



# ECHO UPDATE

QUARTERLY NEWS TO KNOW FOR VOLUNTEERS

## Notes from the Director's Desk

by Mike Baier, Executive Director



Mike Baier with Food Room Cochair Lucinda Marvin

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*In the post-pandemic “new normal” of our current work/life environment, this note continues my effort to share among ourselves what we now do in the various sections to help meet our neighbors’ needs. The goal of the tour of each of our sections is to nurture a collective appreciation for what each section does to meet our mission of helping our neighbors. The tour will include each section’s major responsibilities/tasks, major challenges, and, what other volunteers need to know about what that section does to help them in the work in their own sections. Last newsletter, we toured the Counselor section. This tour takes us to the **Food Room**.*

Of the client needs ECHO helps meet, food is the most immediate. While food needs may fluctuate with the season and the extent of economic circumstances, we take in an average of 18,000 pounds of food a month, and give out 22,000 pounds a month. Meeting the food need for clients requires coordinated, complementary actions across the ECHO enterprise: Counselors to engage clients to determine eligibility for ECHO support and general areas of need and to set up food appointments; ECHO outreach to state our food needs (in newsletters, on our social media platforms); generous in-kind donor response from individuals and organizations; Donation Door volunteers to process those donations; Food Room volunteers to sort, store and stock the food, to coordinate with Counselors on food appointments, to help clients through the Food Choice options, to weigh and record the food provided during each client’s visit to the Food Room, to purchase food items in short supply.

continued....



## Notes from the Director's Desk . . . continued

To ensure ECHO's food program meets client needs, the Food Room volunteers:

- Manage and execute programs for food donations, purchase, sorting, and storage.
- Educate volunteers, donors, congregations, the general public about Food Room needs (for food items, volunteers, etc.).
- Guide the clients through the Food Choice program process, and record the results of each client's visit to the Food Room.
- Coordinate Food Room operations and programs with other ECHO teams – Counselors, Clothing, Housewares, etc. – to help ensure ECHO operations and programs across the enterprise are complementary and mutually supporting in meeting client needs.
- Ensure Food Program operations, to include purchase of food from external commercial outlets, proceed in accordance with ECHO budgetary guidelines and standards.
- Coordinate ECHO Food Program operations, practices with those of partner organizations (e.g., County Government partners, other Community Based Organizations, etc.) to ensure complementary support and to reduce unnecessary duplication of support efforts in helping neighbors in need.

*Mike Baier with Lucinda Marvin, Food Room Co-Chair*



**ECHO will be Closed for the  
Christmas and New Year  
holidays Dec 21 through Jan 1.**



# PARKING LOT PROGRESS

Update from Bob Vitter, President

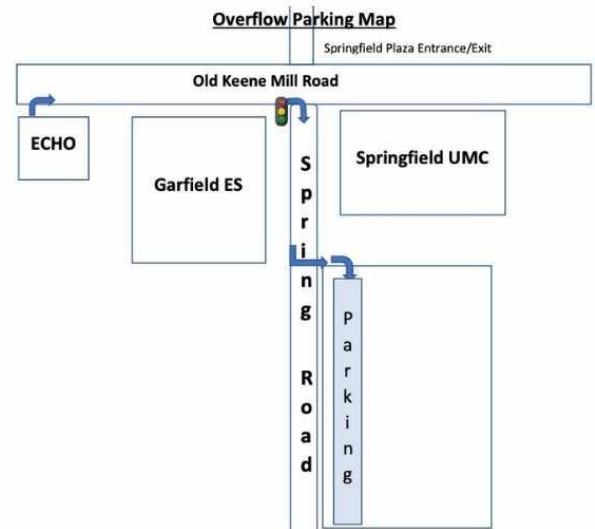
After many delays, construction on the new Volunteer Parking Lot is now in progress. Construction is expected to take 12 - 14 weeks, but remember construction weeks are similar to Dog Years.

During construction overflow parking will no longer be available and we will lose some spaces at the end of the paved parking area due to construction traffic.

