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A Year in the M.O.R.E. Center: Keeping Our Mission—from Bob Botts, Executive Director

August 8 marked a full year in M.O.R.E. Center. It's amazing how much we have grown in that past year. We went from a handful of volunteers, to more than 80. We have grown in the services we offer and, for the most part, we are very proud of our programs. With this success, however, we have become the "go to" agency, the first responders, in the Marengo-Union area for people in difficult situations.

Over the past few months we have been noticing a large increase in clients needing food and emergency assistance. Not only are our numbers up, but the severity of cases is quite noticeable. The country's economic down turn, the mortgage crisis and the reductions in social services are all contributing to a growing number of individuals and families entering poverty level. The stresses of losing a house or apartment, a job, a car, your health, your spouse or children and countless other issues can create depression and volatility in individuals. We are seeing many first timers and they are embarrassed to enter our doors, they are upset, emotionally drained, and they don't know what to expect. We offer advice, food, clothing and household items, and perhaps financial assistance. Sometimes we just listen and console them, but we do it with respect and dignity.

It is difficult for most of us to recognize that in McHenry County, a rich county in many ways, homeless individuals and families actually exist. But they do, and we see it every week. It is difficult for us to give a mother a bag of food that she and her son will be able to eat in their car. But we do it and wish her luck. It is difficult to watch an individual walk away from our Center with a bag of food and that person's next goal being to find a friend, any friend, with a couch for the night. But, again we do it with hope that we are helping this person make it to the day when a job can be found. That's what we do.

I mention these things to let you know we are trying to help in the best ways we can with what we have. We are all volunteers. No one is paid. We depend on your



continued support even if the only way that you can help is to wish us luck and to speak positively to others of our constant needs. We are immensely thankful for all the generous and caring organizations and individuals in our community.

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Salvation Army & MORE Team Up With School Supplies

The M.O.R.E. Center was abuzz on Monday, August 11, with 88 children receiving back packs and school supplies. Thanks to the Salvation Army and local donations, our neediest children will be starting school with most of the classroom supplies requested by the schools and they get to carry them in style. Mary Ann Kawall, our Salvation Army Extension Director, and Chris Botts delighted in watching the excited children waiting to receive their supplies, including tooth brushes.

The children's parents also received a MORE voucher of twenty-five dollars to Levin's Shoes and Dry Goods. The voucher is to be used for the purchase of gym shoes or gym clothes. Thanks Bob Levin.

All of us at the M.O.R.E. Center want to thank the Salvation Army volunteers, Prairie Community Bank, Levin's, and many citizens for their participation in our back to school program.



Mary Ann Kawall and Chris Botts distributed 88 Salvation Army Back Packs filled with school supplies to eager children at the M.O.R.E. Center.

WEB SITES OF LOCAL PEOPLE - Has moved to our Web site only at: www.marengounionview.com

For even more events, visit our Online Community Calendar at: www.marengounionview.com/