

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Volunteer Feature

CommUnity was built on a foundation of caring and compassionate volunteers, and to this day, we are proud to remain a volunteer-driven organization. Our Food Bank Manager, Krystal Kabela, put it best when she said “Volunteers make it possible to do the job that we do. Their dedication and generosity is nothing short of amazing. We are so incredibly lucky to work with them!”

Last year,* 585 Food Bank volunteers gave a total of 11,203 hours of their time to help feed nearly 4,000 local families. Crisis Helpline volunteers gave a total of 3,624 hours of their time to provide emotional support to our neighbors with 86% of clients finding the conversation helpful. The dedication we see from our volunteers every single day is nothing short of amazing.

One of the most incredible things about CommUnity volunteers is that they don’t just go to volunteer (as a verb), they are volunteers (it’s a part of them). It takes a special person to donate their time and energy to provide

emotional, food, and financial support to our neighbors. We hope all of our volunteers are as proud as we are of the amazing work they do for our community.

So, from all of us here at CommUnity Crisis Services, thank you to all of our dedicated volunteers! We couldn’t do it without you.

*Last year refers to fiscal year 2021, spanning from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021



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- Krystal Kabela, Food Bank Manager

JOIN THE FAN CLUB



A \$20 donation will purchase a box fan for a family in need.

The weather is heating up, which means dangerous living conditions for our neighbors without AC or without the means to pay for AC due to record high inflation. Help us keep our neighbors safe and secure in their homes.

builtbycommunity.org/fanclub



4 out of 10

Food Bank clients are children.

Many families depend on school lunches to feed their children, and summertime can be uncertain. Help us bridge the gap in child hunger.



builtbycommunity.org/strikeouthunger

Volunteer Interview

The following is an excerpt from an interview with long-time volunteer, Chris Ledman. Ledman began volunteering in the Food Bank in 2006, and began volunteering with Crisis Helplines remotely in 2018.

Q: What is it about CommUnity that drew you in?

A: Everybody was just wonderful! I enjoyed all the people in the management positions, and I really liked meeting all the other volunteers because there are people from everywhere with all different backgrounds. It's just a really great way to meet people.

Q: Can you tell me a bit about your experience being a Crisis Helplines volunteer?

A: Yeah, so in the past, I've done sexual assault counseling, so a lot of the training was similar, actually. So, I kind of had the background for it. But overall, my experience has been allowing myself to use empathy to help others, and I happen to have the belief that everything you do is a selfish act. So, even though our purpose is to help others, I think that we also help ourselves as volunteers.

Q: And that leads me right into my next question. What have you gotten out of volunteering?

A: Well, a lot of people think it's really hard, and it is hard, I'm not going to deny that. But what I think a lot of people don't realize is that there's a lot of support behind you... That's what I try to tell people, is that you're doing it alone, but you're really not. There's someone always there to help you during the chat, after the chat, and there's quite a bit of training. It is scary in the beginning, I think I found it very scary, but there's so much support that you're really not by yourself when you're doing it.

CommUnity in the Community

With a name like CommUnity, it's no surprise that we hold ourselves to a high standard of involvement in the community we serve, and summer is our busiest time of year. Our staff members have had a blast this summer at a variety of local events!

Amel Ali, CommUnity's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Specialist with Mobile Crisis Response, has been teaching kiddos how to tie dye at the South District Diversity Market every Saturday this summer! The Diversity Market is a pop-up market held each Saturday through July 30th at Pepperwood Plaza that uplifts women and minority artists, food vendors, and businesses.

Our Mobile Crisis team is partnering with the Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County, Dream City, the Iowa City Community School District, City of Iowa City Parks and Recreation, and United Action for Youth to host Wetherby Nights, a youth-oriented event at Wetherby

Park. Intermediate and high school students are welcome to come play basketball or flag football, create art, enjoy the TikTok video booth, and more, every Monday evening throughout the summer months. On August 5th and 6th, Wetherby Nights will have a 3 on 3 basketball tournament, called Hoops in the Hood. By engaging students in community events like Wetherby Nights, we can help them feel connected to our community and strengthen our community as a whole. Happy, valued, and included young folks grow up to be great neighbors and great advocates for their community.

Local events like the Diversity Market and Wetherby Nights provide our neighbors, tall and small, with activities that benefit their mental health and overall wellbeing. They help us to feel more connected and be a part of our community, which has a huge impact on our emotional wellbeing, and can add meaning and purpose to our day-to-day lives. Physical activity, getting outside, enjoying music, and social contact all have a positive impact on our mental health, and events like these provide all of the above!

It can often feel like summertime is overscheduled, overwhelming, and over-the-top hot outside, but the next time you have an opportunity to attend a local event, seize it! It's good for your wellbeing and good for the community - and don't forget to stop and say "hi" to your friends at CommUnity Crisis Services! We probably have something fun up our sleeves...



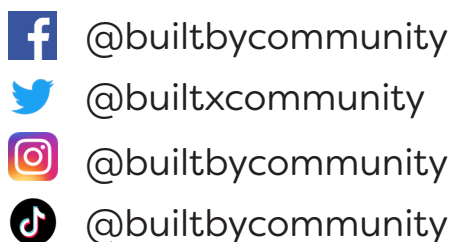
Pictured from left to right: Kyle Burke (Crisis Helplines Manager), Parth Patel (Youth Mobile Crisis Coordinator), and Sarah Nelson (Chief Executive Officer) at the South District Diversity Market.



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Iowa City, Iowa 52240

Crisis Line: 988
Mobile Crisis: 1-855-581-8111
Food Bank: 319-351-0128
Business Line: 319-351-2726

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Upcoming Events

JUNE - AUGUST

Fan Club

All summer - Help keep our neighbors cool this summer by donating \$20 to provide a box fan to a local family.

Strike Out Hunger

All summer - Help provide a stable source of nutrition by participating this summer-long food drive.

OCTOBER

TP CommUnity

All month - Donate toilet paper in October to TP CommUnity. TP is not covered by SNAP benefits, so it is in high demand at the Food Bank.

DECEMBER

Project Holiday

All month - Each \$25 donation will purchase a complete holiday meal for a local family.

