



# Crowded Closet

## MCC THRIFT SHOP



## 2023 Year in Review

The sincere dedication of staff and volunteers and faithful donors and customers made 2023 prosperous! We offer these words of appreciation, encouragement and challenge from outgoing board president, David Heusinkveld:

*“Crowded Closet changes whoever is connected to it, making it one of the best examples of a Christian community I have ever experienced. God is clearly in this place, and I want to be a part of it as long as I can. I hope you do too!”*

Consider how you will join in this ministry for 2024. We’re excited for where God will lead!



### New leadership

We are grateful for caring servant leaders. In November, Susan Scott (*center*) began as Director and current board members (and volunteers!), Bill Benson and Ron Schieffer (*left, right*) move into board leadership roles as Co-Chairs.



### Generous giving

Because of our generous donors, we can share resources to local families in need. Vouchers distributed by local agencies—Catholic Worker, CommUnity and DVIP—allow individuals to shop at the Closet with dignity, selecting quality items they need.



### Record setting sales

Women’s clothing and Specialties departments led the way in sales. Our volunteers’ careful evaluation, processing and pricing yields the most value for each item donated.



### Abundant donations

During the winter months, the flow of donations is typically slower, but already the amount flowing in exceeds expectations.

## Director’s Corner

As the newly hired Crowded Closet Director, I have many first impressions and grateful thoughts. This organization was thriving and successful prior to my arrival, due to our talented, dedicated, and skilled employees and volunteers. We would not be able to fulfill our mission of caring for our neighbors—locally and globally—without this tremendous team effort. My hopes and goals for 2024 include building on our current success, retaining our faithful team members, and continuing to be a leader in promoting fair trade and a sustainable lifestyle. I look forward to the contributions and ideas from our staff as we strive to provide positive experiences for shoppers and donors.

Helping the planet and its people are the words MCC Thrift uses to very simply describe our intentions. This is a place to work, volunteer, shop, donate, and be part of a community of peace. We welcome your engagement in any of these ways as we move forward in this new calendar year!

Susan



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

## Company is coming!

Roll out the red carpet—our thrift family is coming to visit and it’s time to get the house ready! Colleagues from our sister shops across the country will roll into Iowa City for Walk the Talk, the annual conference for MCC Thrift Shop personnel April 24-25, to share experiences and learn new ideas for managing thrift shops.

We need your help to welcome new friends and get the shop ready to shine! Watch for upcoming special projects and tasks, and contact Christine Maust Beachy to volunteer your help. Call 319-337-5924 or email [crowdedcloset.volunteer@gmail.com](mailto:crowdedcloset.volunteer@gmail.com).



## Filled with wonder, hopes for the future

“We couldn’t have imagined.” Crowded Closet founders, Marlene Leichy and Eleanor Yoder are filled with wonder when they reflect on the Closet’s path from humble beginnings in 1978 until today. They recall petitioning church members to promise material donations because of the real concern there would not be enough items to sell. Board members pledged personal monetary donations to make sure bills were paid. Each founder spent countless hours at the shop to guide the first volunteers and keep the newly incorporated nonprofit organized. They smile as they recall record setting daily sales of \$100, and then \$200. Today, expansion storage bulges with abundant donations that will fuel continued winter growth. In 2023, average daily sales hit a new record high of \$7,243.



(Left to right) Founders Marlene Leichy and Eleanor Yoder with current director, Susan Scott.

The founders recall courageous conflict and messy moments when the constituents struggled to find the path forward together. Their faithful decision making made way for growth of revenue and growth of a dedicated service community. With so much change at the Closet, what values do they hope always stay the same? “Service,” one quickly replies. Another hopes that each person would feel Christ when they come to Crowded Closet. Marlene, Eleanor, and others planted seeds of a thrift business that would impact the world with generous giving, and seeds of love and friendship that have grown a compassionate service community that changes lives.