



Cunningham Township

Danielle Chynoweth, Supervisor

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March 5, 2021

Dear Florence, Board members, and the congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign,

We thank you profusely for the support you have provided to the residents of the Champaign County through the UUU Fund. Your donations have been literally lifesaving for residents in the county facing the devastations of current or imminent utility shut offs, in the winter, during a pandemic. It has also helped us pay past due bills of homeless residents moving into permanent housing. May no one ever experience what these friends and neighbors of ours have.

So far, your donations have allowed us to pay the past due bills and reconnection fees for 11 households: 4 for power and 7 for water.

We were working with a man who had been homeless since his eviction several years ago to access new vouchers for the homeless. The entire process was a grueling eight months during which he lost his job, moved from a motel into the shelter, and enrolled in school. He tried for months to get a copy of his out-of-town birth certificate with offices closed due to COVID. Finally he did, submitted it, and received a voucher. Hooray! He then had to search for several months for housing and faced discrimination as someone with a felony conviction. He finally found housing. But, as he was going through the inspection process, he found out he had over \$300 in past due utility bills from years ago. He could not move in until he paid these off. And if he did not pay it soon, he would lose his apartment and voucher. The UUU fund was used to pay off this debt so he could reestablish power in his name and move in. Through our Housewarming program funded by the Angel Donor fund he was able to furnish his new apartment. I can not express the joy of this man moving into his new place. May everyone experience such joy.

Nearly every call we receive about water shut offs is from a family with children or a resident with disabilities.

One woman with three children called on a freezing day. She had made a payment plan but missed one payment of \$98 dollars when she lost expected child support and her water was cut

off. Another woman with disabilities had her water turned off and the company refused partial payments as is their policy when water is shut off. Another woman with a teenager had her water turned off when she lost her job due to COVID, and said she had no notice as the notice went to her landlord. In every case, their water was paid from the UUU fund the same day their presented their bill to us.

Being able to provide same-day assistance to those who are struggling to pay their utility bills is invaluable, especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Your generosity and kindness have helped keep members of our community safe in their homes and we cannot thank you enough for your continued support of our community.

Last week we were close to spending down the UUU funds. Thanks to a recent donation of \$6,000 we now have a balance of \$8,517. This will be essential in the coming month as Ameren plans to reinstate disconnections at the end of March. (The water company has continued shut-offs all winter). We expect a rise in requests for assistance going into April and May. We also have continued requests for

We also want to thank you for all the wonderful notes from your congregation. It has been a rough winter for our participants and the staff who support them. It really lifted out spirits to hear from you.

With love,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Danielle Chynoweth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D".

Danielle Chynoweth
Cunningham Township Supervisor