



**Matthew 25**  
201 3rd Ave SW  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

Empowering People to  
Transform Neighborhoods

## Ramping up for the 2020 Cultivate Hope Market season

The first signs of spring are finally showing and the weather is starting to warm, but Cultivate Hope Greenhouse is already in full swing with plant starts and preparations for the 2020 growing season.



Zach tending to the starts in the greenhouse



Starts ready for planting

each month. It will have activities and partnerships with local businesses and organizations, as well as brick oven pizza from Groundswell Cafe. Each month will have a different market sponsor and a different theme with featured items for sale, either from the farm or from a local vendor.

Planning is also underway for the Market season, starting this year on May 14 and going through Oct. 8 on Thursdays, from 4-7 p.m. at the urban farm. One exciting change this year is that we will be hosting a more robust market on the last Thursday of



Additionally, Cultivate Hope is bringing back Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares so the community can invest in the farm at the beginning of the year and enjoy produce all season long.

YOU'RE INVITED TO  
THE MATTHEW 25  
*Spring Celebration*

This year's celebration is moving to an online format! Join us as we recognize and thank our volunteers, donors and supporters. Plus you can ask our program managers questions and enjoy their fun "Show and Tell" piece!

**APRIL 21, 4:30 P.M.**  
FACEBOOK LIVE  
@MATTHEW25MINISTRYHUB

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# Hope in a Time of Crisis



### Spring 2020

They say you can tell a lot about an organization or individual when you see how they respond in crisis. As I write this, the world is in the process of responding to the coronavirus. Challenging times are ahead. None of us knows how the world will respond.

However, I already know the heart of how Matthew 25 will respond. We are an organization that has faced crisis before. Many of the people we work with are in crisis or have been through one crisis after another. In our response, we try to mimic the love of God and the grit Jesus showed at Easter.

First, we show determination that we will keep serving the community as long as we can. Second, we offer love and grace to everyone. We reach out and act as the hands and feet of Christ, helping to pull people forward when they feel overwhelmed.

But most of all, we hold onto hope. We believe in amazing grace that tells us even when it appears death has had the last laugh, victory is ahead. Because of this, I have confidence in the future. We are in this together. We are not alone. Our community and neighborhoods will be strongest when we support one another.

Hopefully, by the time you receive this, the worst will be over. But even if we are in the midst of crisis, we will keep going. We will continue to figure out creative ways to support the community. Because this is what we are called to do. Within this newsletter you'll read about ways we support the community every day. Thanks for walking with us on the journey.

With abundant expectation,  
*Clint*

### Matthew 25 Response to COVID-19



Our Groundswell Cafe put together 70 lunches to give to Wills Dady Homeless Services. With the cafe closing temporarily, we wanted to make sure our food still went to those in need.



Our office, Groundswell Cafe, and Tool Library are all temporarily closed to aid in the community's need for social distancing at this time. While we are closed to the public, we're still engaged and staff are working from home. We will be working to support people in our affordable housing units and planning to make Groundswell Cafe, the Tool Library and other programs even stronger in the future. We're moving upcoming classes, workshops and events to a "virtual" setting online and are continuing our urban farm spring preparation and planting, although without the use of volunteer groups.



Bridget, one of our Green Iowa AmeriCorps members, has been working with local food pantries to create a system of food distribution to those clients who can no longer come to the pantries.



We had some masks, gloves and safety glasses on hand for Transform Week that we instead donated to Linn County Emergency Management to help keep the community's front-line workers safe.



The cafe was able to donate our remaining perishable food to Green Square Meals. Our cafe staff are also volunteering their time with various organizations to help prepare and distribute more meals to those in need.

To stay up-to-date on the latest news from Matthew 25, follow us on Facebook @Matthew25MinistryHub or join our e-mail list at www.hub25.org/email



## Youth Development Program Expands for 2020

Big changes are coming for our Cultivate Hope Youth Development Program this year! First, the fifteen high school students participating in the program will be split into a three-person "Root Crew" and a twelve-person "Seed Crew."



Students on a field trip at Morning Glory Farm

The Root Crew will be a seven-month program that focuses on leadership skills and season-long growing responsibilities on the urban farm. They will work April - October, around school schedules and the occasional Saturday.

