



# SEEN and HEARD

*A note from Clint Twedt-Ball, Founder and Executive Director*



Think about the last time you felt really seen and heard. Maybe it was when someone noticed something special in you and took time to mention it. Perhaps you were telling a friend or partner about something stressing you and they listened empathetically and offered encouragement. How did it make you feel?

On Friday, March 28th, we opened up Groundswell Cafe for an evening of fine dining. A donor had come forward to support a night out for any family or individual that needed a free, relaxing, nice meal out. She knew that a lot of people were feeling stressed and anxious. She wanted to do her part to help out.

Throughout the evening, I had the pleasure of talking to a lot of our guests. Several families said that they would never have been able to afford a night out with a four course meal, including things like shrimp, steak and a delicious chocolate dessert. Just paying for the basics was nearly beyond them.

For some, this was their chance to celebrate something special, and they dressed in their best evening attire. Another group was made up of two families who had built a relationship based on the Big Brothers, Big Sisters program. The two families went out to celebrate the mentorship and relationship formed over many years. For some, it was a

date night! I can't tell you what a difference it made for all of these folks to feel like they mattered. Everyone, from cooks to hosts to guests, was in an incredible mood.

Our Night Out at the Cafe is just one example of people being seen and heard at Matthew 25. Earlier in March, we had our third Storytellers of Cedar Rapids event, and it was another sold out evening. Storytellers shared their experiences of being impacted by tourette syndrome, addiction, being an immigrant living in rural Iowa, having hemorrhoids and more, in a way that connected to our shared humanity.

Matthew 25's mission is to grow strong neighborhoods and a strong community overall. One of the ways we do this work is by making sure overlooked people are seen and heard. We are so much stronger as a community when everyone has a seat at the table.

In 2025, we've been keeping track of how many interactions our team has with individuals each month. Between the Cultivate Hope Corner Store, Groundswell Cafe, tool library, rental units and other activities, we have about 3,000 people per month that we are in contact with. Our

goal is to make as many of those people feel seen and heard as possible.

Is that action enough to change the world? There is a story in the Bible about a woman begging for her daughter to be healed (Matthew 15:21-28). Jesus is on the

go and seems to not want to notice her or take time to listen. Eventually, she is so loud and insistent that he can't ignore her. His first response is to be annoyed and say to her, "why should

I pay attention to you when I came for others? It's not good to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs." The woman replies that, "even the dogs get the crumbs that fall off the table." Jesus is stunned, stopped in his tracks, and tells her that her daughter has been healed. In being seen and heard, there is healing.

Think about the last time you really felt noticed. Or, worse, think about that time you felt discounted and ignored. Those feelings stick with us. Some of them are even life-changing, for good or for bad. Unfortunately, in our society, some people and neighborhoods are just naturally ignored and seen as unimportant. We'd like to think that if Matthew 25 can be a place where all people are seen and heard, lives will be changed for the better. ❤️

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# STRONGER TOGETHER:

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF TRANSFORMING HOMES AND HEARTS



## Matthew 25 Goes Solar: A Bright Step Toward a Greener Future

This past November marked an exciting milestone for our team: we installed solar panels on the roof of our office! Watching the sleek panels go up was more than just a visual transformation—it was a powerful step forward in our commitment to sustainability.

For years, we've supported projects that strengthen and uplift our community. But this felt especially meaningful. While we're certainly looking forward to reduced energy bills, the impact of solar energy reaches far beyond financial savings. It's a long-term investment in our planet—one that helps lower our carbon footprint and serves as a visible example of what's possible for others in our community.

By harnessing solar power, we're actively reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and cutting greenhouse gas emissions. That means a healthier environment today and a more stable climate for future generations. Solar energy is renewable, abundant, and enduring—making it a smart choice for organizations striving to operate in eco-conscious ways.

Our decision to go solar wasn't just about economics. It was rooted in our values. Every kilowatt-hour we generate helps ease the strain on the electrical grid, contributing to a more resilient, self-sufficient energy future. This initiative aligns perfectly with our mission to care for the Earth, spark innovation, and lead by example.

Our solar journey is just beginning, and we're proud to take this step alongside our community. Together, we can make sustainable energy not just an option—but a priority.

This June 23–27, Matthew 25 will celebrate a major milestone: **the 10th Annual Transform Week**—a powerful tradition of neighbors helping neighbors through home repair and community revitalization.

Since its start, Transform has brought together hundreds of volunteers with a simple but profound goal: to make homes in the Cedar Rapids Taylor and Time Check neighborhoods safer, healthier, and more beautiful. The program matches local homeowners in need of support with teams of volunteers who tackle repair, maintenance, and landscaping projects—all at no cost to the homeowner.

From painting porches and replacing windows to clearing overgrown yards and

building raised garden beds, the work done during Transform is visible, meaningful, and lasting.

But Transform is about more than hammers and hedge trimmers—it's about building relationships, lifting spirits, and investing in a better future for our community.

As we gear up for this landmark year, there's still time to get involved. Homeowners who need assistance can still apply to be part of this year's Transform, and volunteers of all skill levels are encouraged to sign up.

Join us June 23–27 as we celebrate ten years of building hope, one house at a time.

