

Empowering positive futures.



July 2023

A Message From The Executive Director

Bidwell Riverside Center and Hawthorn Hill come together to form Families Forward.

Bidwell Riverside Center and Hawthorn Hill - both sharing roots with the United Methodist Church as well as being United Way of Central Iowa partner agencies - traditionally worked in parallel to provide different programs with the similar goal of helping children and families in need.

On July 1, Bidwell Riverside Center and Hawthorn Hill officially merged into Families Forward, an organization where the original four programs - Bidwell Pantry, Child Development Center, New Directions Shelter, and The Home Connection - work together to provide compassionate, life-changing assistance to families on their path to self-sufficiency.

2022 Program Outcomes

During 2022, New Directions Shelter provided emergency housing for 62 families including 162 children. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the families transitioned into permanent housing and 100% of the adults that looked for employment got a job. The Home Connection provided longer term housing (2 to 5 years) for 36 families including 93 children. The families that completed the program increased their monthly income by 59% or \$980. The two programs provided much needed assistance to families with children experiencing homelessness so that they had a place to call home whether their "home" was temporary at New Directions Shelter or for a longer term in one of our The Home Connection's 29 housing units.

Bidwell Pantry continues to be the largest serving food pantry in Iowa and is a one-stop-shop for essential needs including diapers, baby food, clothing, toiletries, and household goods. All of this, as well as food, is available for free to anyone who walks through the doors.

In 2022, the Bidwell pantry served 17,199 unique individuals and distributed approximately 255,133 clothing items, 129,183 diapers, 5,301 units of baby formula or food, and 116,343 toiletry items. Access to food, toiletries, diapers, baby food, formula, clothing, and household items is vital to those living in poverty, and the need is unfortunately increasing.

The Child Development Center continues to provide a comprehensive education and care program at an affordable price for children ages 2 to 5 years old. We served 76 children in 2022, with 71% living at or below the poverty line. Ninety-two percent (92%) of the children demonstrated age appropriate social-emotional skills and 67% demonstrated age-appropriate pre-literacy skills.

Thank you so much for all you do to support our mission of providing assistance to those that are food insecure, to families that need affordable, quality early childhood education, and to families with children experiencing homelessness acquire permanent housing and achieve a level of financial independence. Your help is critical so we may provide a helping hand to those in need!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Shanahan".

Tim Shanahan
Executive Director

Families Forward Management Team



Tim Shanahan
Executive Director



Tamsin Webb
Development & PR Director



Melanie Wright
Administrative Assistant



Missy Reams
Bidwell Pantry, Volunteer &
Community Outreach Manager



Kellie Johnson
Child Development Center
Director



Kelsie Pinegar
New Directions Shelter
Program Manager



Sergio Hernandez
The Home Connection
Program Manager

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Volunteer Impact

Volunteers are a crucial part of our team at Families Forward and their dedication makes what we do possible. Volunteers poured out to help us last year, contributing 21,113 service hours to our organization. These 2,321 amazing volunteers gave their valuable time to provide us with more than 10 full-time equivalent (FTE) employee hours!

Volunteers helped all 4 programs and at special events such as holiday programs where New Directions Shelter and The Home Connection families chose free gifts for their loved ones. Volunteers continued to maintain our no-till, environmentally friendly garden that provides extra produce for pantry clients. It was also great to have Book Buddies back in the Child Development Center. In addition, volunteers worked on projects at home such as knitting hats and scarves to bundle up the families we serve or to make no-sew t-shirt bags to hold pantry guests' groceries.

So many people give their time and talents to make sure each person that walks through the doors of Families Forward feels respected, acknowledged, and supported. We are only able to serve so many because of the kindness from so many in our community.

Due to their ongoing support during 2022, the following volunteers received a Governor's Volunteer Award for their impact on Families Forward's mission and the work we do:

- Length of Service Award for 30+ Years - Judy Somers
- Group Award - Cub Scouts Pack 98
- Group Award - Merchants Bonding Company™
- Individual Award - Ann Michelson
- Individual Award - Kyle Robinson
- Individual Award - Ginger Crichton
- Individual Award - Doug Crichton

Volunteers have and always will be the heart of our organization. For more information or to sign up as a volunteer visit www.familiesforward.org or contact:
Missy Reams
missy@familiesforward.org
515-989-8404



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Families Forward is committed to having diversity, equity and inclusion be core values of our organization. We believe equality is a human right and we must do more to create a better community for all. We are proud to offer a safe, nondiscriminatory environment and offer a welcoming hand to all and treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Empty Bowls

Empty Bowls is the Bidwell Pantry's annual fundraising event that allows us to shed light on the food insecurity faced by our neighbors and raise funds to support our mission to increase stability and self-sufficiency in our communities. Each attendee takes home a handmade, artisan bowl as a reminder to fill the bowls of others as often as we can. Last year we hosted our most successful fundraiser to date!

