

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



Annual Report Fiscal Year 2024

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,
committed citizens can **change the world**;
indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

QUICK CONTACTS

Donate

Builtbycommunity.org/donate

Crisis Helpline Services

Call or text 988

Chat online at 988lifeline.org/chat

Mobile Crisis Response

Call 1-855-581-8111 and ask for mobile crisis

Financial Support

Call (319) 569-6393

Food Bank

Call (319) 351-0128

Visit the food bank at

1045 Highway 6 East, Iowa City

Healing Prairie Farm

Call (319) 255-7006

MISSION

CommUnity Crisis Services and Food Bank is a volunteer-driven organization that provides immediate and non-judgmental support for individuals facing emotional, food, or financial crisis.

VISION

Every individual in our community has support in a time of need.

CONTENTS

A Word from Our CEO	1
Meet the Team	2
Food Bank	3
Eddie's Story	4
Financial Support	6
Healing Prairie Farm	7
JC's First Care Farm	8
Homegrown, World Renowned	9
Crisis Helpline Services	10
Crisis Response Services	11
Financials	13
Celebrate & Reflect	14
Donors, Grantors, & Sponsors	15
Your Support Fuels Us	17



A WORD FROM OUR CEO

As I look back on everything we've achieved together in Fiscal Year 2024, I'm filled with gratitude and pride.

This year, we made some incredible strides. We expanded our youth services with the opening of Healing Prairie Farm. This new space is already making a big difference for young people in need.

The food bank faced record-breaking demand, and thanks to your support, we were able to rise to the demand even though resources were, at times, limited.

Looking ahead, I'm excited about our future. We're gearing up to launch a new Mobile Pantry truck, which will help us reach even more people who can't easily travel to the food bank. This means we'll be able to deliver fresher produce and groceries to those who need them most, including those with transportation challenges, disabilities, or mobility issues.

I'm genuinely excited about what's next and can't wait to see where we go from here. None of this would be possible without your incredible support, and I want to say a huge thank you for helping us make such a difference in our community.

Here's to another amazing year ahead!

Warmly,

Sarah Nelson
CEO

Sarah Nelson



Chief Executive
Officer

Adrienne Korbakes



Chief Operating
Officer

Drew Martel, LISW



Chief Clinical Officer

Jennifer Steines



Chief Financial
Officer

Angie Meiers



Director of Finance

Julia Winter



Director of
Development

Sara Barth



Director of Supportive
Services

Ryan Dickson



Director of Crisis
Helpline Services

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Washington-Hoagland**
Board Member

Yu Yu
Board Member



Matt Himschoot, Food Bank Warehouse Coordinator, unloading turkeys for Project Holiday 2023

FOOD BANK

2.08 million pounds of food distributed

49,173 visits to the food bank

and for those unable to make it to the Food Bank, we had 6,321 food deliveries and 2,110 Mobile Pantry visits.

20,248 individuals served annually

and an average of 197 visits for food per day.

1.4 million pounds of food donated

about 1.2 million pounds of which were donated by Table to Table, one of our partner organizations dedicated to eliminating food waste.

629 food bank volunteers

served 17,255 hours in fiscal year 2024.

It's a service in the community that really makes a difference. You can't forget about that. Helping people and **making a difference** in the lives of our neighbors.



EDDIE'S STORY

By Emma Huntzinger, Communications Manager

Meet Eddie—a retired chef and the friendly property manager at Parkview Church. Eddie embodies the essence of being a good neighbor in a close-knit community. Along with working for the church and being a staple of the South District community, he takes care of his elderly parents and babysits his grandchildren. When you hear “it takes a village,” trust me, you want Eddie in your village.

His journey with CommUnity Food Bank began years ago, long before we moved into our current location in Pepperwood Plaza. His role at Parkview, which owns the food bank building, allowed him to make a personal connection with staff and volunteers. “They’re absolutely amazing, and I think they serve the community well,” he says, noting that the work provides essential support to those in need, including fresh vegetables and other groceries that are often scarce. He appreciates how welcoming and friendly food bank staff and volunteers are, always ready with fresh veggies and a smile.