Large construction vehicles will come through the Main (Client) entrance, drive around the back of the building and enter the construction area via the former gravel entrance to overflow parking.



- Do not park along the back fence (near the sheds) or in the parking spaces close to the back fence - we will mark the spaces that are not to be used
- We will reserve some parking spaces next to the building for Volunteers with limited mobility
- Other parking spaces in the Volunteer Lot will be on a first come basis
- We have made arrangements with Springfield United Methodist Church to use some parking in their lot on Spring Road - see attached map
- If you park there, please park ONLY in the designated area and put an ECHO Volunteer sign on your dash.
- We will setup an area near the Volunteer Entrance with updates on construction status and extra copies of the SUMC map and the Volunteer sign
- I encourage Volunteers working on a specific day to form carpools - either from home or meet at SUMC and park then one Volunteer drives to ECHO
- If you currently work 9:30 - 12:30 but can work in the afternoon - please consider shifting your scheduled time for the duration of the construction
- Evening and Saturday shifts should not be impacted since we have fewer Volunteers working those shifts



**Please Park ONLY in the parking spaces on the right side, next to Spring Road.**

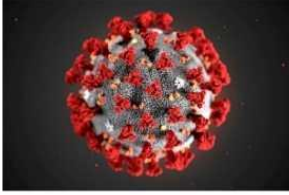
**DO NOT park in the middle section.**

**Put an ECHO Volunteer sign on your dash.**



Breaking Ground November 27th





# ECHO's COVID POLICY UPDATE

December 13, 2023

As of 1 December 2023, according to the CDC, the Fairfax County hospital admissions rate for COVID cases is **LOW** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>)

Current precautions include:

- Stay up to date with Covid-19 vaccines
- Maintain ventilation improvements
- Avoid contact with people who have suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19
- Follow recommendations for isolation if you have suspected or confirmed COVID-19
- Follow the recommendations for what you are to do if you are exposed to someone with COVID-19
- If you are at high risk of getting very sick, talk with a health care provider about additional prevention actions

Based on this guidance, ECHO's current COVID Policy is as follows:

- Masks are a personal choice. Those Volunteers that are working/interfacing with clients (their choice) may ask the client to wear a mask and the volunteer would obviously wear a mask while working with them. Volunteers and clients may use masks at anytime, anywhere while in ECHO.
- Vaccination recommended for all Volunteers. Staying "up-to-date" on COVID vaccinations now means a regular, probably annual, injection developed to handle the latest COVID variant. Documenting that frequency to "prove" current "up-to-date" vaccination status is impractical/impossible to implement in ECHO's all-volunteer environment. Rather, ECHO continues to encourage all Volunteers to follow CDC guidance for staying up-to-date on vaccinations. Encouraging/ recommending vaccinations is also part of the recruiting interview process for new Volunteers.
- ECHO encourages/recommends that all clients follow CDC guidance for staying "up-to-date" on COVID vaccinations. Counselors will encourage/recommend to all clients that they follow CDC guidance for staying "up-to-date" on COVID vaccinations. Counselors will provide that guidance as a part of the in-take process, along with information on COVID vaccination availability. ECHO will continue to provide clients COVID at-home test kits (as available). As with Volunteers, Counselors will also advise clients that they may use masks at any time while inside the ECHO building.
- COVID Positive Notification.
  - If a Volunteer tests positive for COVID, notify your Shift Lead, Committee Chair.
  - The Volunteer will follow CDC guidance for isolation (currently for five days) and wear a mask for 10 days after testing positive. If asymptomatic, they can then return to ECHO. (Positive Volunteers please follow the CDC website for Care – What to Do if You Are Sick).
  - The Shift Lead/Committee Chair will handle notification – within the shift, to those who may have had long contact with other volunteers - to the Director.



## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: ECHO'S ENRICHMENT BAG TEAM

*by Jane Curtis, Outreach Chair*



Susie Miller, Andi Smith, Andrea Talbott, Laura Holsinger, seated Lynn Colahan.  
Not pictured Pat O'Hara, Carole Flamm

The Enrichment Bag team might boast that their program is the most fun of any of ECHO's year-round volunteer efforts. They assemble age-appropriate packages of toys, games, and books to give to the children of clients. Co-chairs Susie Miller and Andi Smith lead a group that is determined to bring both fun and learning to children whose families are experiencing financial hardship.