EMC Insurance was recognized as our 2022 Community Partner of the Year. EMC has been making a positive impact at the Bidwell Pantry for many years. EMC employees have volunteered at the pantry countless times accomplishing a variety of tasks- stocking shelves, guiding clients through the grocery aisles, organizing donations for our annual holiday events, and so much more. Not only are they amazing volunteers, they also frequently organize company-wide donation drives for our most-needed items. We so appreciate the time EMC devotes to serving the community!

Susan Ryon was recognized as our 2022 Volunteer of the Year. Susan has volunteered over 900 hours in the last 2 ½ years, with most of this time being spent in the pantry. Often, Susan comes early to make sure everything is stocked and ready to welcome the pantry guests. She also helps pick up food recovery, she makes t-shirt bags and knits hats, makes dinners for the shelter, and she brings in denim quilts to the shelter that her mom makes from damaged jeans. She is always thinking of others and is always willing to help!

Stay tuned for updates on our 2023 Empty Bowls to be held on Thursday, November 2nd!



Art & More For Shelter

Art & More for Shelter is our annual fundraising event held each spring that helps bring awareness and raise funds to support our housing programs. Attendees enjoy food, music, and participate in a live and silent auction featuring items donated to us from local businesses.

Merchants Bonding Company was recognized as our 2023 Community Partner of the Year. Last year, Merchants Bonding selected New Directions Shelter as its non-profit organization to support throughout 2022. Employees from Merchant's Bonding volunteered with the shelter twice a month for the entire year. This included in-person opportunities like cleaning and organizing the shelter in addition to off-site opportunities like preparing shelter meals and hosting a supply drive. In addition to all their volunteering, Merchant's Bonding donated over \$16,000 to New Directions Shelter in 2022!

Cub Scout Pack 98 was recognized as our 2023 Volunteer of the Year. One of the first events they did in 2022 was sponsoring a Valentine's Day party. During February 2022 there was an increase in Covid cases, and the shelter had to be closed off to volunteers, but that didn't stop Pack 98 from providing materials for a great event. They created a beautiful banner for the party, catered a fancy dinner for the families, and provided all the decorations and items needed to host a fantastic Valentine's Day party. The group was back for Christmas 2022 with the same thoughtfulness and intention of the previous year. Santa came to visit with presents, the kids played games, and everyone had a great time!



Bidwell Pantry

The Bidwell Pantry helps families put food on their table and clothes on their backs. By helping our guests obtain food, fresh produce, clothing, personal hygiene items, and more at no cost, we hope to reduce the strain they're experiencing so they can focus on other goals that will break the cycle of poverty. The Bidwell Pantry is the highest-serving food pantry in the state of Iowa. We served 17,199 unduplicated individuals in 2022- the most in our organization's history.

The Bidwell Pantry is open Monday – Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Each person must check in before 4:45 p.m. After intake, you can select your own items or have one of our volunteers make the selections for you. After that, you'll check out and head home to enjoy your food and other items.

We are a no-boundary pantry, so we welcome everyone, no matter where you live. No financial information is needed. We are also proud members of the Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC) pantry network and the Food Bank of Iowa.

Visit www.familiesforward.org/bidwell-pantry to access our Amazon Wish List and make a donation to help us support the families we serve.



2022 Outcomes

17,199
Individuals

116,343
Toiletries Distributed

5,301
Units of Baby Food,
Formula, Wipes Distributed

129,183
Diapers Distributed

255,133
Clothing Items Distributed

1,053,180
Pounds of Food Distributed

Brie's Story



Brie started coming to Bidwell's pantry about 15 years ago when she heard about our services through a friend. She has been coming once every couple of months to pick up items for herself, her two children, and her mom.

Lately, Brie said inflation has made buying groceries more difficult. "Food has been sky-high. I pay more for my food than I do it rent- it's just crazy," she said. "Going to food pantries helps a lot because sometimes you just don't get enough."

Bidwell's friendly environment has been important to Brie. "They care so much- they do everything they can," said Brie.

Child Development Center

The Child Development Center strives to empower young children, regardless of income or background, to be capable life-long learners. We offer full-day care for children ages 2-5 years old and provide developmentally appropriate environments for each age group.