But it’s not just about the food. Eddie says “Anything I needed I’ve been pretty much able to get there, you know, so it’s been a blessing.” With grandkids in the mix, he’s been able to pick up diapers and other essentials he needs while babysitting, easing the financial burden of raising young children.

For anyone new to the area or unsure about the food bank, Eddie’s advice is simple: Just go for it! “I tell people all the time that I know that they’ve recently moved to the area and stuff like that, especially with kids, I’m like, they serve one and all... It can help you along... Maybe you’re getting your low income or just need some help and some assistance, and it helps get you through.” He emphasizes that the food bank is there for

Cont. →

Food Bank Manager, Krystal Kabelo
Client, Eddie
Food Bank Supervisor, Allison Christopher

everyone, especially families and people who might need a little extra help.

And for current and future donors, Eddie's message is heartfelt. "Their donations help a lot of people. It helps a lot of people and it makes a difference in the lives of people," he says. "You just, you never know who you're helping. Everybody can use a little help now and again and the food bank's there. And like I said, they greet you with open arms." He knows firsthand how much of an impact even small contributions can have, helping single parents, young families, and many others.

When I asked Eddie his favorite meal, he took a moment to think. He says, "As a retired chef, I like a little bit of everything." Ultimately, though, it's got to be pasta. Versatile, satisfying, fresh - it has to be pasta. "You can mix in beef, chicken, pork, some of anything... Throw some fresh vegetables in... Especially this time of year because they have all kinds of, you know, fruits and vegetables." With fresh produce from the food bank, he's able to whip up delicious, healthy meals for his family. He even gets some special treats for his elderly parents.

"My dad, he loves vegetables. And Krystal [the Food Bank Manager] is always seeing if I need something sweet for my mom. My mom's 78, and I once got some white chocolate that they had over there - a peppermint candy - and I went back and told Krystal that my mom said to thank her. I was like, that was so sweet, oh my gosh." This story is, of course, very on-brand for Krystal Kabela, who has been the CommUnity Food Bank Manager for five years. "Everyone over at the food bank, they're all so sweet and just wonderful. Yeah, they're awesome."

Eddie's story is a testament to the warmth and capability of community support systems. His experiences reflect the invaluable role of the food bank in not only providing essential resources but also fostering personal connections that enhance the community's well-being. Through Eddie's eyes, we see the profound impact of both giving and receiving help, reminding us of the importance of compassion and support in our shared journey.



Food Bank Manager, Krystal Kabela, at the first-annual Pantrylympics.
Photo Credit: @travis_crabb_photography

It helps a lot of people
and it makes a difference
in the lives of people. You
just, you never know who
you're helping. **Everybody
can use a little help
now and again.**

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

305 Cultivating Careers assists

3 veterinary care assists

4,004 clothing vouchers distributed

221 bus passes distributed

320 identification assists

790 housing and utilities assists

with 78 of those families obtaining new housing through the Iowa City security deposit program.

Financial Support team

Sara, Elvis the Bernedoodle, Sarah, Patience, Mohamed, and Elliott



HEALING PRAIRIE FARM

March 4, 2024 doors opened to youth in crisis

This program is still in its infancy, but has already served dozens of youth experiencing a mental health crisis, homelessness, or other crises as appropriate.

26 youth served in Crisis Stabilization Residential Services

since beginning crisis stabilization services in May 2024. 6 have been repeat clients, speaking to the complex needs of clients and the safety and comfort offered at Healing Prairie Farm.

7 day average stay at the farm

with stays ranging from 4 hours if the youth is able to stabilize and create a safety plan to return home that night to up to 10 days if there are complex family needs.

14-year-old average age of clients in crisis stabilization

with the youngest client served being 10 and the oldest being 17.