Susie, a founder of the program, describes its beginning this way: "Around 14 years ago, while volunteering in Housewares, I was putting some items in the "freebie" section out front, when a client approached me and asked me to find a book for her 6th grade daughter. We talked and I helped her select several books on different reading levels. Later, another volunteer, Debbie Eakin, and I were discussing the abundance of toys ECHO receives. An idea to make age-appropriate packages for the children of clients kept rumbling around in our heads and we approached Barbara McDonald, Housewares Co-chair, (who) told us to talk to Meg Brantley, the Director. Both were very receptive, and the enrichment program began with the two of us."

Each Enrichment Bag contains something educational, something soft such as a stuffed animal, and something fun such as Play-Doh or a puzzle. The bags are given out at clothing appointments to all clients who have children under 15. Each week, 30 to 50 Enrichment Bags are distributed to ECHO client households. In addition to enjoying their work together, this team has a common goal. Pat O'Hara says she likes "the comradery of being with other like-minded volunteers who want to put a smile on the face of a child."

continued...



## continued... Enrichment Bag Team

Co-Chair Andi calls the group of volunteers on this project the “Toy Tuesday Team.” The team includes Lynn Colahan, Carole Flamm, Laura Holsinger, Pat O’Hara, and Andrea Talbott. Sometimes Andi’s seven-year-old grandson gets drafted to check out puzzles and games at her home to certify that they are complete and ready to bring happiness to a child.

The work includes sorting through donations for items appropriate for the program. The Enrichment bags are made up and labelled by age and gender. The team makes sure the items included are clean and in working order. Lynn Colahan says, “It’s important that what we give to them is complete—puzzle pieces and game pieces.” These women use this project to convey love and respect to the children who receive these packages.

Carole says, “I really enjoy making special packages...that can help bring joy and learning opportunities to the children we support. I am also grateful for the comradery and sense of community I feel with the volunteer team at ECHO.”

While this project has a line item in ECHO’s budget so that they may purchase some items to complete the Enrichment Bags if needed, the team finds most of the materials for the program in the donations that come through ECHO’s Donation Door. Laura says, “I love making use of all the great stuff (books, toys, games, toiletries, etc.) ... by giving it to the families who may not otherwise be able to afford them.” In addition, the Toy Tuesday Team takes donated books that ECHO can’t use to McKay’s in Manassas where they are able to trade for books appropriate for this project.



Andrea sums up the enjoyment of being a member of the Toy Tuesday Team in these words, “Volunteering at ECHO is a great way to give back ... It gives me the opportunity to plan and organize (which I love), while being a part of a very dynamic team. Each Tuesday I partner with a team of amazing women, whose work will have a positive impact on many families within the community.”





# ECHO HOLIDAY OUTREACH EFFORTS



## Holiday Shop 2023

By Eileen Short, Holiday Shop Co-chair

ECHO's Holiday Shop was once again a very huge success! Thanks to the many volunteers that helped this year and to the different areas at ECHO that gave up space to make this wonderful event happen. Due to our many generous donors, we were able to provide toys to approximately 220 families/550 children. The ECHO Holiday Shop provides such joy to many families in the ECHO community. Its heart warming to see the smiles on our clients' faces.



Elves-in-waiting Randy Browner, Patty Maton, Janet Morgan, Linda Priddy, Nancy Halloway

## Holiday Meals 2023

by Fran Eck, Holiday Meals Co-chair

Thanks to all the ECHO volunteers who, either through their congregations or through ECHO directly, provided Thanksgiving meals to 259 ECHO clients. All 200 Christmas Meal recipients were from the remainder of ECHO-covered zip codes. The number of client responses to our invitation showed that the need for food is still strong. Many of the clients thanked ECHO for the invitation to receive a meal.





