



ECIA Executive Director, Mae Hingtgen, shared CSEI highlights at the luncheon

## Donor & Partner Appreciation Luncheon

CSEI proudly hosted the 2nd annual Donor & Partner Appreciation Luncheon, bringing together individuals and organizations who make our work possible.

This year we were honored to recognize Theisen's for five years of generous financial support of CSEI's programs. Through their More For Your Community grant, Theisen's has demonstrated a strong commitment to the community, including the CSEI mission. In addition, their partnership allows CSEI to restock needed essential supplies for homeless outreach through purchases made at their stores.

CSEI is also grateful to have received a grant this year from the East Central Iowa Association of Realtors to support the producing of an informational and mission-driven video. This exciting opportunity will provide us with a professional resource to strengthen community outreach and enhance future grant applications.

During the luncheon, ECIA Executive Director Mae Hingtgen highlighted key program data and impact. CSEI Homeless Program Coordinator Christine Efferding shared powerful client feedback, offering a firsthand perspective on how our services are making a difference. CSEI Board Member Sam Wooden also spoke about his experiences and the importance of serving on the CSEI board.

Every person in attendance at this luncheon has played a role in expanding CSEI programs, reaching more individuals, and helping CSEI provide critical resources, care, and connection to those who need it most.

*Thank you!*



Theisen's Home • Farm • Auto



East Central Iowa Association of Realtors


# Impact in Action

## Seen, Heard, Helped – The Importance of Connection

When someone is at risk of experiencing homelessness, they are often navigating more than just a housing crisis. They may be facing the loss of employment, health issues, or family challenges, which can all lead to financial strain. In these moments, real conversation with a compassionate person can make all the difference. Being seen, heard, and understood face to face builds trust in ways that a phone call cannot.

In October of 2025, CSEI expanded the Housing Helpline to include onsite assistance from a Homeless Program Coordinator at locations in Dubuque where individuals are already present and expanding into Delaware County in January 2026. Walking into a familiar space and being greeted by someone ready to listen can reduce fear and uncertainty.

**CSEI In Person  
Housing Outreach Hours**



<b>Delaware County Community Services</b>
First Tuesday Each Month 10:00 AM – Noon
<b>Crescent Community Health</b>
Tuesdays & Wednesdays 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM
<b>Dubuque Rescue Mission</b>
Third Tuesday Each Month 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM



## Winter Point-in-Time – Why We Count

The Point-in-Time Count is an activity mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) every January. CSEI leads this effort to capture a one-night snapshot of unhoused individuals in Delaware and Dubuque counties. This count is not inclusive of all homelessness, as it does not capture individuals who are staying with friends and family or people who are in temporary institutional stays, like hospitals or jails.

The data collected from this count helps determine federal funding levels and guides ways in which local resources are directed to meet the greatest needs. Most importantly, the PIT Count ensures CSEI's response to homelessness is grounded in real data, helping us strategically plan and effectively advocate for our neighbors.

## Responding to the Human Need

In 2023, adults age 55 and older made up 20% of the homeless population. It's not hard to understand because the average Supplemental Security Income payment is just \$554 per month which is far less than the cost of rent alone. Add in the rising healthcare and food costs, and even the most careful budgeting can fall apart.

In December, Mary, an 80-year-old woman who had lived in her apartment for more than 25 years, called the CSEI Housing Helpline after receiving an eviction notice. Her building, plagued by mice and rats, was being fully remodeled. Suddenly, she was facing homelessness. Mary could afford rent in a new unit, but she couldn't afford the deposit or moving costs. Although she qualified for public assistance, high community need and strict assessment tools meant she likely wouldn't receive federal or state-funded help.

**Because of private donations**, CSEI was able to act. CSEI helped Mary secure a new apartment, covered her deposit, and provided six months of rental assistance to stabilize her transition.

As elderly homelessness rises, private, flexible funding is more than helpful – it's essential. This support it can mean the difference between losing everything and simply moving forward for seniors like Mary.



***“Adults over 50 are the fastest-growing group experiencing homelessness in America, and their numbers are expected to triple by 2030.”***

*- National Alliance to End Homelessness*

# Programs & CSEI Updates

## Our Mission

Our mission is to promote and encourage public well-being; provide homeless prevention resources to those living in poverty and threatened with homelessness; to help individuals and families survive and exit homelessness; and to expand opportunities and empower people to be self-sufficient in east-central Iowa cities and counties.

## Our Programs

### Rapid Rehousing

Short and medium-term rental assistance and case management serving individuals and families who are homeless

### Homeless Prevention

Short-term assistance serving individuals and families who are at imminent risk of homelessness

### Tenant Based Rental Assistance

Rental assistance for individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

### Street Outreach

Outreach program with emphasis on reaching those living unsheltered and providing basic needs

### Housing Helpline

Individuals at risk of homelessness in Delaware or Dubuque counties are encouraged to call the Housing Helpline to access information, referrals, and resources in their communities related to housing instability or homelessness

## Donations Matter

**507**

HOUSING INSTABILITY CALLS

**146**

INDIVIDUALS SERVED THROUGH A HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

**21**

INDIVIDUALS SERVED THROUGH STREET OUTREACH

**27**

HELPED DURING WINTER POINT IN TIME COUNT

## CSEI Staff Feature:



**Chelle Klootwyk**  
Communications/  
Development  
Assistant

Chelle Klootwyk joined CSEI in July 2025 as the Communications/Development Assistant. Before coming to CSEI, she worked with several nonprofit organizations in Dubuque and brings more than seventeen years of experience in city government to her role.

"I am most passionate about work that supports the greater good and allows me to lead with compassion and kindness. I love building connections with community members and working together to make a positive impact in our communities so that every person has the opportunity to succeed."

Reach out to Chelle at [cklootwyk@ecia.org](mailto:cklootwyk@ecia.org) to learn how you can make a greater impact in our communities or invite a CSEI team member to speak with your organization about the programs we offer supporting some of our most vulnerable neighbors.



**Jennifer Walker**  
Special Programs  
Director

Jennifer Walker retired after 16 years with ECIA, where she most recently served as Director of Special Programs. She began in 2009 on a temporary, part-time basis in the Community Development Department, helping to address a backlog of hazard mitigation plans. Over time, she used her fundraising expertise to support feasibility studies and capitol campaigns for projects such as the Haedacre Theater in Tipton, libraries in Clarence and Asbury, the Miracle League of Dubuque, the Kid Project Childcare Center in Dyersville, and L'Arche in Clinton.

Jennifer also played a role in guiding community organizations through strategic planning, helping them map out long-term goals.

As director of CSEI, she led a rebranding effort, strengthened fundraising, expanded the donor base, and raised awareness about homelessness.

Beyond her primary role, she served as a Keep Iowa Beautiful Hometown Pride Coach, supporting several communities. One highlight was securing a \$9,699 state grant to restore the historic WWI Spirit of the Doughboy sculpture in Mechanicsville, which was reinstalled in time for Memorial Day 2023.

Help us congratulate Jennifer on her many years of service and impact on communities across northeast Iowa.

## Contribute to Our Mission!

### Mail Donations:

Community Solutions of Eastern Iowa  
7600 Commerce Park  
Dubuque, IA 52002