The Child Development Center curriculum focuses on literacy, language, mathematics, and social-emotional/physical/cognitive skills. Our universal pre-kindergarten program is partnered with Des Moines Public Schools, and we are one of their community locations.

Each day we provide the students with healthy and nutritious meals that fulfill the Child and Adult Care Food Program standards. As a United Way of Central Iowa partner, the students also have access to on-site resources like dental exams, fluoride treatments, eye exams, hearing tests, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. We are also part of the United Way Book Buddy program.

Visit www.familiesforward.org/child-development-center to access our Amazon wish list and make a donation to help us support the families we serve.

2022 Outcomes

76
Children

47
Children Screened for
Developmental Delays

28
Children Received Services for
Speech and Fine Motor Skills

67%
Demonstrate Age
Appropriate Pre-Literacy Skills

92%
Demonstrated Age Appropriate
Social-Emotional Skills

71%
Received Tuition Relief Via
Childcare Assistance

Prom 2023



Our Child Development Center had an amazing start to the summer season! We kicked things off with a special CDC Prom complete with music, dancing, snacks, and of course the kids dressed up for the occasion. It was impossible not to smile as they took photos and sang along to “Old Town Road.” Families were invited to the prom as well and everyone had a fantastic time!

Shortly after prom, the CDC celebrated the 2023 Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) graduating class. The students walked in their caps and gowns, sang songs they learned throughout the year, and were given their diplomas. We’ll miss seeing these kids every day and hope they are able to come back and visit us!

New Directions Shelter

New Directions Shelter provides free, temporary, emergency shelter and services for families with children experiencing homelessness. We help families get a new start through professional case management, counseling, and advocacy.

Our case management staff assists our clients with resume development, completing job applications, finding employment, attending job fairs and job interviews, obtaining job training, and acquiring affordable childcare. Our services also include helping clients obtain needed documentation such as social security cards and birth certificates, and assisting them with obtaining FIP, SSI, and food stamps if qualified.

New Directions Shelter is one of only three homeless shelters available for families in the Des Moines metro area. The shelter provides eight private bedrooms, balanced meals, and laundry facilities. We offer a hospitable atmosphere emphasizing dignity and respect for others. We encourage positive change and provide the emotional and physical space necessary to make responsible, informed decisions for securing housing for their families.

Visit www.familiesforward.org/new-directions-shelter to access our Amazon wish list and make a donation to help us support the families we serve.

2022 Outcomes

62

Families

162

Children Within The
Families

40%

Average Increase In Income

100%

Of Adults Looking For A Job
Gained Employment

62%

Families Transitioned Into
Permanent Housing

75%

Obtained Childcare

Girl Scouts



New Directions Shelter has had a fun start to the summer season with several special activities! This past month, Girl Scouts of America brought a 4-day STEM Camp to the shelter. This camp was available to all girls in grades K - 12 residing at the shelter. The girls especially enjoyed making their own bouncy balls and homemade ice cream.

We're incredibly grateful for this partnership with Girl Scouts and look forward to their next activity in the fall.

The Home Connection

The Home Connection program provides supportive housing for families with children experiencing homelessness. The Home Connection's goal is to move families from homelessness to permanent housing with an emphasis on financial independence.

The Home Connection is the only housing program with 20 single family homes, 3 duplexes, and a 3-plex located in various neighborhoods in Des Moines. We aim to provide as much normalcy as possible for the families we serve.

Our case management staff works with families to identify the causes of their homelessness and develop a plan, with goals, to remedy causes and attain financial independence within approximately two to four years.

To be eligible for this program, at least one adult must be working or actively looking for employment. Parents must also be involved in their children's education and development, and volunteer in the community.

Visit www.familiesforward.org/the-home-connection to access our Amazon Wish List and make a donation to help us support the families we serve.

2022 Outcomes

36

Families

93

Children Within The
Families

59%

Increased Monthly Income

\$980

Average Increase In
Monthly Income

96%

Employed Adults

57%

Exited to Permanent
Housing

Client Story

For personal reasons, this client has requested to remain anonymous and will be called "Client."



Unsure of whether it would be a good fit for her family, Client was skeptical when she was first told about The Home Connection. "I had just been battling domestic violence, picking up pieces of my life and putting it back together. My kids and I were separated for five months because I was so broken from what I had been through. I could not be the parent they knew me to be."

She said the process of moving into her new home with her children went smoothly.