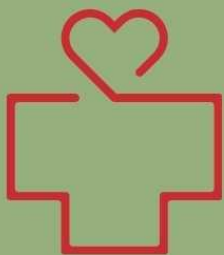
## FALL YARDSALE UPDATE

The October 28th Yard Sale in St Bernadette's Catholic Church school gym went well and the assistance from St. Bernadette's was a huge help. The church rented tables and set them up early Friday morning. Total sales for the Fall Yard Sale were \$18,020.20 with \$11,116.20 received on Friday and Saturday. In-house sales, April 18 - October 26th were \$5,824. We were once again able to offer clients \$20 coupons of which \$1,080 were redeemed.

This is always an exciting event and the teamwork involved in the effort shows the spirit of ECHO in giving and receiving. Thank you to the Yard Sale Team: Kathy Freund (Yard Sale Chair), Cele Frazee, Susan Taylor, Mary Chasteen, and Rachel Hoover assisted by Joan Wheaton, Facilities Director and to the many, many volunteers who helped.



## ECHO RED CROSS FIRST AID TRAINING



To improve our ability to respond to emergencies in the ECHO building, we arranged for Red Cross first aid training. Twenty-five ECHO volunteers were certified in Red Cross first aid/CPR/AED during two training sessions on October 18 and November 15. ECHO now has Red Cross-certified volunteers for every shift except Wednesday evening. We will put that Red Cross training on a two-year cycle to match that for Red Cross certification. The Red Cross trainers also recommended on-line training in opioid overdose and naloxone, details for which we passed to the volunteers who received this training.



***Please share the Food Room Shopping List on this page to help meet increased demand.***

# ECHO PANTRY

## THANKS FOR ADDING ECHO TO YOUR SHOPPING LIST

### Winter 2023-24

*Thank you for including ECHO Food Room needs on your shopping list.*

- *Choose sizes appropriate for our average family size of four.*
- *Include an assortment of food to ensure a variety of items for our clients.*
- *Because of the generosity of our community, ECHO has an ample supply of canned vegetables (especially green beans), can pumpkin, applesauce, and stuffing. However, we are short on many other items such as personal care products and the items listed below.*
- *ECHO cannot give our clients food whose expiration date is past, open food, or repackaged food (no zip-loc bags).*
- *ECHO continues to see a deficit of several thousand pounds a month between food donated and food given to clients. Since the beginning of the pandemic ECHO has seen an increase in need and this need has not abated. Any donation, large or small, is most gratefully welcomed.*

#### **Food List:**

- Protein Items (e.g. can chicken, Spam, sardines, chili, beef stew)
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Instant Coffee
- Can Fruit
- Bag Rice
- Tea (green, herbal, black)
- Milk products (canned, shelf stable, hot chocolate)
- Spices (esp. garlic, onion, cinnamon, salt, pepper, Cumin)
- Juice
- Crackers
- Can Tomatoes
- Healthy Snacks (nuts, raisins, dried fruit, granola bars etc.)
- Sugar
- Masa (Corn) Flour
- Box Potatoes
- Lentils
- Pancake Mix
- Pancake Syrup
- Bagged beans (black, red, or garbanzo)

- Macaroni and Cheese
- Lemon/Lime Juice
- Honey
- Cooking Oil
- Tortillas
- Muffin/Cornbread Mix
- Brown paper bags
- Reusable grocery bags

#### **Hygiene Products:**

- Children's Toothbrushes
- Laundry Detergent
- Toilet Paper
- Deodorant
- Shampoo
- Bath Soap
- Facial Tissues
- Dish Soap
- Paper Towels
- Body/Hand Lotion
- Band Aids
- Shaving Cream/Razors



[www.echo-inc.org](http://www.echo-inc.org)  
for more details



# NOTES FROM THE CLOTHING ROOM

*by Paula Kvartunas, Clothing Co-Chair*

## Clothing Donations Needed

Men's Jeans 30/30, 30/32, 32/30, 32/32

New Men's Underwear 28/30, 30/32, 34/36

Girl's Winter Tops/Bottoms Sizes 5-18

Adult Winter Coats Sizes Small, Medium, Large

Adult/Children's Winter Scarves



Visit the Amazon Wishlist to order needed items directly. Thanks!