96% hospital diversion rate

and only 1 client has had to leave the farm for a higher level of care. All others were able to return home or to a safe community placement such as a family member's house or youth shelter.

7 youth who openly identify as LGBTQIA+

a population which is at increased risk of mental health struggles and suicide risk. Knowing if a client openly identifies as LGBTQIA+ helps inform our practices and make sure we are providing inclusive, affirming care.

JC'S FIRST CARE FARM

"I think the farm is a very, very unique model," says Chief Clinical Officer, Drew Martel LISW, of Healing Prairie Farm, CommUnity's newest program. "It's a very special model - human services providing compassionate care in a unique setting to youth who come from a variety of backgrounds with unique needs. We're so fortunate to have it here in Johnson County. I would encourage anyone not familiar with it to learn a little bit about it."

Healing Prairie Farm is a collaboration between CommUnity and United Action for Youth (UAY) which houses two unique programs to de-escalate and support youth in crisis all while staying on, well... a farm! While staying at the farm, youth can participate in individual and family counseling, peer support groups, therapeutic art and music recreation, care for farm animals, and more.

The care farm model allows youth to process emotions in a homelike setting. Projects following this model elsewhere have led to improved mood, reduced anxiety, and decreased likelihood of returning to a state of crisis.

"It fills a significant gap for our youth where previously hospitalization or traditional shelter care was the only option for services," says Heather Bopp, Healing Prairie Farm Program Manager. "By offering a therapeutic and supportive environment, Healing Prairie Farm not only addresses immediate needs but also helps build resilience and long-term connections for the young people we serve."

This project was made possible by funding from the Johnson County Board of Supervisors, Mental Health/Disability Services of the East Central Region, grants, and individual contributions.

Read the full interview with Drew Martel at builtbycommunity.org/opening-the-barn-doors.



HOMEGROWN, WORLD RENOWNED

We're thrilled to share that six of our CommUnity team members presented at CrisisCon 2024, a major annual conference organized by The Crisis Residential Association and the International Council for Helplines. This was a big moment for us—having more presenters from our organization than from any other is a real testament to our national expertise in crisis care and suicide prevention. Something we do not take lightly.

Ryan Dickson, Director of Crisis Helplines, and Sami Therme, Crisis Helplines Program Manager, dove into the challenges faced by remote crisis teams, especially after the expansion of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Their focus was on building supportive, connected teams to address burnout and improve retention.

Sarah Nelson, CEO, and her daughter Emma Nelson, Peer Support Specialist at Healing Prairie Farm, shared their personal journey. They highlighted the gaps in

youth mental health services and offered new insights based on their experiences, aiming to enhance how we support young people in crisis.

Adrianne Korbakes, COO, explored care farms as an innovative model to provide homelike care to youth. She provided an overview of the care farm model, a unique therapeutic approach from the Netherlands that's now making waves in the U.S. Adrianne's talk demonstrated how care farms can be integrated into crisis services, particularly for youth.

Drew Martel, LISW presented a TED Talk on a historical look at how our understanding of suicide has evolved over time. From ancient Rome to the present day, Drew explored how societal attitudes have shifted and emphasize the importance of compassion and historical context in addressing this critical issue. Drew was also the keynote speaker at the 28th Annual Wisconsin Crisis

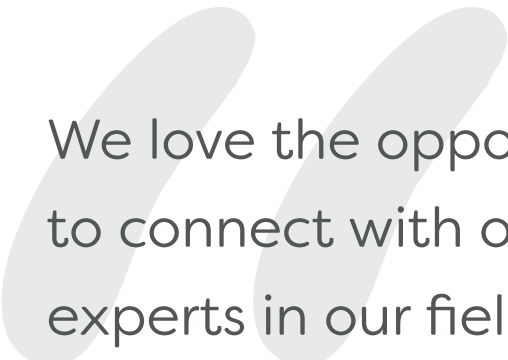
CommUnity staff at CrisisCon 2023
Kyle, Phoebe, Ryan, Sarah, Adrianne, Sami



Intervention Conference in September, where he spoke on educating on best practices in a culturally aware format that leads to superior quality mental healthcare services.