The Seed Crew will join the Root Crew for eight weeks during summer break. Together these groups will learn about food systems, how to take care of the farm, as well as other valuable job skills, including communication, teamwork and problem solving.

Another new element of the program is a market stand that the students will operate on Tuesdays to sell the produce they have grown and the value-added products that they have created. This will be separate from the Matthew 25 Cultivate Hope Market on Thursdays.

Starting this year, thanks to Alliant Energy the students will have their own piece of land on which they will run their own growing operation. This will allow the Root Crew to see the entire growing process from start to finish, and it will give the students a greater sense of responsibility as well as pride in seeing the tangible results of their own work.



Working at the urban farm

Each student will walk away from this program with a greater sense of the gifts and talents they have to offer the world. They will have new friends from different backgrounds and a greater empathy for the challenges facing their peers. They will not only have a deeper appreciation of healthy food, but they'll also have knowledge of the greater food systems and

## Endowment Milestone Within Reach

Recently a very generous gift of \$20,000 from donor Betty Debban put Matthew 25's endowment fund at \$98,652, just shy of hitting \$100,000!

The Matthew 25 Friends Fund at the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation was established in 2010 as a way to help ensure the long-term sustainability of Matthew 25 by providing a permanent source of support. Gifts to the endowed fund form the principal, which is then protected and invested so that it grows. A portion of this value is distributed annually to Matthew 25 forever.

When asked about her motivation for giving such a generous gift, Betty said, "I know that Matthew 25 does such good work in this entire neighborhood here and beyond."

We thank Betty and all of the other donors who have given to our endowed fund. Your gifts will continue to provide nutritious food, healthy housing, and a good education to those in struggling neighborhoods for many years to come.

**For information about contributing to the Matthew 25 Friends Fund, visit [www.gcrf.org](http://www.gcrf.org) or contact Jana at Matthew 25 at 319-200-2783.**



Participating in food trials

how to grow food on their own in the future. They will be more responsible and confident in themselves, with valuable work skills that they can take into future jobs.

## Groundswell Cafe leans into community involvement, reaches new audiences

As a community-driven cafe, Groundswell knows the importance of reaching out to neighbors and joining forces with other great businesses in Cedar Rapids. In this spirit, Groundswell Cafe has been participating in dedicated week-long events that drive community involvement.

In February, the cafe was one of 20 restaurants participating in Cedar Rapids Restaurant Week, an initiative through the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance to showcase the great cuisine and unique eating establishments across the city. We kicked off the week by participating in Fork & Knife Feast, an event for locals to try samples



Our falafel wrap special during Restaurant Week proved to be very popular

from all 20 restaurants. Our soup was so popular that we ran out before the event was over, and had attendees asking for the West African Peanut soup that they heard about through the grapevine. This led to a noticeable increase in cafe customers throughout the week, and many new faces at that.

We're looking forward to joining other vegan and vegetarian-focused restaurants for Corridor Veg Week. This event was supposed to be April 20-24, however it has been postponed to a yet unannounced future week. When it does occur, we will be showcasing the many plant-based options that we already have on our menu,



Emily and Nathan at Fork & Knife Feast

while experimenting with some new and exciting dishes as that week's specials.

We are very lucky to be part of such a vibrant and supportive restaurant community here in Cedar Rapids. Thank you to all who support us and recommend our establishment to others. We couldn't run Groundswell Cafe and feed those in need without you!



A new Groundswell Cafe fan ready to dig in to her banana pancakes!

**Follow us on Facebook @CRGroundswell to stay up-to-date on all things happening at Groundswell.**

## Matthew 25

### WORKSHOP CALENDAR

APRIL 24 • 5 PM	Build Your Own Bat Box (online)
MAY 19 • 5 PM	Container Gardening Basics (online)
JUNE 12 • 5 PM	Build Your Own Worm Bin
JULY 10 • 5 PM	Build Your Own Bee Hotel
AUG. 11 • 5 PM	Eco-Lawnscaping For Your Yard
SEPT. 16 • 4 PM	Harvesting & Preserving Produce
OCT. 12 • 5 PM	DIY Hydroponic Gardening
NOV. 12 • 5 PM	Up-cycled Ornaments



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