Bidwell Riverside Center

Financial Statement

The financial statements below are taken from Bidwell Riverside's Independent Auditor's Report on the Financial Statements, Year ended June 30, 2022. The complete financial statements are available at Families Forward's office, 3001 Grand Ave, Des Moines, IA 50312.

CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents		\$783,434
Certificates of deposit		147,580
Accounts receivable		29,927
Contributions receivable		7,208
Prepaid expenses		9,894
Total Current Assets		978,043
OTHER ASSETS		
Investments		604,472
Property of equipment, net of accumulated depreciation		725,292
Total Other Assets		1,329,764
Total Assets		2,307,807
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable		8,978
Accrued expenses		61,247
Refundable advance		44,755
Total Current Liabilities		114,980
NET ASSETS		
Net assets without donor restrictions		1,588,355
Net assets with donor restrictions		604,472
Total Net Assets		2,192,827
Total Liabilities and Net Assets		2,307,807

Statement of Activities

	Without donor restrictions	With donor restrictions	Total
REVENUE AND SUPPORT			
Contributions	\$973,001	\$500	\$973,501
Child development program fees	500,470	---	500,470
Special events	45,933	---	45,933
Investment income	1,572	(98,291)	(96,719)
Other income	5,050	---	5,050
Total Revenue and Support	1,526,026	(97,791)	1,428,235
EXPENCES			
Program services			
Child Development Center	800,842	---	800,842
Bidwell Pantry	331,356	---	331,356
Supporting services			
Management and general	32,245	---	32,245
Fundraising	56,169	---	56,169
Total Expenses	1,220,612	---	1,220,612
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	305,414	(97,791)	207,623
Net Assets, beginning	1,282,941	702,263	1,985,204
Net Assets, ending	1,588,355	604,472	2,192,827

Hawthorn Hill

Financial Statement

The financial statements below are taken from Bidwell Riverside's Independent Auditor's Report on the Financial Statements, Year ended June 30, 2022. The complete financial statements are available at Families Forward's office, 3001 Grand Ave, Des Moines, IA 50312.

CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents		\$806,587
Certificates of deposit		162,786
Accounts receivable		8,833
Contributions receivable		17,996
Prepaid expenses		11,045
Total Current Assets		1,007,247
OTHER ASSETS		
Investments		6,467
Property of equipment, net of accumulated depreciation		1,243,512
Total Other Assets		1,249,979
Total Assets		2,257,226
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable		4,173
Accrued expenses		43,273
Deferred revenue		5,640
Client escrow		2,210
Tenant security deposits		12,000
Total Current Liabilities		67,296
NET ASSETS		
Net assets without donor restrictions		2,182,339
Net assets with donor restrictions		7,591
Total Net Assets		2,189,930
Total Liabilities and Net Assets		2,257,226

Statement of Activities

	Without donor restrictions	With donor restrictions	Total
REVENUE AND SUPPORT			
Contributions	\$662,900	\$---	\$662,900
Program fees	174,030	---	174,030
Special events	46,436	---	46,436
Investment income	104	780	884
Gain on sale of assets	29,324	---	29,324
Total Revenue and Support	912,794	780	913,574
EXPENCES			
Program services			
New Directions Shelter	436,142	---	436,142
The Home Connection	365,189	---	365,189
Supporting services			
Management and general	45,246	---	45,246
Fundraising	53,637	---	53,637
Total Expenses	900,214	---	900,214
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	12,580	780	13,360
Net Assets, beginning	2,169,759	6,811	2,176,570
Net Assets, ending	2,182,339	7,591	2,189,930

Bidwell Riverside Center

Contributors

June 1, 2022 – May 31, 2023

Thank you to our generous contributors as we could not provide the critical services needed in our community without their support. If we have erred or overlooked listing your name, please contact Tim Shanahan at (515) 283-1911 or at tim@familiesforward.org. We sincerely apologize for any errors or names that might have been accidentally excluded from the list.

\$20,000+

Des Moines Public Schools
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Federal Home Loan Bank
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IA Conference – UWF
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Church
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National Office
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UMC

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June 1, 2022 – May 31, 2023

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Supporters of Families Forward can build upon their legacy and expand their generosity through our planned giving program.

Commonly donated through a will or trust, planned giving is arranged in the present and allocated at a future date. Planned giving both aid Families Forward and help to continue a loyal donor's legacy.

Please contact Tamsin Webb (515-244-6251, option 2) with questions about our planned giving program.



3001 Grand Ave. Des Moines, IA 50312-4206

Families Forward Annual Report

Learn more about our name change and the work we've done within our four programs.

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