Apply for help or sign up to volunteer today at [matthew-25.org/transform](http://matthew-25.org/transform)



## Matthew 25 Featured on John McGivern's Main Streets TV Show!

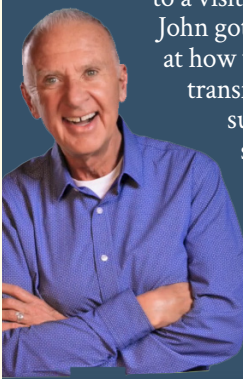
We're excited to share that Matthew 25 was recently featured in an episode of *John McGivern's Main Streets*, a regional television series that shines a spotlight on vibrant Midwestern towns and cities. The Cedar Rapids episode premiered in February and highlighted the spirit, resilience, and creativity that define our community.

As part of the episode, host John McGivern visited Matthew 25 to learn more about our mission and programs. From a stroll through our Urban Farm to a visit at Groundswell Cafe, John got a firsthand look at how we're working to transform neighborhoods, support local food systems, and empower

our neighbors through tools, housing, and education.

We're incredibly grateful to John McGivern and his team for shining a light on the heart and soul of Cedar Rapids. This feature not only highlights the work of Matthew 25 but also celebrates the strength and generosity of the entire community.

*John McGivern's Main Streets* Cedar Rapids episode is available to stream on pbs.org and the free PBS App or YouTube. We will also be showing the Matthew 25 feature and bonus footage at our Spring Celebration on April 29th.



John McGivern's  
**MAIN STREETS**



## UPCOMING EVENTS



### Spring Plant Sale

Saturday, May 3  
10:00 AM-1:00 PM



### Farm Stand Markets

Thursdays  
May 22-Oct 2  
4:00 PM-7:00 PM



### Mega Markets

Last Thursday of the month  
May-Sept  
4:00 PM-7:00 PM



### Summer Food Camps

June 9-12  
June 16-19  
June 23-26  
August 1, 8, 15



## Cultivate Hope Nutrition Nights: Nourishing Minds, Building Community



A vibrant crowd gathered at the Cultivate Hope Corner Store on March 12 for our first Nutrition Night, an evening designed to nourish both body and community. Guests experienced an engaging blend of hands-on learning, local flavor, and meaningful conversations—all centered around the power of healthy, accessible eating.

Each Nutrition Night is built around a central theme: making nutritious meals simple, affordable, and delicious. This recent event featured a local expert leading a cooking demonstration using fresh, citrus ingredients. Attendees were not only treated to a taste of the featured dish but were also invited to take home recipes, nutrition tips, and even a meal kit to recreate the dish in their own kitchens.

"This night is about more than just food," said one participant. "It's about learning more about this store, nutrition and feeling connected to your neighbors."

The evening underscored the Corner Store's objective to make healthy living practical for our community. With participants of all ages and skill levels in attendance—from curious beginners to experienced home cooks—our first Nutrition Night proved that learning to eat well can be a joyful, communal experience.

Upcoming 2025 Nutrition Nights will be June 11, September 10, and December 10. Check our website events page for times and topics. Bring a friend or the whole family, and discover how eating well can transform not just your plate, but your community!

## Take a look at what else has been happening...



### Storytellers of Cedar Rapids at Groundswell

The third Storytellers of Cedar Rapids event in March sold out once again! Don't miss the last show of our debut season on Wednesday, May 7th.

Purchase your tickets today at:  
[matthew-25.org/storytellers](http://matthew-25.org/storytellers)



### Tool Library Highlight

Our Matthew 25 Tool Library was thrilled to connect with local makers and DIY enthusiasts at the CR Public Library's Maker Fest, sharing how our tools help build a stronger community!

Watch a video taken at Maker Fest of one of our Tool Library members at:  
[matthew-25.org/maker-fest](http://matthew-25.org/maker-fest)



### Monthly Potlucks

Starting in March, we launched a new tradition — Community Building Potlucks! Join us on the first Tuesday of every month to share a meal, build connections, and strengthen community. Everyone is welcome!

Read more about our fun potlucks at:  
[matthew-25.org/monthly-potlucks](http://matthew-25.org/monthly-potlucks)





Growing Strong Neighborhoods

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



## Groundswell Cafe Wins **BIG** During Cedar Rapids Restaurant Week



Cedar Rapids Restaurant Week 2025 was a week to remember at Groundswell Cafe! With a full slate of delicious specials, live music, and vibrant energy, Groundswell experienced its most successful Restaurant Week yet—thanks to the incredible support of our community.

A major highlight came at the 2025 Fork & Knife Feast, where Groundswell Cafe won the event's People's Choice Award. Up against 18 other well-known Cedar Rapids restaurants, we were the little pay-it-forward café that could. This honor is especially meaningful to our team because it reflects the voices of the people we serve—supporters who believe in our mission of providing good food for all.

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We are deeply grateful to everyone who joined us during the week, whether you came in for a meal, cast your vote, or helped spread the word. Your continued support allows Groundswell Cafe to serve fresh, affordable meals to our neighbors while creating a space where everyone is welcome.

If you haven't visited yet, or it's been a while since you were last here, we invite you to stop in and discover (or rediscover!) what makes Groundswell Cafe so special. Every meal you enjoy helps build a stronger, more connected community.

**Thank you to all our Groundswell Cafe customers — we're honored to serve you!**



**GROUNDSWELL**  
cafe

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[matthew-25.org/email-list](http://matthew-25.org/email-list)



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### OUR MISSION:

Improve the health of people and neighborhoods by investing in quality affordable housing, healthy food, educational opportunities, and community building.