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1NPONMD7U0IS2?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1NPONMD7U0IS2?ref_=wl_share)

## HOUSEWARES NETWORKING WINDFALL



by Barbara Ryan, Housewares Co-Chair

During a donation drop-off, Debbie Moreau chatted with the donor and commented how needed the donated dishes were. The donor worked at Clyde's of Georgetown and offered additional dishes for donation if we were willing to pick them up. A big thanks to Brian Heath, Joan Wheaton, and Debbie Moreau for driving with me to Georgetown to acquire the dishes. We carried the dishes down two narrow staircases from the attic storage for a total of 1,200 pounds of dishware. This donation will enable us to make many dish sets for our clients. Thanks to Joan, Brian, and Debbie for taking the time and providing the muscle to make this happen!



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars for these upcoming opportunities for enjoyment that will benefit ECHO.

December 17th 4:00 PM

### Annual FOMA Seasonal Concert

St Andrew's Episcopal Church

6509 Sydenstricker Rd, Burke, VA 22015

Join us for our annual seasonal celebration with Karen Ashbrook, joined by multi-instrumentalist Paul Oorts, fiddler Andrea Hoag, and vocalist Eileen Estes. These four internationally-known performers have crafted a delightful program of Celtic songs and tunes to celebrate Christmas, winter, and the New Year. Selections include the toe-tapping Wren, the King of the Birds, and the tender Irish lullaby Christ in the Manger, set to the beloved melody of Morning Has Broken. The program has a wide selection of traditional and contemporary airs, jigs, and reels from Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man, and Brittany.

**A portion of the proceeds will go to ECHO**

Contact Andrea Hellier for more details ([andrea.hellier@verizon.net](mailto:andrea.hellier@verizon.net))



### Maleks' Pizza and Pasta

7118 Old Keene Mill Rd. Springfield, VA 22150

**LAST MONDAY OF THE MONTH CHARITY!**

Since this month's last Monday is Christmas, THIS MONTH WE WILL DONATE ON THE SECOND TO LAST MONDAY. Join us on **Monday, December 18 - Tuesday, December 19th**, in support of **ECHO**, an organization providing food and financial help to people with short-term emergencies and providing clothes and household items to people with low income. 25% of all sales - dine in, take out, delivery, and catering - will be donated directly to this cause! **All sales from dine-in, carry-out, delivery, and catering go to our cause of the month**



*Just to set the record straight, it's*

**"MAA-LEX" not "MUH-LEEKs!"**

**ma-lek's** /málek/ *n.* **1** restaurant that has been open for over 30 years. **2** first pizzeria in Springfield to offer dine-in, take-out and delivery of great taste and excellent quality. **3** family hideaway; open crazy hours of the night. **4** historical establishment; offering so much more than pizza.





## HELP WANTED: SPECIAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

*Submitted by Beth Clark, Volunteer Coordinator*



***There are so many ways to help at ECHO.  
See if your skills match a need***



Check the ECHO website to see new opportunities as they come available. Go to [www.echo-inc.org](http://www.echo-inc.org) and click the Volunteer tab and go to Adult Volunteer Positions Needed Right Now, or email [Volunteercoordinator@echo-inc.org](mailto:Volunteercoordinator@echo-inc.org).

**Clothing – 1 volunteer Thursday evenings**

**Clothing Support – 1 volunteer Monday mornings;  
2 volunteers Thursday mornings**

**Counselors –1 Spanish speaking counselor Friday mornings;  
1 Spanish speaking counselor Tuesday evenings  
1 Assistant Counselor Tuesday evenings and Thursday evenings**

**Donation Door – 1 volunteer Thursday evenings**

**Food room –2 volunteers needed. One would be a floater who can fill in mornings when volunteers are unable to work on their given day. This could become a permanent slot as openings arise.**

**The second volunteer is on Friday mornings. This is a more physical day as the Food Room rotates stock on this day. Volunteer must be able to lift boxes weighing 20-40 pounds for 2-3 hours. Comfortable working on ladder and moving boxes weighing about 20 pounds. Other tasks could include working with clients as they shop, and sorting food.**

**Housewares – 1 volunteer Monday mornings;  
1 volunteer Thursday evenings,  
1 volunteer Saturday mornings**

**continued...**



## SPECIAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

...continued

### Grant Writing Team

ECHO is searching for Grant Writers to support our efforts in securing funding to help our neighbors in need. A Grant Writer's responsibilities include researching grant opportunities, writing compelling grant proposals to acquire funding, and working with the finance team to identify ECHO programs that could benefit from grant funding.



