



In November we give thanks for all we have including food. This issue of the Social Justice newsletter centers on how St. Cecilia's parishioners help our community through our monthly food collection for MICA and Food at First.



The World Food Prize was recently held in Des Moines . The purpose of the event was to get countries of the world to join the fight against hunger at home and abroad. Around 600 researchers, food pantry organizers, students, and charity leaders from across Iowa and the world attended. Members of **St. Cecilia's Social Justice Committee** attended the gathering.

Recently released demographic statistics culled from the **Feeding America Report** were presented. Results show that Iowa has approximately 530,000 food pantry users. A profile of users follows: 69% White, 17% Black, 7% Hispanic; 31% under the age of 18, 11% over the age of 60; 79% High School Graduates or General Equivalency Diploma; 23% have no health insurance; and 65% have incomes at or below the Federal poverty level of \$23,850 for a family of four.

Hungry children experience anxiety and stress and puts them at a greater risk for negative behavior which affects their development and academic achievements. Hungry families can lead to families living in chaos and greater risk of becoming dysfunctional.

Bishop Richard Pates, Bishop of the Diocese of Des Moines and Chair of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on International Justice and Peace, was a keynote speaker. His travels have shown how hunger and conflict are related in a perpetual cycle. Bishop Pates said,

"Food security and the relationship between food and peace are moral issues."

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This issue of the SJ newsletter is dedicated to **Patty Rua** who passed away in October. She was our mentor and Social Justice leader for decades at Saint Cecilia's. We miss you, Patty, and thank you for all you did for those in need in our community.

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The Social Justice Committee meets on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Sunroom. Everyone is welcome to attend.

The FOOD AT FIRST *program currently consists of two parts:*

- a free meal program,
- and a perishable food pantry.



The **free meal program** serves seven meals per week at First United Methodist Church in downtown Ames and is open to anyone who is hungry, no questions asked. Almost everything that is served would otherwise have been thrown away by local grocery stores and food services, but has been turned into wonderful, tasty meals!

The **perishable food pantry** takes the thousands of pounds of great food that are left over (AFTER taking what we need for use in the meals), and gives it away to folks who need it. Distribution happens at the "Free Market", which now has two locations: 116 Washington Ave. and 3626 Ontario St. (Trinity Reformed Church). Because the food is perishable, it is collected and given away on the same day – distributions are 5:00 to 5:30 PM every Monday and Thursday at the Washington Ave. location, and 10:00 to 10:30 AM on Saturday at BOTH locations.

St. Cecilia Parish volunteers shop for, prepare, serve and clean up each week for the Tuesday night meals. Over the past year, nine volunteers from St. Cecilia's spent about 136 hours grocery shopping; 15 chefs prepared and cooked meals for a total of around 448 hours; 46 volunteers served and provided clean up (that totaled 648 hours). In addition, there are 34 volunteers on our substitute list. A total of 70 St. Cecilia volunteers provided an estimated 1,232 service hours to provide 3,396 meals. On average, 75 guests are served at each meal. Much parishioner time and talent is given to those in need at Food at First!

Have you ever wondered how much food and supplies you, as members of the



St. Cecilia's family, contribute the 3rd weekend of the month to those in need in our community? **A LOT** as you'll see below!! (numbers are the weight of the monthly collection from Jan.-Oct. 2014)

January	423#	June	360#	TOTAL 4,157 lbs.
February	308#	July	337#	
March	505#	August	349#	Thank you for
April	454#	September	373#	all you do!
May	414#	October	634#	