



851 Hwy 6, Iowa City, IA 52240



Winter 2019 Newsletter



Crowded Closet Celebrates Historical Year

2019 marked a historical year in the story of Crowded Closet, with relocation to our new shop and new sales records among the highlights. While many things have changed, our mission has stayed the same: to share God's love and compassion in the name of Christ by supporting Mennonite Central Committee world relief, service and development programs, as well as local community relief agencies. To each donor, shopper, and volunteer, thank you for making the increasing goodness of Crowded Closet more possible now, and for years to come.

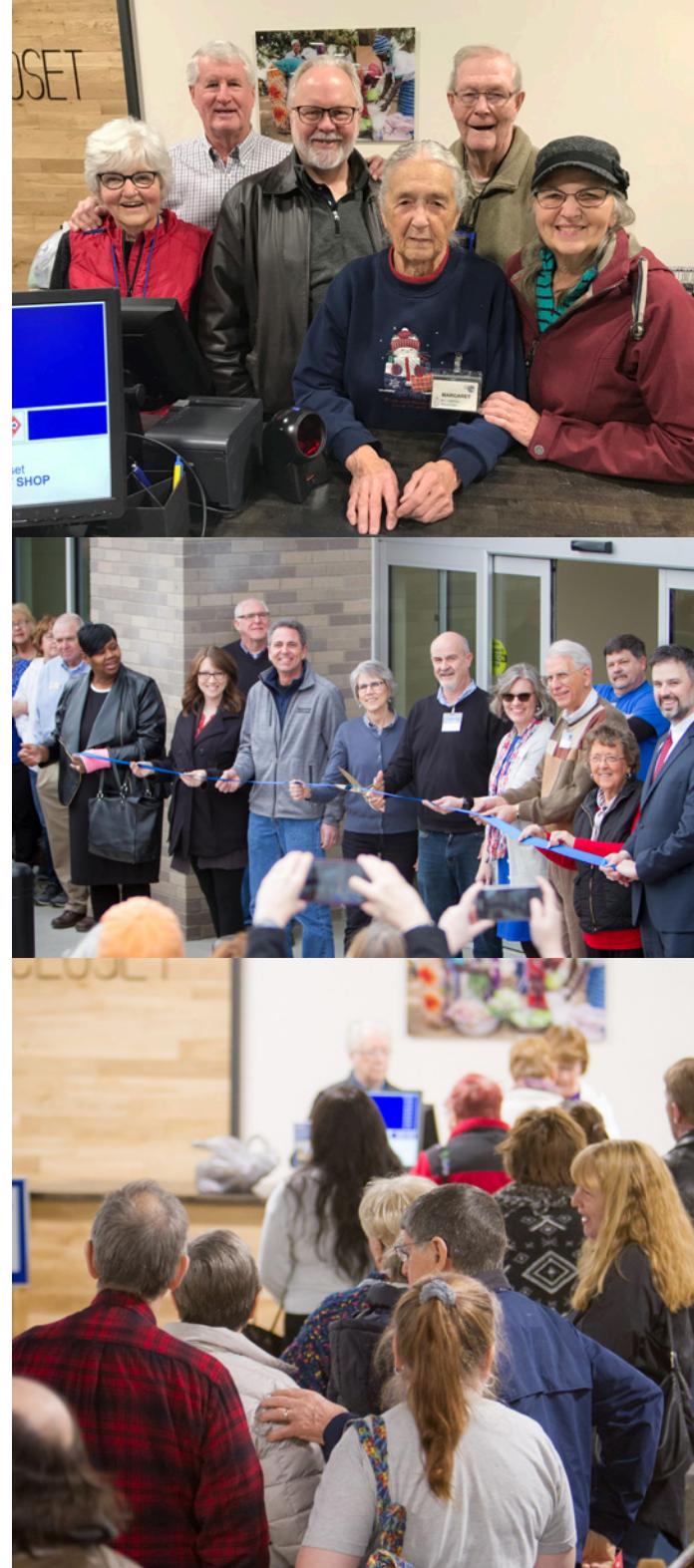
Marlene Leichty, one of the founders of Crowded Closet, recognizes the growth of Crowded Closet with amazement. Marlene commends those who planned for the move and carried out this valuable project.

"The commitment of those who were involved with the purchase of the building, the renovation, and the move, was every bit as important to Crowded Closet as the original vision of the founders." - Marlene Leichty

Jane Schlabbaugh was asked to lead the Task Force that would look at the pros and cons of a move or renovation during her time on the board. They began by looking at the Gilbert Court property Crowded Closet was in at the time and assessing that building, location, sales, growth, etc. Then, they formulated a list of priorities for a potential move and gathered financial information from other MCC Thrift Shops. They considered the financial results of moves other MCC shops had made in recent years. After much analysis, prayer and discernment, the Crowded Closet board, members of the Task Force and MCC Thrift representatives were all in agreement on a move if a suitable building could be found.

"Finding a building that met every need on our list was truly a gift - gift that continues to see growth and outreach. It took many people willing to affirm this leap of faith, and it showed me that when we are willing to be open to the changes God has for us, the possibilities are limitless."

- Jane Schlabbaugh



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

Mennonite Central Committee turns 100 years old!

Crowded Closet is pleased to support Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). We join in celebrating the 100th anniversary of MCC! Since 1920, MCC has worked with the church, partner organizations and supporters to share God's love and compassion by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice. They started by helping families affected by war and famine in southern Russia (present-day Ukraine). MCC now works in more than 50 countries and here at home. Learn more about the centennial celebration at <https://mcc.org/centennial>.



