

FEBRUARY 2025



THE DREAM



Celebrating Helen Miller's Inspiring Memoir, *I Don't Swim*

We closed out **Black History Month** in the best way possible—by celebrating the launch of Helen Miller's powerful new memoir, *I Don't Swim*!

Last Friday, February 28th, we had the distinct honor of hosting this special event. We were joined by an incredible crowd, shared great food, and most importantly, heard inspiring words from the author herself.

Helen's story—**shaped by the Civil Rights Movement** and the ongoing fight for equality—is a testament to resilience, activism, and hope. Her journey reminds us of the power of standing up for justice and making a lasting impact in our communities.

Congratulations, Helen, on this incredible achievement!

SCAN TO BUY A COPY



UPCOMING EVENTS

Sip for the Future

Thursday, April 10th, 2025

6:00 pm

Urban Dreams Community Center
1615 2nd Ave. Des Moines, IA 50314

SCAN TO PURCHASE TABLES/TICKETS



Mural Unveiling

Time & Date TBD

Urban Dreams Community Center
1615 2nd Ave. Des Moines, IA 50314

Stay tuned for more information!

FEBRUARY 2025



EXPANDING HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS WITH ISU EXTENSION AND OUTREACH

We're excited to announce a new partnership with **ISU Extension and Outreach – Healthy Food Access** to enhance the way we serve our community!

Together, we will:

- **Increase client choice**
- **Promote Additional Resources**
- **Market Healthy Foods**
- **Create an Inclusive Pantry**
- **Structure the Food Pantry**
- **Increase Healthy Donations**



By working with ISU Extension and Outreach, we're taking meaningful steps to improve food security and overall well-being in our community.

Stay tuned for more updates as we roll out these initiatives!

IZA AH NAMED IN IOWA 500 MOST INFLUENTIAL BUSINESS LEADERS

We are thrilled to announce that Izaah Knox, our Executive Director, has been recognized in Corridor Media Group's inaugural **2025 Iowa 500: Most Influential Business Leaders!**

This prestigious honor highlights their exceptional leadership and dedication to our mission. Congratulations, Izaah!

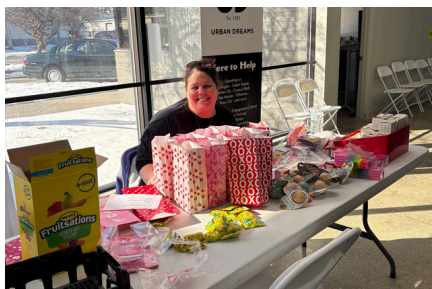


NEBRASKA FURNITURE MART VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We were honored to welcome volunteers from **Nebraska Furniture Mart** as they helped prepare for our Sweetheart Dance, assembling goodie bags, crafts, games, and decorations. Their hard work made a huge impact!

Beyond their time, they generously donated **\$1,000** to support our mission. They have been a valued partner since we moved into our current building, even providing a much-needed refrigerator.

We're grateful for their continued support and look forward to more collaborations. **Thank you, Nebraska Furniture Mart, for making a difference!**



VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH: ALYSON NELSON

We're thrilled to recognize **Alyson** from Nebraska Furniture Mart as our **Volunteer of the Month**! Alyson's dedication and enthusiasm shined as she helped prepare for our Sweetheart Dance, ensuring every detail—from goodie bags to decorations—was perfect.

Thank you, Alyson, for your kindness and dedication—you make a difference!



JOIN OUR TEAM: AMERICORPS OPPORTUNITY AT URBAN DREAMS!

Are you passionate about making a difference in your community?

Urban Dreams is looking for a dedicated individual to join us through **AmeriCorps**! This is a unique opportunity to gain valuable experience while serving the community and supporting our mission.

As an AmeriCorps member at Urban Dreams, you'll have the chance to work directly with our programs, help expand community resources, and make a lasting impact. If you're ready to be part of meaningful change, apply today!

WHAT IS IT?

You'll experience the following:



Gain professional skills and development.



Start building your professional network.



Give back to your community in a meaningful way.



