

Taking Action in Columbus Junction

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

Through the resources of a Horizons Grant, groups of Columbus Junction citizens have been meeting over the past several weeks to investigate poverty in the community, and come up with action plans to help alleviate this situation.

The grant provided funding for four separate groups to meet for five weeks. The groups looked at poverty issues in the Columbus Junction area, analyzing what creates poverty and what can be done to eliminate or at least lessen poverty.

The groups came together last Thursday to compare their findings, and attempt to put together an action plan to fight poverty. It was the general consensus of all four circles that a number of items leads individuals to poverty: lack of education, lack of job opportunities, addiction to drug and alcohol, lack of knowledge of services available from the city, county and state, and background or family environment.

After presenting the four findings, each circle listed their action plans to address these issues on posters. The attendees then marked each action plan that they felt was feasible to accomplish. From this exercise four plans were derived: the creation of a resource directory listing all of the services available in the area for those in poverty situations; design-



Circle members mark their choice of action plans to help alleviate poverty in the area. Photo by Frieda Sojka

ing a drug and alcohol program that will be understood and accepted by our youth; addressing safety issues in town such as grants for additional

lighting; and finding ways to encourage our youth to become involved in the community, thus buying in and staying here after graduation.

Committees were chosen to address each of the four action plans. More will be reported in the Gazette as these committees move forward.

A fabulous response to clothing drive

By John Carpenter
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The generosity of the Columbus Community citizens is something that I noticed when I first moved here 35 years ago, and still impresses me today. The Gazette, with the help of St. Joseph's Confirmation class and the area Girl Scouts, undertook a second annual clothing drive for area families. I expected a few bags to be left off at the office on Family Night, but never did I imagine the response we would receive. Two car loads of clothing were received last week, with an additional car load coming from parishioners of St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

The clothes have been delivered to St. Joseph's, and the Confirmation class spent last Sunday morning sorting the clothing by type. The clothes are now on tables in the Church basement, and are available for any individual or family to pick up. The Church will be open from Noon to 8:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, up to and including Christmas, for you to sort through and take whatever your family can use. If you cannot make it on these days, give John Carpenter a call at the Gazette, 319-728-2413 to arrange a time.

Thank You to everyone.



St. Joseph's Confirmation students sort clothes last Sunday morning.

United Fund kicks off 2009 Fund Drive

United Fund of Columbus Junction is conducting its annual fund drive. Last year the organization reached its goal of collecting \$20,000 for local non-profits. Fire protection, education, sports, childcare, first aid, youth activities, and recreation are some of the interest areas for the United Fund of Columbus Junction.

This year the board of directors of United Fund of Columbus Junction distributed money to 20 groups. Recipients were Colonel's Kids Day Care, Columbus Action, Columbus City Improvement Club, Columbus Community Swimming Pool, Columbus Senior Center, Columbus Softball Association, Conesville Fire Department, Friends of Columbus Junction Library, Letts Public Li-

brary, Letts Volunteer Fire Department, Letts/Columbus Girl Scouts, Louisa County Area Vietnam Veterans, Louisa County Fair, Louisa County Responders, Wapello United Way, Washington Community Chest, Winfield Fire Department, Columbus Junction Community Development Center, Louisa County Extension, and Home Caring Services.

The United Fund of Columbus Junction was originally created to help service organizations fund the valuable work they do for children, families and seniors in the Columbus Junction area. The United Fund serves as a central charitable fund that individuals and businesses donate to thus creating a pool of money that is distributed annually. The majority of donations are made through payroll

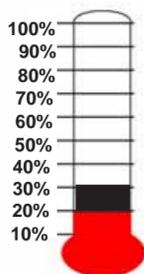
deductions, with Tyson employees making up the largest donor group. Money goes primarily to Columbus Junction groups however; funds are also distributed to nearby communities where United Fund of Columbus Junction contributors live and work. Supporting groups in donors' home communities is a top priority.

Donations to the United Fund of Columbus Junction in any amount are immensely appreciated. Tax-deductible donations can be mailed to United Fund of Columbus Junction, PO Box 263, Columbus Junction, IA 52738 or dropped off at the Community Development Center at Civic Center. Contributors to the 2009 fund drive will receive a colorful window cling recognizing their generosity.

2009 United Fund Goal - \$20,000

Your contribution provides:

- Fire Protection • Education
- Childcare • First Aid • Books
- Youth Activities • Recreation
- Wellness



Community Action makes appliances available for flood damaged homes

Community Action of Southeast Iowa has partnered with Interstate Power and Light Company (IPL), an Alliant Energy company to replace appliances in flooded homes in Louisa and Des Moines County.

Applicants must live in Louisa or Des Moines County, be a flood victim, have an active Alliant Energy electric account, and meet an income guideline to qualify. To qualify, gross

income from all adult household members must be verified and can't exceed the amounts below:

Household size and maximum monthly amount: 1-\$2,166.68, 2 - \$2,916.68, 3-\$3,666.68, 4-\$4,416.68

For each additional household member add \$750.00.

