

NONPROFITS

Coralville Food Pantry edges closer to fundraising goal for new building

By Noah Tong

noah@corridorbusiness.com

The Coralville Community Food Pantry's fundraiser for a new, customized building has raised approximately \$700,000, with more gifts anticipated but not yet official, according to Executive Director John Boller.

Shy of the \$1.2 million goal so far, the 5,000-square-foot headquarters would allow the food pantry to add new programs and accommodate additional personnel necessary in creating a unique community space.

Although a substantial amount of funding is still needed, Mr. Boller is "cautiously optimistic" that the goal will be met.

"I've been so grateful for the support that we received from our neighbors," he said. "So far, people have responded so enthusiastically and very supportive [of this plan]. Anytime we talk about this long-term vision, people get really excited."

The food pantry hopes to reach its goal through pledges by spring 2022. Several larger gifts are coming in over a multi-year

period, meaning they will take out a construction loan, since not all cash will be on hand immediately, he said.

If all goes to plan, Mr. Boller anticipates a new food pantry could break ground as soon as December or January.

"More and more people are turning to us for supplies than ever before," said Mr. Boller, noting that demand for the food pantry has grown significantly in the last 18 months. "We're anticipating the needs for our services will continue to grow. So it's important that we have a space that can accommodate the need for securing more food, having more people in our building and making our services even more efficient for everyone involved."

His hope for the nonprofit is that a new building can transform the food pantry into more of a community space for different types of activities.

"We want to do some community building and have room for programming



CORALVILLE 4

Groceries are bagged at the current food pantry site in Oct. 2020. CREDIT JOHN BOLLER

Give the gift of **joy**
this **holiday** season!



Adopt a family today
at hacap.org/adoptafamily

NONPROFITS



A rendering of a new Coralville Community Food Pantry building. If the \$1.2 million goal is reached, the food pantry hopes to expand its programs and offerings. CREDIT JOHN BOLLER

CORALVILLE

PAGE 3

where community members can have other needs met to grow and build relationships," he said.

One of those programs they're planning to launch is a twice-monthly hot meal program – an idea in the works for several years. They've also discussed adding cook-

ing classes, mobile health clinics, utilizing an outdoor gardening space, holding advocacy group meetings and having grill-outs and pizza nights in an outdoor cooking area, in addition to taking advantage of more pantry and storage space inside.

The pantry has operated out of the former Coralville Post Office, originally provided by the City of Coralville for free, since 2015. They realized they were outgrowing the space once they felt the constraints of

their food storage and shopping space, as well as a desire to hire more employees.

The new building will be located on the empty lot attached to the Coralville United Methodist Church at 806 13th Ave. The church donated the land for the project for free.

"It's incredibly generous," he said. "They were one of the original founders of the pantry back in the day. They've been deeply supportive over the years."

Serving as a free grocery store for Coralville and surrounding communities like Tipton and Oxford, items range from food staples to personal hygiene products. The food pantry has distributed 650,000 pounds of food in the last 12 months to around 3,300 people in the community through its food assistance program.

The building is being designed by Neumann Monson Architects and will be constructed by Hodge Construction. CBJ

Roots that run deep

When UFG Insurance opened its doors in 1946, our founder planted ethical seeds of doing business the right way and treating people the right way.

Those seeds have grown into rooted fundamentals today – sown into daily interactions – with "community" at the core.

While we're working to protect community businesses with trustworthy insurance products and services, we're also striving to support local nonprofits through volunteerism and corporate sponsorships.



**THANK YOU, EASTERN IOWA NONPROFITS
FOR YOUR CRUCIAL ROLE IN BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES.**