We love getting the chance to speak at events like CrisisCon 2024 and have been fortunate to be in the national spotlight as experts in our field. It's a great opportunity to learn from others and bringing those fresh ideas and insights back to our local community. Being recognized as national experts is an honor, but our real passion lies in applying that expertise right where it can make the most impact—locally.

Every conference, every presentation is a chance for us to grow and improve, and we're committed to using that knowledge to better serve the people in our community. We're excited to connect with others in the field, exchange ideas, and continue our mission of providing exceptional crisis care and support.



We love the opportunity
to connect with other
experts in our field from
across the nation and
**put that collaborative
knowledge to work
right here at home.**

- Sarah Nelson, CEO

CRISIS HELPLINE SERVICES

84,434 total helpline contacts

15,888 of which were contacts to the Iowa 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. 51,742 were contacts to the LGBTQIA+ 988 line, for which CommUnity is one of a handful of organizations across the nation contracted to answer.

386 Suicide & Crisis Helpline contacts from Iowa were attempting suicide at the time of their contact

98.64% of contacts were deemed safe by the end of the call

21.57% increase in total contacts compared to fiscal year 2023

4,300 contacts from Iowa youth under the age of 18

CRISIS RESPONSE SERVICES

24 minute, 24 second average mobile crisis response time

following the initial call. Our contract requires counselors to respond within one hour of the initial contact, but we strive to arrive on scene as soon as possible to ensure those in crisis are not alone longer than necessary.

1,709 total mobile crisis dispatches

2,314 mobile crisis follow-up contacts

94.4% mobile crisis diversion rate

from hospitals or jails. One goal of Mobile Crisis Response is to de-escalate mental health crises to divert clients from hospitals and jails. This helps clients receive appropriate support and avoids unnecessary use of public resources.

12 calls to mobile crisis resulted in placement at Healing Prairie Farm

out of 346 calls regarding a client 18 years old or under. 215 calls or 12.58% of all calls were school-related. CommUnity has a dedicated Youth Mobile Crisis Coordinator who works with schools to provide support to students and parents.

2,261 client contacts at the GuideLink Center

1,264 listed substance abuse as the primary presenting issue, and 997 listed mental health crisis as the primary presenting issue.

1,124 hours providing crisis counseling at GuideLink

provided by CommUnity Triage Counselors stationed at the GuideLink center.

29 minute 49 second average GuideLink triage contact

CommUnity staff, volunteers, family, and friends march in the Iowa City Pride Parade 2024



For every \$1 spent...

\$0.93 goes to
programs

\$0.07 goes to
administration

Revenue

\$11,413,255 Contract income

\$3,001,528 In-kind donations

\$1,336,388 Contributions

\$881,184 Grants

\$323,264 Funding allocations

\$136,278 Other

Expenses

\$7,177,827 Crisis Helpline Services

\$1,041,323 Food Bank

\$1,384,825 Mobile Crisis Response

\$768,473 Administration

\$716,747 Financial Support

\$728,857 GuideLink Triage

\$549,612 Healing Prairie Farm

\$72,612 Other

CELEBRATE & REFLECT

As we wrap up another fiscal year, we're thrilled to share our annual report with our dedicated donors, volunteers, clients, and team members. This report is more than just a snapshot of our financials and data from fiscal year 2024 – it's a testament to the profound impact your support has had on our community. For us, annual report season is a blend of celebration and reflection. It's a big deal for us, and we're eager to show you how we've been putting your dollars, time, and trust to work in our community.

The financial statements you see here offer a glimpse into our fiscal health, but they can sometimes be misleading without proper context. For example, you might notice that CommUnity's budget for this year was over \$17 million. At first glance, this figure might suggest that all of our programs are thriving. However, the reality is more nuanced.

