

WE'RE CELEBRATING

Thirty years ago (1993), Iowa West Branch of Orphan Grain Train was started by Pastor Donald Winterrowd and the Lutheran Laymen's League. It was started in the garage of Bob Wilke in Battle Creek. When they outgrew that, they moved to a building in Battle Creek. In the early days support was garnered by fish boils and other donations. When the operation outgrew that, a building in the business district of Ida Grove was rented for the operation. When that building was no longer big enough, rental of the current building at 417 Main Street, Ida Grove was made possible. Herman Jensen from Ida Grove was instrumental in getting the two buildings for the branch. They started out with an old bread truck that they painted and used to deliver items to places in the area.



We have a trailer that we used to leave beside the building for people to leave items during the week and for us to haul things to different areas. However, we no longer leave the trailer out because some people were ransacking the bags left and taking real good items and selling them on the internet.

We work on Tuesday mornings from 8-11 a.m. March through October and from 9-noon November through February. We work out other times for special groups to come and work. We have a church mission board that comes once a quarter, some ladies groups who come several times a year, confirmation classes and some OABCIG seniors come on their service day. Since COVID, we could use more men to help on a weekly basis. We do have men come on the mornings that we load a container which is fantastic!

Elroy and Barb Koch were managers for over 22 years. Sharon Irwin took over as Branch Manager in the Fall of 2016. Her husband, Jerry Irwin, is the warehouse manager.

We provide seasonal clothing, hygiene supplies, shoes and boots and bedding to Siouxland Soup Kitchen in Sioux City and Beacon of Hope Men's Shelter in Fort Dodge. We get many items to GoServ Global for air transport to Haiti. They have still been able to fly into Les Cayes, Haiti. We help local school districts with backpacks and some school supplies and extra clothing. We also give to individuals who come into our facility looking for clothing help for a new job, etc. We have had to limit the items they receive, as some in the past have taken advantage.

Elroy Koch had a trucking company, so when they were managers, they made trips to Texas and to North Dakota with needed supplies at different times. Most of our large shipments now are international. Our warehouse isn't very large so we are limited to shipping to areas that have similar weather to Iowa because we do not have the area to keep clothing separated for summer or winter. We have sent containers to Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, the Republic of Georgia, Kyrgyzstan. We have helped to complete three shipments to the Ukraine with Justice for All.

When we receive pictures back from shipments that we have made to different agencies in other parts of the world, we realize how blessed we are and why we do what we do.

Our branch and Orphan Grain Train as a whole, have increased with Mercy Meals packing at Faith Lutheran Church in Sioux City and Central Iowa Branch started at Clemens, Iowa.

We operate strictly with volunteer workers and with donations and gifts from churches, groups and individuals. God is gracious and merciful as we work to help those less fortunate!

When we "Let Go and Let God" direct our work and activities, the blessings and miracles that we receive at Iowa West Branch are so amazing!

To God be the Glory!!



