

High Holy Day Appeal

*For many years, AJC has conducted a food drive over the High Holy Days—unfortunately, this year that is not possible. Instead, we are encouraging AJC members and friends to support one or more of the nonprofit organizations in Ames that do good work in providing food and shelter to those in our community who otherwise would be hungry and/or homeless. This is especially important now with the high level of unemployment and other effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Below is a listing of some of the more prominent organizations, for which some AJC is an official member, and websites you can go to for more information or to donate. **Please give generously!***

COVID-19 Emergency Fund for Story County Immigrants

This Emergency Fund is meant for Story County immigrant residents who need assistance with rent, utilities, or other basic necessities. It has made a huge difference in the lives of many people in our community, providing over \$78,000 in rent and utility assistance to 78 different households as of early August. Without this help, many of these people would now be facing the possibility of eviction or utility cut-offs. The financial situation hasn't eased for many of these families, and it is expected that they will need financial help for a long time yet. Tax deductible contributions designated "COVID-19 Fund for Immigrants" may be sent to St. Cecilia Catholic Church, 2900 Hoover Ave., Ames, IA 50010, or given online at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/story-county-covid19-immigrant-fund>.

Food at First (<https://foodatfirst.wordpress.com/>)

The Food at First program, operating out of First Christian Church in downtown Ames, provides free food—no questions asked—in two ways: a free meal program and a perishable food pantry. **Free meals** are provided seven days a week to anyone who is hungry. The **perishable food pantry** takes the thousands of pounds of leftover fresh food (after taking what is needed for the free meals) and gives it away to folks who need it. Although the food given away by Food at First is given free of charge by local stores and food providers, there are underlying monetary costs, such as overhead and the purchase of supplies and food staples needed for cooking the meals (purchased from the central food bank at a deep discount). Cash outlays have increased tremendously with COVID, as meals are provided in disposable containers and many plastic bags are needed to prepackage the fresh produce.

MICA (Mid-Iowa Community Action)

<https://www.micaonline.org/>

Most years, MICA has been the recipient of AJC's High Holiday nonperishable food (and paper goods) drive. MICA works closely with local communities to stock food pantries for families in need. It works with community members, religious institutions, and other organizations to keep its food pantry shelves stocked, allowing many families to provide meals for their children. MICA always appreciates donations to its local food pantries, and monetary donations go a long way with MICA's ability to acquire food at a deep discount.

Bridge Home (formerly known as ERP—Emergency Residence Project

[\(http://www.amesshelter.org/\)](http://www.amesshelter.org/)

The Bridge Home is the local homeless shelter in Ames, serving Story County and surrounding areas. It provides shelter and food to the homeless, and whenever possible, helps to prevent individuals and families from becoming or remaining homeless. The immediate concern is how the effects of COVID are preventing people from paying their utilities and rent, greatly increasing the risk of utility shutoffs and/or eviction. ERP receives financial support from many of its member congregations, most of which conduct Sunday "offerings" that can be funneled to the Bridge Home; AJC doesn't have that practice and so depends on its members to contribute directly to the organization. We know that many of our members give generously to ERP as individuals; if you would like AJC to receive "credit" for your donation, either make a notation on your check or send a check to AJC and we will deliver it with the proper notation. AJC is a member organization.

Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance (GNEA)

<https://gnea.org/>

GNEA was organized by member faith groups in Ames and Story County to provide emergency rent, utility, food, fuel, and other assistance. Before GNEA began operating in 1997, AJC and other faith organizations received a steady request from those who needed charitable assistance beyond the resources available from other agencies in Story County. Out of concern and vision for stewardship, a few faith groups pooled their resources to organize Good Neighbor, which today offers a central location where a qualified director evaluates requests for assistance and provides counseling and advocacy with the support of dedicated volunteers. AJC is a member organization.

MAZON (<https://mazon.org/>)

Although not a local organization, MAZON is a well-established national advocacy organization, inspired by Jewish values and ideals, working to end hunger among people of all faiths and backgrounds in the United States and Israel. Its current areas of focus include military & veterans, senior citizens, rural/remote Native American communities, student hunger, Israel, and more. AJC is a member organization.