Documentation from Green Shirt Assessment, Approved Long Term Recovery Committee Form, Insurance Settlement Letter, SDA Loan Acceptance Letter, Accepted Jumpstart Application, or Federal Buyout Program Letter.

Approved households may receive a refrigerator, freezer, water heater, washer, or dryer, or may receive reimbursement for previous

purchase. All appliances must be Energy Star rated and electrical. Dryers must have a moisture control and water heaters must be rated at EF .93 to qualify for reimbursement.

To make an appointment for this program in Louisa County call (319) 728-2314 or in Des Moines County call (319) 753-2893. Funds will only be available for a limited time and may be exhausted at any time.

Briefly -

The Columbus Community to be featured on IPTV

The Columbus Community will be featured on IPTV's program, "The Iowa Journal," which will detail various flood stories. The program is scheduled for 9:00 p.m. on December 11th, and will be shown again on December 12th at 6:30 p.m., December 18th at 8:30 p.m., December 26th at 6:30 p.m. and on January 29th at 8:30 p.m. The area IPTV station is Channel 12.

City Council to meet tonight

The City of Columbus Junction will hold its regular Council meeting today, Wednesday, December 10, 2008, at 5:30 p.m., at the New Civic Center/ City Hall.

Christmas exhibits at Columbus Junction Museum

Please visit the museum to see the special Christmas exhibits: postcards, quilts, sleighs, and Santas. Open: Saturday from 9 a.m. - Noon. Sunday from 1-4 p.m. Raffle for Christmas items and books on Saturdays, December 13th and 20th, and on Sundays, December 14th and 21st. Drawing will take place the 21st and winners will be contacted by phone by December 23rd. Also: Columbus School photos still needing names for pupils.

Decategorization Board to meet

The Quad City Decategorization Board will meet today, Wednesday, December 10, 2008, from 10-11 a.m., in the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, 610 N. 4th, Burlington, Iowa.

Free coffee at Meal Site

The regular Second Thursday Free Coffee will be next Thursday, Dec. 11th, at the meal site in the City Hall at Columbus City. This has been organized for the community and everyone is welcome. Please join us for a free cup of coffee and a good time of visiting from 8:00 to 10:30.

High School Horticulture class to sell poinsettias

The Columbus High School's Horticulture class will be selling poinsettias again this year. The sale will run Wednesday, December 10 through Friday, December 12, 3:30-5:30, and Monday, December 15 and Tuesday, December 16, 3:30-5:30. Several colors are available and the cost is \$7 each. Questions, call Cheryl Curtis at the high school: 728-2231.

JEL to hold year-end party

The public is invited to attend the year-end wrap-up and holiday party for Louisa County Clean Air Now and Wapello JEL. The event will be held on Friday, December 12 from 5:30 to 6:15 at the Briggs Center in Wapello. A presentation on both groups' history and purpose will be made with an opportunity for the public to ask questions and enjoy social time with members. Please contact Kaitlyn Wintermeyer with ISU Extension at 319-523-2371 or kmwinter@iastate.edu for more information.

Conservation Board to meet

The Louisa County Conservation Board will hold a work session on Monday, December 8, at 6:00 p.m., at the Louisa County Conservation Board Office. The Board will also hold a regular meeting on Wednesday, December 10, 2008, at 7:00 p.m., at the Louisa County Conservation Board Office.

Christmas program at Letts Bible Church

Letts Bible Church will present the Christmas program "I Wonder About Christmas" on Sunday evening, December 14 at 6:00 PM. A Candle Light Service will follow. There will be a refreshment time after the service and Christmas sacks will be handed out to all children in attendance. Everyone is invited to attend this program. For more information, one of these numbers can be contacted - 726-5108 or 729-5042.

Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet on December 11th at 11:30 a.m., at the home of Dick and Anna Fullerton in New London, for a potluck dinner.

Story Hour at the Library

Story Hour at the Library: Tuesday, December 16, after school to 5 p.m. For kids grades K-3rd. Christmas stories, crafts, music and BINGO.

United Methodist Bell Choir to present a Christmas Concert

The public is invited to a Christmas Concert entitled "The Spirit of Christmas" on Saturday, December 20, 2008, 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the Columbus Junction United Methodist Church featuring the CJ United Methodist Church Bell Choir Quartet, Tara Crawford (Flute), Melanie DeVore (Acoustic Guitar and Vocals), Marsha Gerot (Piano), The Muscatine Symphony Orchestra Brass Quartet, Jill Sterner (Vocals), Aurelia Torres (Vocals), and the CJ United Methodist Church Praise Band. Come enjoy your favorite Christmas songs performed in the beautiful candle-lit sanctuary and enjoy fellowship and refreshments following the concert. The concert is free to the public. A free-will offering basket will be placed in the entrance with the proceeds benefiting the CJUMC Music Department.

Fair dates changed

Due to a scheduling change the dates for next summer's Louisa County Fair will be July 27th through August 1, 2009.