

Hawthorn Hill

Hawthorn Hill's mission is to establish and operate housing programs for homeless families with children that help them obtain permanent housing and to provide services to help families achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Hawthorn Hill fulfills its mission through two programs:

1. New Directions Shelter: Provides free, temporary, emergency shelter and services for homeless families with children.
2. The Home Connection: Provides permanent supportive housing for homeless families with children with an emphasis on helping the families attain financial independence,

In 2020, Hawthorn Hill served 259 individuals: 99 adults and 160 children.

Hawthorn Hill respects the inherent worth and dignity of all people, and sees housing as a basic need deserved by all.

Champion: Sally Boeckholt

Just Voices

Our Values

Our values guide our work. Our work is about justice. Our work is about truth. Our work is about equity. We operate with these core values:

- Police are our partners, not our enemies. The police have an incredibly hard job and provide protection, safety, and security in an unpredictable and divided country. Their jobs are risky and often thankless. We appreciate and respect them.
- Black people should be treated equally by law enforcement. The legacy of America, her original sin of slavery, has led us to a boiling point of disparity in policing Black people today. In America, Black skin color means you're more likely to be stopped, ticketed, jailed, and you'll experience longer sentences and heavier penalties than the white majority.
- Skin color is not reasonable suspicion.
- Everyone has bias and bias is everywhere. But implicit bias are the thoughts and feelings that we are unaware of or mistaken about their nature. We have a bias when, rather than being neutral, we have a preference for (or aversion to) a person or group of people. But when police, or otherwise well-meaning citizens, *act* on their implicit bias, or aren't aware of their implicit bias, the results for communities of color are disastrous.

First Unitarian Church of Des Moines – Faith in Action Nominees 2022-2023

- Denial is not productive. James Baldwin, award-winning author, once said, “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” We have the stories. We have the data. Racial profiling happens in Des Moines, IA, far too often and it is causing emotional and financial trauma to Black and Brown people. Let’s face it so we can fix it.
- The punishment should fit the crime.
- We get it. It’s complicated.

Champion: Harvey Harrison

Al Exito

Al Exito’s mission is to accelerate Latinx youth’s academic achievement and leadership capacity through transformative opportunities for youth, and their families, to fully participate and thrive in Iowa’s communities. Vision – Al Exito’s vision is to advance Iowa’s prosperity through Latinx excellence.

Al Exito has had a long term relationship with First Unitarian Church of Des Moines. The first Mary E Campos scholarship luncheon was held in our building almost 5 years ago. It's been a while since they have been one of our Faith in Action partners.

Champion: Gene McCracken

AMOS Let’s Talk

AMOS Let’s Talk was formed to address the school to prison pipeline for students of color. Our mediation group was formed to address the fact that students of color in Des Moines and across the nation are disproportionately suspended and referred to Juvenile Justice System. Any student – regardless of race or other identity — who is suspended or expelled is more likely to have future negative involvement with the Criminal Justice system.

Our program is disrupting this pipeline by making restorative justice practice the norm in our schools. We empower students to fairly and peacefully resolve their conflicts with other students and steward a school culture built on respect, honesty, listening, truth and sharing.

Champion: Ellen Taylor