



Changing lives locally and around the world. Shop. Donate. Volunteer.

## Stories From the Heart

The Pitman family is a monthly support to our Monday retail rotation in the book department. Together, Becky and her four children pull books to make room for new inventory. On a recent evening at home, Becky and her husband laughed imagining Mira or Emmie, the two youngest, being interviewed for college... "How long have you been volunteering at Crowded Closet?" Their answer, "Since I was born!"



Emmie Pitman volunteering in books.

## Crowded Closet proudly supports Mennonite Central Committee

MCC is a global, nonprofit organization that strives to share God's love and compassion for all through relief, development and peace. MCC is an Anabaptist organization striving to make peace a part of everything they do. When responding to disasters MCC works with local groups to distribute resources in ways that minimize conflict. In development work they plan with community and church groups to make sure the projects meet their needs. MCC advocates for policies that will lead to a more peaceful world.



Check us out on:



## What people are saying!

Michelle Armster, Executive Director of **Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Central States Region**, recognizes Crowded Closet for the contribution of \$240,000 to MCC in 2017. The funds provide direct support to extend a hand when disaster strikes, support innovative solutions to poverty, and invest in peacebuilding. MCC works with 515 partners in 56 countries with 767 projects worldwide. MCC congratulates Crowded Closet on the 40-year anniversary.

Crowded Closet was selected as one of the 10 Best Thrift Shops in Iowa by **Best Things Iowa**, which highlights great local organizations and initiatives. The writer highlights the ever changing inventory at Crowded Closet that provides new surprises every time you walk through the door. The massive number of items to choose from, clean space to shop in, and the abundance of special treasures make Crowded Closet a top thrift pick.

Source: <https://bestthingsia.com/thrift-shops/>

The blogger of **Meemaw Eats** highlighted Crowded Closet in a recent enthusiastic post. She says, "This Mennonite sponsored thrift store is staffed by volunteers with mile-wide smiles and 'Iowa Nice' personalities." She goes on to give readers a tour of the shop with pictures and comments about the different areas of the shop. She finishes her blog by talking about Margaret Miller, volunteer cashier, who is a friend of the family.

Source: <http://www.meemaweats.com/meemaws-story/>

The **Iowa City Press-Citizen** featured, Tom Schulein, a new Crowded Closet volunteer who has joined the sewing machine team with Ed D. Miller. Tom has been a long time shopper at Crowded Closet where he loves finding "interesting stuff" like the 1928 Singer that he now displays in his home. The feature article explains more about his hobbies.

Source: Hakes, Dick. "Retired UI professor's latest hobby: Collecting old sewing machines." *Iowa City Press-Citizen*. Feb 1, 2018.



Mark your calendars for 40th Anniversary Special Events:

May 21 – Association Meeting at West Union Mennonite Church  
6pm Board Meeting; 7pm Association Meeting  
June 19-22 – Crowded Closet Birthday Party during business hours  
November 5 – Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

1213 Gilbert Court, Iowa City, IA 52240 319-337-5924 [www.crowdedcloset.org](http://www.crowdedcloset.org)





## Danny Reflects on IVEP Experience

What single word best describes this year for you? Serve.

Back in my country, I would sometimes complain. But here, when I see the volunteers, I feel like they just love to do anything. They never complain. The enthusiasm, the spirit of serving - that is something that I have seen here. I see Margaret Miller, and I think, "She never stops!" When I see the energy of volunteers, how can I be tired? How can I stop working? That makes me feel that when people are active, they don't get tired. They have enthusiasm and spirit and feel better in their body and mind. When people stop working, they feel tired. I think that volunteering is a blessing to the world. That is what I have learned here.

Danny Soren, International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP) participant, serves through MCC at Crowded Closet until July 11.

## Volunteer Spotlight



"The fastest way you're going to run me off, is if you pay me." This is the response that Jerome gave when asked about his Crowded Closet beginnings. Ask Jerome about his East Coast adventures and his reputation as a mover. He moved to 6 different states during his first 6 years of marriage. Lucky for Crowded Closet, Jerome has stayed with us for years, serving several days each week in the furniture department.

An Iowa native, a veteran with the Navy, and a retired electrician from the area, Jerome started his volunteering journey with Crowded Closet around 5 years ago. His role at Crowded Closet enables him to remain flexible in his daily life, something that is important to him. Jerome's sense of humor, coupled with his positivity and greatly timed wit has made him a joyous presence in the shop. We are grateful that Jerome "keeps off the street and out of jail" at Crowded Closet.

## Crowded Closet Staff & Board

Carey Miller, Executive Director  
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Betsy Slabaugh, Retail Manager  
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Josh Johnson, Processing Manager  
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Lindsey Colbert, Workroom Supervisor

Danny Soren, IVEP Volunteer

Terri Daugherty, Saturday Manager

"Em" Emily Halbrooks, Saturday Manager

Emily Gaulke, Pre-sort Assistant

Brandon Burke, Janitor

### Board of Directors:

Roger Farmer, Board Chair  
Bob Cumings, Vice Chair  
Carol Kuhns, Secretary  
Galen Graber, Treasurer  
Twila Hochstedler  
Larry Pickard  
Sherry Schrock

## Silent Auction Features Valuable Donations

Silent Auction started at Crowded Closet in 2011. All items from the Specialties department are evaluated for suitability on Silent Auction. Some items chosen for Silent Auction feature artists like P. Buckley Moss, Grant Wood, or local interests, such as the Hawkeyes. Other items are chosen for their rarity or high demand. Gold and silver items are popular for their resale value. Recent highest selling items have been a loom, a car, and a Viking sewing machine. Items that do not get any bids are taken off, given a price tag, and sold on the retail floor.

To bid, any customer can get a bidding number. Once an item has hit \$100, it must be bid up by \$5 increments. When the bidding has stopped for six days, the item goes to the highest bidder.

Check for highlights about Silent Auction on Facebook, or come in and bid on something!



Crowded Closet celebrated Volunteer Appreciation Week in April with week-long healthy snacks served, a pedometer challenge, and a check-up from our Crowded Closet doctor, Dr. Malerie Plank. The ministry of Crowded Closet is possible because of the support by hundreds of dedicated volunteers!

## Groups Welcome

The participation of service groups connects new volunteers to the ministry of Crowded Closet and helps accomplish essential shop operations. Groups serve regularly from the community and association churches to provide extra support to processing donations and improving retail areas. A service activity at Crowded Closet is a fun way for group members to spend time together while also accomplishing valuable service. Contact Christine to schedule your group. After hours and weekend dates available.



Clockwise from right: East Union Mennonite Church youth, First Mennonite Church youth, Kalona Mennonite Church girl's club, Lone Tree High School 9th graders