While programs like Crisis Helpline Services and Mobile Crisis Response are fully funded by contracts and grants, many of our programs, by the nature of the program, will never be funded in these ways. CommUnity Food Bank, Financial Support, and Healing Prairie Farm all rely nearly entirely on individual contributions to continue operating—and the need for these programs is only rising.

It's a common misconception that food insecurity hit a peak during the pandemic and has since returned to "normal." The truth, however, is that inflation over the past few years has had a one-two punch effect on the food bank's ability to provide each family in need of assistance with adequate food for their household. Groceries are less affordable than they used to be, which means 1) more people are in need of assistance and 2) donating food is less cost effective so in-kind

*Unaudited financials

donations, while rising, are struggling to keep up with demand. In fact, some families who previously donated have found themselves visiting the food bank for the first time this year.

The food bank, financial support, and the farm each provide consumable goods and services—which are historically not funded by ongoing grants or contracts. Which is why ongoing individual contributions at a rate that meets the rising demand is the *only* way for these programs to continue providing support. Your contributions help us adapt to changes and continue providing essential services to those who need them.

In fiscal year 2025, we are striving to not only provide support to those in need, but to provide enough to *meet* the needs of our neighbors in crisis. This past year, families visiting the food bank received an average of 37 pounds of food per visit. To put that into perspective, a full grocery cart weighs about 200 pounds. We are striving to increase the amount, quality, and nutritional value of food on our shelves, and we need your help to do it.

While our financials provide important information, they don't tell the whole story. The numbers alone cannot capture the essence of the work we do together or the lives we touch in our community. Every dollar you contribute, every hour you volunteer, and every food or hygiene item you donate plays a vital role in supporting our mission.

Thank you for standing with our neighbors and for making a meaningful impact in our community. Together, we can continue to address needs, adapt to challenges, and provide support to those who need it most.



Hills Bank sponsors Strike Out Hunger 2024

DONORS, GRANTORS, & SPONSORS

We are beyond grateful to have such overwhelming community support for our programs. Because we have such a wonderful donor base, it adds significant expense to our annual report printing costs to print a full list of our supporters. In order to consider the environmental impact and steward your dollars well, we have published our full donor list digitally once again this year!

We began publishing our donor list digitally last year as it allows us to ensure donors are recognized at every level. It also ensures that donor dollars go towards

providing support to our neighbors facing crisis instead of being spent on printing.

Last year, we saved about \$1,175 by publishing the listing online. Those savings could feed about 29 local families for a week.



Scan the QR code or visit builtbycommunity.org/thankyou24 to see the full list of donors, grantors, and sponsors.

Just a few

of the many wonderful in-kind donations we received this year...

1 saddle for youth at the farm to ride horses

10 shopping carts to keep the food bank running smoothly

Many new furniture items to furnish the living rooms and common areas at Healing Prairie Farm

1 horse, 2 baby goats, and 4 chicks for the farm

Iowa SWARM Football players help unload food donations at the food bank





YOUR SUPPORT FUELS US

As we close out another incredible year at CommUnity, we want to give a huge shoutout to YOU.

Your support has made a real difference in the lives of our neighbors. From expanding our youth services to meeting the record demand at our food bank, we've accomplished so much together.

But here's the thing: the need for help never takes a break, and neither can we.

This year, will you consider becoming a Mission Circle donor? By making a monthly donation, you help us smooth out the ups and downs of funding throughout the year. Your monthly gift will ensure that we can keep our programs running strong, no matter what.

It's a simple way to make a big impact. *Your consistent support means we can plan better, respond faster, and make sure no one in crisis falls through the cracks.*

Thank you for being such a crucial part of our mission. We couldn't do it without you!

Elliott Tucker, Financial Support Coordinator, dressed as a CommUnicorn*

*CommUnicorn: a uniquely talented person who recognizes when people need help and takes a step to learn how to help those people. Like you!

Learn more about CommUnicorns at bit.ly/communicorns



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Iowa City, Iowa 52240

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