to help people who have nowhere else to turn.”

Hannah Green,
Crisis Intervention Operations Coordinator

“The best part of working here is getting to know these amazing people who commit themselves to helping our community. Getting to know them week after week is an incredible privilege.”

Kai Kiser, Food Bank Supervisor

“I cannot express enough gratitude to our volunteers. I've met so many great people who have devoted so much time and effort to helping their community. It makes every day better to work with these amazing folks.”

Luke Welch, Food Bank Coordinator

COLLABORATION WITH ICPD TO HIRE LAW ENFORCEMENT LIAISON

CommUnity is pleased to announce a collaboration between the Iowa City Police Department (ICPD) and our Mobile Crisis Outreach Program.

The Iowa City City Council has formalized a partnership with Foundation 2 and CommUnity to create a law enforcement liaison position. CommUnity will hire a mental health professional who will work as a law enforcement liaison with officers in

the ICPD. The liaison will be specially trained in trauma-informed de-escalation and harm reduction techniques. This team, sometimes referred to as a co-responder model, will utilize the combined expertise of the officer and the behavioral health specialist to de-escalate situations and help link people with behavioral and mental health needs to the appropriate services. This model will offer formal and informal

cross-training between law enforcement and behavioral health disciplines that can lead to greater understanding and shift agency cultures. Developing these differentiated responses are so important because these response models are all about responding to incidents using the least intrusive or least restrictive responses. We look forward to working with the Iowa City community to implement this new approach.



The new Guidelink Center facility is located at 300 Southgate Avenue in Iowa City. (Left) The front sign at the new Guidelink building. (Right) One of the crisis stabilization beds available to clients recovering from a crisis.

MOBILE CRISIS MOVES TO THE NEW GUIDELINK CENTER

The Access Center Provides an Alternative for Mental Health Crisis

Guidelink Center officially opened its doors on February 15th after over a decade of collaboration and hard work from dozens of entities. This brand new building on Southgate Avenue in Iowa City provides immediate care to people experiencing a behavioral health or substance use crisis. The behavioral health access center serves residents of Johnson County and provides access to CommUnity's

Mobile Crisis Outreach program, as well as crisis stabilization beds, a sobering unit, and a detox unit.

CommUnity's Mobile Crisis Outreach program dispatches mental health counselors to homes, schools, emergency rooms, or public places where a mental health crisis is occurring. In addition, our Mobile Crisis counselors are now able to provide assessment and crisis

stabilization support for clients arriving at Guidelink Center.

Guidelink is a joint project that involves nineteen community partners including local municipalities, nonprofits and medical facilities. We are so proud of this community effort and the opportunity to create better outcomes for people experiencing a mental health crisis.

COMMUNITY RECEIVES RE-ACCREDITATION

From International Council for Helplines

CommUnity Crisis Services and Food Bank has earned International Council for Helplines (ICH) re-accreditation for their Crisis Intervention phone, chat and text helpline services. This accreditation signifies that CommUnity has demonstrated commitment and substantial conformance to providing high quality service and helpline best practice standards of care.

"We congratulate and commend CommUnity Crisis Services and Food Bank for achieving accreditation and for their exemplary service to the state of Iowa. We are honored to have CommUnity as an accredited member of International Council for Helplines" said Gail Selander, Executive Director of International Council for Helplines.

An organization receiving International Council for Helplines accreditation has demonstrated to a team of accreditation examiners its commitment to offering helpline programs and services that are accountable, measurable, and of the highest quality. During the review process, the accreditation examiners evaluated CommUnity for compliance in several areas including governance and leadership, training, program management and suicide prevention and intervention standards.

"We are very excited to have once again been re-accredited by International Council for Helplines. ICH recently did a sweeping revision of standards to promote the use of best practices in crisis intervention service provision, a goal our organization always strives to meet.

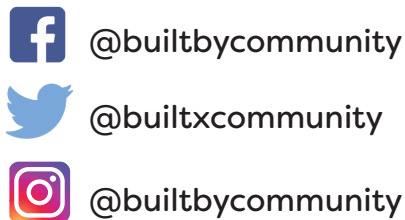
With this re-accreditation, we are ensuring that we have practices in place that allow our Crisis Intervention Program to provide crisis services based on these best practices," said Cindy Hewett, Director of Services for CommUnity.

International Council for Helplines is an independent, not-for-profit accrediting body with a mission to inspire, educate, and accredit helpline programs which offer support to individuals in crisis and emotional distress via phone and online emotional support services including chat and text. International Council for Helplines has been accrediting helpline organizations for over 50 years, and as an accrediting body, is solely dedicated to helpline best practice standards.





1121 S. Gilbert Court
Iowa City, IA 52240



Crisis Line: 1-855-325-4296
Food Bank: 319-351-0128
Business Line: 319-351-2726
Mobile Crisis: 1-855-800-1239

builtbycommunity.org



BABY SHOWER

HOW TO HELP:

- Host a baby products drive
- Make a financial donation
- Host a Facebook fundraiser

builtbycommunity.org/shower

April showers bring May flowers, and this April we're asking YOU to help us buy diapers for our month-long CommUnity Baby Shower! We receive about 650 requests for diapers each month. We rely on donations from the community to supply diapers to as many of those families as we can, but sometimes, we come up short.

You can help supply diapers, wipes, and formula for babies in need. We're asking you to show your support by hosting a diaper drive, creating a Facebook fundraiser, or making a financial donation at builtbycommunity.org/shower.

With your help, we can continue to supply baby items to families in need. We appreciate your support!



The 5th Annual Hunger Banquet will take place **June 11, 2021** with an all-new virtual event.

An invitation with more details is forthcoming.



VOLUNTEER WITH US!
VISIT BUILTBYCOMMUNITY.ORG/VOLUNTEER FOR MORE INFORMATION.