Check us out on:



851 Hwy 6, Iowa City, IA 52240 319-337-5924 www.crowdedcloset.org

Top to bottom: First time Crowded Closet reached over \$1 million dollars in annual sales; Ribbon cutting; Opening day.

Crowded Closet Staff & Board

FULL TIME STAFF

Carey Miller, Executive Director
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Christine Maust Beachy,
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Alisa Ketchum, Retail Manager
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Kristy Caldwell, Donation Supervisor

Em Halbrooks, Retail Supervisor

PART TIME SUPPORT STAFF

Julie Birky, Marketing
Brandon Burke, Custodian

PART TIME RETAIL STAFF

Dea Hoeme, Retail Supervisor
Toby Bishop-Kent, Retail Supervisor

PART TIME PROCESSING STAFF

Emily Bixler, Donation Receiver
Heather Monroe, Donation Receiver
Kaitlyn Amborn, Donation Receiver
Kylie Everwood, Donation Receiver
Adrian Guirola, Furniture Assistant
Bobby Morrow, Furniture Assistant
Konrad Swartz, Furniture Assistant
Seth Bethune, Furniture Assistant

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Larry Pickard, Board Chair
David Heusinkveld, Vice Chair
Carol Kuhns, Secretary
Galen Gruber, Treasurer
Shelby Gruber
Twila Hochstedler
Laurie Kauffman
Amy Landes
Mark Miller

From the board of directors

As we come to the end of 2019, the board of Crowded Closet wants to say a few words of appreciation. It has been a year of major accomplishments. We have moved from our Gilbert Court location to our new facilities at Pepperwood Plaza. We had to plan for a new and larger retail space, organize the space where we receive and sort donations, and of course, do a great deal of work wrapping things up at the old location and make the move.

It was, and still is, a lot of work, but it has all been worth it. Donations have increased, and sales have already topped \$1 million for the first time ever in one year. And of course, all of this goes to a very good cause. Our mission at Crowded Closet is not simply to generate sales. It is to help people in need throughout the world through Mennonite Central Committee. We also support local agencies such as CommUnity. The increase in donations and sales means we can help more people in need here and abroad. This is our goal, and we as a board are firmly committed to it.

If we are having greater success than ever before then a number of people are making that success happen. We as a board want to thank those people. Who are they?

Donors – Crowded Closet's success begins with donations of usable clothing, furniture, electronics, housewares, and so many other things. All are given by people who no longer need the item, and rather than selling it at a garage sale, they gave it to Crowded Closet. Thank you so much!

Shoppers – Those who shop in our store are a vital part of our success. You are not just getting a quality item and a great price, when you shop, you are supporting people in need. Thank you so much!

Staff – Whether it is Carey Miller, our Executive Director, our retail supervisors, or those who gratefully receive donated items, we have an amazing staff. They are the main reason the move to the new location went so well. They are the ones who planned and organized how things would be done in the new location. And they are the ones who keep it running so well. You are an amazing staff, and your kindness, commitment, and skills are evident every day. Thank you so much!

Volunteers – Most of the work is done by volunteers who give their time to sorting, pricing, and selling donated items. They do this work with such enthusiasm and dedication. They are the heart of Crowded Closet, and if not for them, the amount of money we could send to people in need would be a fraction of what it is. We as a board are deeply grateful to each of you. Thank you so much!

God – Crowded Closet is faith based. We do not require those who help us or those we serve to share our faith, but we firmly place it at the center of what we do. In short, we believe that none of the success and achievements of this year would have happened without God. The Lord has blessed us, and we are so very grateful. Thank you so much, God!

Volunteer Spotlight



Every Thursday at Crowded Closet was brightened by the cheerful swarm of family and friends gathering to serve with Lois Plank. Lois could be found at the center of the Housewares tables in the workroom, listening with a kind smile, laughing with joy, and always drawing people to her spirit of love and friendship. Some people choose to see the best in each of us, and Lois Plank was such a person. She radiated love and compassion for all people, and she lived each day as a testimony to her love for Jesus.

Many days in the Crowded Closet morning prayer circle we lifted prayers for Lois. We were never ready to be apart from her. Lois passed away on Monday, November 11, 2019, at her home in Wellman following a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer at the age of 65 years. Her legacy of service and kindness remains close to all who knew her at Crowded Closet.

Lois Plank's (second from left) family and friends serve together at the Gilbert Court shop.

Chocolate Sour Cream Layer Cake

If you have ever been to a Crowded Closet pot luck, you know this cake! John Koch shares his secret recipe. See him for more details for recipe perfection.

Chocolate Sour Cream Layer Cake

CAKE

1 c flour
6 T cocoa
½ t salt
¼ t baking soda
10 T butter
1 c + 2 T sugar
1 t vanilla
2 eggs
½ c sour cream

FROSTING

2 t instant coffee powder
1 ½ t hot water
1 c + 2 T sour cream
10 oz. semisweet chocolate



For cake: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease two round cake pans. Sift first 5 ingredients. Beat butter until fluffy. Gradually add sugar, vanilla, and eggs. Add dry ingredients alternately with sour cream until just blended. Divide batter between cake pans. Bake about 25 mins. Cool 5 mins in pans, then turn out onto racks and cool completely.

For frosting: Dissolve coffee powder in hot water. Add sour cream and blend. Melt chocolate in double boiler until smooth. Add sour cream mixture to chocolate and blend.

Place 1 cake on platter and spread ½ c frosting over. Top with second cake layer, and spread top and sides with remaining frosting. Can be prepared 8 hours ahead. Cover and let stand at room temperature.