Members receive a living allowance and education award for their service.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Scan the QR code or use the link above this newsletter to apply.
2. Fill out the form and enter **Urban Dreams** for the desired host site field.
3. Select the **Quarter Time** for the slot type.
4. Email your **resume** and **1 -2 sentences** about why you are interested in applying to Erin at erin.hardigree@hhs.io wa.gov

SCAN TO APPLY



QUESTIONS?

Visit <https://hhs.iowa.gov/rural-health/iowa-community-corps> or contact **Erin Hardigree** at erin.hardigree@hhs.iowa.gov.

FEBRUARY FOOD PANTRY STATISTICS



23,332

TOTAL POUNDS OF FOOD



1,928

TOTAL PANTRY VISITS



3

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Food Pantry Hours

Monday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Tuesday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Wednesday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Thursday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Our Partners

Atlantic Bottling Co.	Kum & Go
Casey’s	Kwik Star
Centro	Malo
Costco	Pizza Hut
Dollar General	Price Chopper
Food Bank of Iowa	Sam’s Club
Garbazo	Whole Foods
Gilroy’s	World Market
Hiland Bakery	

2023 TO 2024 COMPARISON

Thanks to our amazing community partners, we’ve seen incredible growth in our food pantry’s reach! You can see the comparison of in-person visits and total pounds of food donated below.

2023

Over **10,000** in-person visits
& **77,876** lbs of food donated

2024

Over **22,000** in-person visits
& **270,823** lbs of food donated

158%

INCREASE OF IN-PERSON VISITS

248%

INCREASE OF FOOD DONATED

URBAN DREAMS COMMUNITY CENTER

Rent the Urban Dreams Community Center!

Our community center has been buzzing with activity over the past few months, serving as a hub for connection and celebration. It's home to the Riverbend Neighborhood Association's monthly meetings, weekly AA gatherings, and a variety of other events. The space is perfect for hosting baby showers, holiday parties, corporate events, and more.

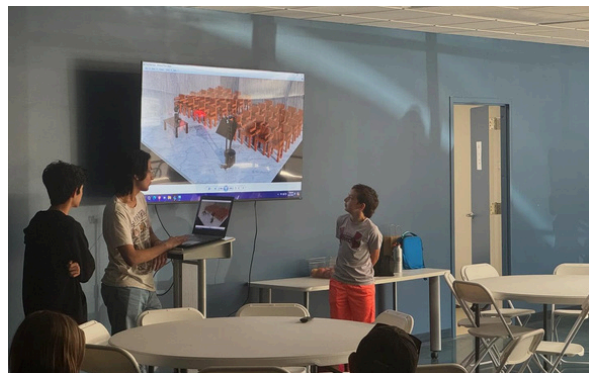
Amenities include:

- Capacity for 275 people standing
- Up to 15 round tables seating 8 people at each table
- Three mounted TVs and one mobile TV
- High-speed WiFi
- Convenient kitchenette
- Toucan video conference system



SCAN TO RESERVE

To reserve the space, please scan the QR code or follow the link provided above this newsletter. To use the community center, a minimum donation of \$10 an hour is suggested. Your generous support helps maintain and improve the facility.



Employee of the Month!

This month's Employee of the Month has been awarded to Jackie McGilberry!

Jackie brings unwavering positivity and kindness to every aspect of her role at Urban Dreams, especially in the food pantry. She plays a crucial part in ensuring that our community members always feel supported and cared for. Jackie's warm spirit and dedication have earned her consistent praise from those she serves.

We are incredibly grateful for her hard work and the joy she brings to the team. Thank you, Jackie!



MISSION STATEMENT

Urban Dreams advocates for **all members of the community**, breaking down barriers to success and collaborating with key stakeholders to overcome obstacles and uplift **underserved** and **underrepresented** people.

VISION STATEMENT

Our Urban Dream is to create **equal opportunity and access** for people to pursue their Dreams.

FOLLOW US TO STAY UP TO DATE ON CURRENT EVENTS



Urban Dreams - Iowa
Facebook



urban.dreams.dsm
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Snapchat



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Urban-Dreams
LinkedIn



www.urbandreams.org
Website



SCAN OUR LINK TREE TO
ADD US ON SOCIALS