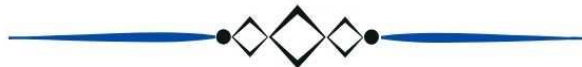
### Responsibilities:

- Identify grant funding opportunities
- Write, submit and manage grant proposals
- Furnish prospective funders with supporting documents

### Preferred Qualifications:

- Proven work experience as a Grant Writer or similar role
- Proficient with measuring and reaching income goals
- Working knowledge of MS Office Word and Excel

**DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO COULD HELP? - PLEASE NETWORK FOR US!**  
 e-mail [Volunteercoordinator@echo-inc.org](mailto:Volunteercoordinator@echo-inc.org).



## HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS

The Board of Supervisors designated November 11-18, 2023, as Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. ECHO's Food Room Co-Chair, Lucinda Marvin attended this event as ECHO's representative. Lucinda noted that Chairman McKay said that over 60,000 people in this wealthy county are food insecure. Also, during the discussion among the supervisors, Supervisor Lusk recognized the work that ECHO does. ECHO is proud to be among these groups recognized for their service to our community.







## BOD FAITH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

# The Rolling Valley Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

*by Jane Curtis, Outreach Chair*

The Rolling Valley Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, one of ECHO's supporting congregations, has its own podcast called Rolling Valley Stories. The podcast is produced by members of the congregation. The use of this technology within a local faith community offers a fresh approach to reaching out to members. Brad Cochran, the member of the Ward who produces the podcast, and David Stankiewicz, the Ward's representative to the ECHO Board of Directors, credited bishop Jake Aplanalp of their congregation with the idea for the podcast. Bishop Aplanalp believed it would be useful in building meaningful connections between members. He wanted to use the podcast as a vehicle for members to strengthen each other spiritually.



6942 Sydenstricker Road  
Springfield, VA 22152

Brad, as interviewer and technical producer of the program, captures the living histories of members who voluntarily sign up to be interviewed. Brad says that the best part of the podcast endeavor is “hearing about the struggles, challenges, failures and successes of others and how those experiences have affected their life and drawn them closer to God and Jesus Christ.” Sometimes the stories include times of great stress or sadness. Listeners may hear their own challenges reflected in the stories and draw inspiration from the accounts of the role of faith in the lives of those who are interviewed. Though the initial idea was to use the podcasts as a way of fostering unity within the congregation, they are distributed on popular podcast sites such as Google, Apple, and Spotify, so that anyone who is interested may download and listen to them.

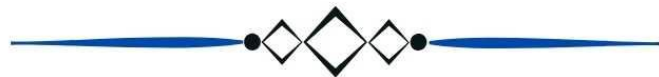
The Rolling Valley Ward has a long relationship with ECHO. David says that the Ward tries to include as many different members as possible in helping ECHO serve people in need in the community. They hold regular food drives to help keep ECHO's Food Pantry stocked; their youth clean ECHO's building once a week; and they rotate with other Church of Jesus Christ congregations to provide lawn-mowing and other clean-up for the outside of the building.

continued . . .



## **continued...The Rolling Valley Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Podcast**

The congregation offers further opportunities for its members to support people in our community. In addition to their efforts on behalf of ECHO, David says, "Along with other congregations of the Church of Jesus Christ, we support the Resource Center for a Better Life, which provides free classes in English, basic computer skills, American culture and sewing instruction to recent immigrants and refugees."



**Thank you to all ECHO Volunteers**  
**Peace and joy in this season**

**See you back at ECHO in 2024!**