



Crowded Closet MCC THRIFT SHOP

January 2018 **Newsletter**



Crowded Closet Celebrates 40th Anniversary

In 2018, Crowded Closet celebrates 40 years of God’s faithfulness, 40 years of friendships, 40 years of serving the community and supporting the work of Mennonite Central Committee. Since 1978, the mission has been unchanged: to share God’s love and compassion by supporting Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and local relief agencies through the sale of donated goods. The mission of Crowded Closet has brought together churches and community members to form a wide, diverse Crowded Closet community. The cloud of witnesses who have guided the growth of Crowded Closet over the years have together created a thriving non-profit which has sent over 7.5 million dollars to MCC and a ministry with a heart of compassion. Crowded Closet engages servant hearts and generous spirits, and we are open to God’s leading in this year of celebration and beyond.



Crowded Closet's first location (left) and current location (right).



Crowded Closet's founders in 1978 (left) and current staff (right).



Crowded Closet morning prayer circle over the years.

Mark your calendars for 40th Anniversary Special Events:

- March 24th – Open House; 4:30-6:30 at Crowded Closet, followed by Association Meeting at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City
- June 19-22 – Crowded Closet Birthday Party week-long during business hours
- November 5 – Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

Fabric Donations Provide Warmth

Crowded Closet helps Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) share hope and comfort in the form of handmade comforters. Last year, MCC shipped 51,062 blankets to Jordan, Ethiopia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), Ukraine, Serbia, Iraq, Canada, the U.S. and more. A handmade comforter provides not only warmth but also a tangible message to people that their needs are not forgotten. Crowded Closet donates fabric to churches for MCC sewing projects. Crowded Closet is pleased to support the sewing ministries of churches as they create the comforters that provide warmth around the world.



Lois and Malerie Plank hold a quilt donated to Crowded Closet by the sewing group at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church. The quilt was a gift to the shop to show appreciation for the fabric provided by CC for MCC comforters.

Crowded Closet Staff & Board

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

Danny Soren, IVEP Volunteer

“Em” Emily Halbrooks, Saturday Manager

Nan Baron, Pre-sort Assistant

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



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Stories From the Heart

Crowded Closet touches many lives, and even led a family to find a church home with a local Mennonite congregation. A young couple, new to Iowa City, visited First Mennonite a year or so ago. They each had grown up in different parts of the country and attended a number of different churches over the years. They met, became teachers and eventually moved to Iowa City for graduate studies. Here they discovered Crowded Closet where they like to shop and recall meeting people who were so friendly. At Crowded Closet they learned about Mennonites and discovered First Mennonite Church. From connections formed at Crowded Closet, they began visiting First Mennonite and now attend regularly.

Mennonite Historical Society of Iowa celebrates Crowded Closet

The January newsletter of the Mennonite Historical Society of Iowa will feature Crowded Closet in honor of the shop's 40th anniversary. The historical society publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Reflections*, about various topics in Iowa Mennonite history. The six page newsletter features history, stories, and pictures from the shop. Copies of the newsletter are available in the staff office for those interested.

Half Price Thursdays

The most exciting day of the month at Crowded Closet is the 3rd Thursday. It begins at 9:30 a.m. with more than 50 people waiting for our doors to open. Thrift items are 50% off (yes that includes pink tags!) The gift shop is 25% off, with an additional 25% off sale items. We continue to put new items out on the floor throughout the day and stay open until 6:00 p.m.!

Half Price Day
HALF OFF EVERYTHING
Thrft

Gift Shop
25% OFF

Volunteer Spotlight

Ruth Graber has worn every Crowded Closet hat: manager, donor, board member, customer, and volunteer. She has led throughout operations, from retail, presort, clothing, linens, furniture, to her current role in housewares. Her first shop memories are setting up the retail floor before the shop opened in 1978.

Ruth says the friends and fellowship make Crowded Closet so special. Whether joined in prayer circle each morning or sharing a glass of Ruth's fresh iced tea in the break room, Ruth helps make Crowded Closet a joyful, welcoming place to serve. Ruth believes God has blessed Crowded Closet, and she is motivated by the mission of MCC. She hopes partnerships with neighbors, like Crisis Center, remain strong in the years to come.

To the Crowded Closet team, Ruth is a respected leader and friend who guides others with decisiveness, grace, and love.



Over 200 Gather to Celebrate Volunteers

In November, the Crowded Closet community celebrated together at the annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. The delicious meal was served by Carolyn Weiss and friends, with help from Kalona Kountry Katering. Kalona Mennonite Church hosted the event which celebrated the effort of the volunteers whose service and leadership carry the ministry of Crowded Closet forward. Becci Reedus, Executive Director of The Crisis Center, shared her Crowded Closet story and emphasized the important role Crowded Closet has in supporting individuals and families in the community through the voucher program. Each year Crowded Closet shares over \$40,000 worth of inventory with families in need through the help of The Crisis Center. Crowded Closet is supported by more than 245 regular volunteers and many more who serve for short-term service projects.





Left to Right: Caitlin Harrington, Lindsey Colbert, Emily Halbrooks

Hello and Good-bye

Caitlin Harrington has been a staff member at Crowded Closet since 2014. During that time she became a loved and respected part of the CC team. Caitlin is moving home to San Diego, and she will be greatly missed by her CC friends. To fill the gaps created by Caitlin's departure, we have hired several part time staff. Caitlin was able to be a part of welcoming Lindsey Colbert who will lead 25 hours a week in the workroom. She will work alongside workroom staff and volunteers to support the processing of donations. Lindsey brings wide customer service experience, savvy thrift instincts, and a ready smile. Emily Halbrooks also joins us as a Saturday manager.

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:

