



ECHO UPDATE

QUARTERLY NEWS TO KNOW FOR VOLUNTEERS

Notes from the Director's Desk

by Mike Baier, Executive Director

*In our last three newsletters, we toured the Counselor, Food, and Clothing sections to better understand the “new normal” that emerged after the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the adjustments we made to continue to meet our neighbors’ needs. The goal of the tour is to nurture a collective appreciation for what each section does to meet our mission of helping our neighbors. This tour takes us to the third leg of our in-kind donations, **Housewares**.*



Mike Baier with Monday Housewares Volunteers
Grit Labocki and Eileen McGirl

IN THIS ISSUE:

- NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK
- HOUSEWARES: ITEMS NEEDED
- ECHO PARKING LOT COMPLETED
- INTRODUCING STORYTELLING AT ECHO
- VOLUNTEER PROFILE: DONATION DOOR VOLUNTEER SAMEER AL NASHIF
- FOOD AND CLOTHING...WITH A SMILE
- SPRING YARD SALE UPDATE
- ECHO FOOD PANTRY LIST
- NOTES FROM THE CLOTHING ROOM
- 3RD ANNUAL VOLUNTEER PICNIC
- SCHOOL BACKPACK PROGRAM IS BACK
- HELP WANTED: SPECIAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
- FAITH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:
ECHO CONGREGATIONS MODEL
COOPERATION AND FRIENDSHIP

As with Food and Clothing, meeting any need for housewares requires a collaborative effort across ECHO. It begins with the Counselors who determine eligibility for our clients to receive ECHO support, and then determine the nature of the support that we can provide. They set up the appointments for Food and Clothing, and may include individual client requests for houseware items. Our Communications and Outreach efforts, and those of the Donation Door Volunteers, help educate our donors about what ECHO needs for helping clients, as well as explaining to donors what we cannot accept, and why.

Housewares Department's Major Responsibilities/Tasks:

Working in Housewares is a very diverse job. We see all kinds of donations! This team sorts through the donated items, and determines whether an item directly benefits our client base. If it does, we either add it to our inventory, or place the item in the lobby, food room, or clothing room for clients to browse and select. If an item does not directly benefit clients and has value, it is transferred to the yard sale team for pricing. Otherwise, it is passed on to B-Thrifty, or any of the other external organizations ECHO supports, such as Medical Missionaries or the Animal Shelter.

continued....

Notes from the Director's Desk

... continued

Major challenges:

Post pandemic, Housewares identified stock items which we always hope to have on hand to fulfill client requests. Because a client can schedule appointments at set time intervals, we want to ensure we have the stock items available to meet client needs. These stock items include sheets, comforters, towel sets, large and medium pots, large frying pans, coffee pots, tea kettles, and toaster ovens.



In the past year, both an increase in client needs and a drop in donations have made it difficult to keep these stock items on hand. To alert the community of donors to our needs, we publish a wish list on the ECHO website, maintain an Amazon Wish List, and additionally include immediate needs on the ECHO marquee and publish it in the church bulletins, from which our Community does make donations on these needs. Even so, Housewares needs to make purchases when inventory is low, and this has been occurring more frequently in the last year.

What other volunteers need to know about what each section does to help them work in their own sections:

To help ensure we manage our inventory, and have items for all clients, Housewares has specific guidelines for what a client can request. These guidelines include:



- Blender only for families with babies
- Silverware sets for the family size – meaning a family of 4 may only receive 4 sets of silverware
- Dish sets for the family size
- Bedding – one sheet set and 1 comforter, if needed
- Pots and pans – one large pot and one saucepan per family
- Frying pan – one per family
- Towel sets – one per family member
- One Crock pot or Instant pot per visit

These guidelines help ensure we have inventory and can fulfill the needs of any client who has an appointment.

continued....

Notes from the Director's Desk . . . continued

We work very closely with the Donor Door Volunteers, Clothing Volunteers, Yard Sale team, Fix It Desk, Counselors, and Food Room Volunteers in the following manner:

- The Donor Door Volunteers complete an initial screening of Housewares items that have been donated. Often Housewares collaborates with the Donor Door Volunteer to confirm if Housewares can accept a donated item.
- Any electronic or battery-operated item goes to the Fix It Desk where the donated item can be fully vetted and verified that it is functioning correctly. Brian Heath at the Fix It Desk also takes scrap metals to various off-site locations to sell for additional revenue. Often, we coordinate with Brian on whether a metal item has any additional value.
- We work very closely with the Clothing team as the Clothing team works directly with the client. Clothing conveys what Houseware items the client has requested, and the Housewares team pulls the requested item from the shelf.
- Housewares has shelf space in the food room. We place small electronic items for clients to take home if the electronic item has been sitting on our shelf for a while. We also provide serving platters and any other Housewares item that would benefit our clients, and it is not something they would routinely request.
- A meeting with representatives from the Counselor area, Clothing, Food and Housewares occurs throughout the year to ensure we continue to meet the needs of our clients, and to make adjustments, if needed.

Mike Baier with Barbara Ryan and Jean Chandler, Housewares Department Co-Chairs

HOUSEWARES: ITEMS NEEDED



We are in need of towel sets, or towels we can use to make into a set. A set consists of a bath towel, hand towel and wash cloth.

We are looking for items in good condition and they don't need to match.

We are also in need of comforters in all sizes, but most of the demand is for twin, queen and king sizes.

We would love to have small appliances like irons, blenders, mixers, toasters, etc.

ECHO PARKING LOT COMPLETED

Fom Joyce Giuliani, Dir. Communications and Outreach

Hooray! Our Volunteer Parking Lot is open, marking the completion of Phase 1 of our ECHO expansion plans. Volunteers are already enjoying the new parking spaces - even on rainy days! The ribbon cutting was attended by volunteers and special guests to mark the occasion. Pictures below tell the story.



MAY 8, 2024



Photos courtesy of John Olsen, Bob Kelberg and Bob Vitter

INTRODUCING STORYTELLING AT ECHO

Every ECHO volunteer has a story to tell in what they have seen or heard as they work with clients, fellow volunteers and donors. These shared moments in life give meaning to the work we do at ECHO. In an effort to make these stories bring ECHO's mission to life, two volunteers have stepped forward to try to collect stories to share. Kathy M. Fleming and Shelley Draheim will be exploring ways to gather ECHO's stories and will be explaining their plans as they evolve. Stay tuned for more. In the meantime, this Volunteer Profile was written to give all volunteers a look at why volunteering at ECHO is meaningful. We are grateful to Sam for sharing and feel sure that his story will ring true with many volunteers.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: Donation Door Volunteer Sameer Al Nashif

by Kathy M. Fleming, Volunteer Storyteller

One mission of the Volunteer Newsletter is to help volunteers get to know those who work on different shifts. Sometimes we feature a team, as in last quarter's profile of the Wednesday Morning Food Room Volunteers. Sometimes we highlight a single volunteer, as we are doing this quarter with Sameer Al Nashif, known to us as Sam, who has volunteered at ECHO for ten years.

It was at a swimming pool in 2014, that a neighbor invited Sam to check into volunteering with him. The neighbor, Gabe Bajusz, worked with Sam at the donation door for six years before Gabe retired around the age of ninety.

The camaraderie at the door makes volunteering a happy experience for him. "Plus, it improves my English," Sam, whose first language is Arabic, said, laughing. "You can hear I still need to work on it every day." He says the main reason he keeps coming back is the respect he feels for other volunteers. "These are such good people," he says as he smiles at each person in sight.

Serving at the donation door means so much more to him than "Hello." "Thank you." "Would you like a receipt?" Sam says. He and frequent donors recognize each other and exchange smiles. "They are very good people, too."

Sam is from Jordan and was married with two children when he lost most of his right arm in a tractor trailer accident. Six months later his wife died. Sam views these life-altering events philosophically. With a shrug of his shoulders, "Everyone deals with something," he said. "I try my best."



continued....

continued... VOLUNTEER PROFILE: Sameer Al Nashif

Several years later, his sister helped Sam immigrate to the United States because he wanted his children to grow up here. He worked for a bus company in Woodbridge before settling in the Springfield area. His son Rami and daughter Lamia also live in the area. Inspired by the age of many volunteers, Sam plans to keep working at ECHO for as long as he can. Everyone deals with something, and Sam will be at the donation door every Wednesday to help.

FOOD AND CLOTHING... WITH A SMILE

Thanks to Beth Clark and the clothing crew for sending this photo. On the same day a massive amount of kale was generously donated to the food pantry, this shirt came to the clothing sorting table. You just have to smile!



SPRING YARD SALE UPDATE

Bargains abounded at the ECHO Spring Yard Sale at St. Bernadette's School gym in April. With the help of MANY, MANY VOLUNTEERS, ECHO once again raised needed funds to support our work in the Springfield and Burke communities.

Final talley showed ECHO netting \$10,478.25 on the day of the sale and \$4,769.75 from in-house sales. Be sure to keep an eye out in our Yard Sale area for bargains galore. Our volunteer support for this effort pays off!



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

Summer 2024



ECHO's Food Room continues to break records seeing 159 families in May serving 655 people and giving out 26,458 pounds of food. Consider that pre-COVID, the food Room averaged helping 78 families a month and gave out 15,000 pounds of food. Your help in meeting this challenge is most appreciated.

- 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.

Please NO expired, open or re-packaged items.

Food List:

- Protein Items (e.g. can chicken, Spam, sardines, chili, Tin Fish (tuna, sardines, salmon etc.)
- Can Fruit
- Bag Beans (black, red or garbanzo preferred)
- Lentils
- Spaghetti (pasta)
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Instant and ground coffee
- Can Tomatoes
- Tomato Paste and tomato sauce
- Baked Beans
- Bag Rice (Clients prefer white, jasmine or basmati)
- Instant (Box) Potatoes
- Crackers
- Pancake Mix
- Pancake Syrup
- Ramen
- Can milk, shelf stable milk
- Box pasta
- Juice (Bottles or box)
- Tea (green, herbal or black)
- Healthy Snacks

- Spices (garlic, onion, cinnamon, salt, pepper
- Masa (Corn) Flour
- Box cereal
- Lemon or Lime Juice
- Jelly and Honey
- Tortillas
- Cooking Oil
- Brown Paper Bags
- Reusable Grocery Bags

Hygiene Products:

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



www.echo-inc.org
for more details

NOTES FROM THE CLOTHING ROOM

by Paula Kvartunas, Clothing Co-Chair

Clothing Donations Needed Summer 2024

Men and Boy's Clothing

- Boy's Sneakers Sizes 1 thru 6
- Boy's Tops/Bottoms Sizes 18 months to 20
- Boy's New Underwear Sizes 2T-20
- Boy's New Athletic Socks Sizes Large/X-Large
- Men's Winter Coats Sizes Small, Medium, Large
- Men's Jeans Sizes 30/30, 30/32, 32/30, 32/32
- Men's New Underwear Sizes 28/30, 32/34, 36/38

Women and Girl's Clothing

- Girl's Sneakers Sizes 1 thru 6
- Girl's Tops/Bottoms Sizes 18 months to 20
- Women's New Athletic Socks

Other Needs

- Baby Wipes
- Diapers, Sizes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Thank you!



Visit the Amazon Wishlist to order needed items directly.

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1NPONMD7U0IS2?ref_wl_sha

3RD ANNUAL VOLUNTEER PICNIC



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15TH

1 PM – 4 PM

**NEW LOCATION: LAKE ACCOTINK PARK
MCLAREN SARGENT SHELTER**

**JOIN IN A FUN AFTERNOON
WITH FELLOW ECHO VOLUNTEERS**

More details to follow

SEE YOU THERE!



SCHOOL BACKPACK PROGRAM IS BACK

from Sandy Milam, Backpack Chair and Jane Curtis, Outreach Chair

It's Already Back-To-School Time for ECHO

Donors and volunteers are needed to help meet ECHO's goal of filling 1300 backpacks with grade-specific school supplies by the time the next school year begins. This is a great opportunity for teens and adults who are looking for a short-term volunteer commitment that will make a real difference for our community. Volunteers may sign up for one or more of the work sessions that will be held from 2:00 to 5:00 on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons in July and August at ECHO, 7205 Old Keene Mill Road.

Volunteers must be at least 13 years old. All volunteers younger than 18 must return an information form signed by them and a parent before they will be scheduled. The form will be emailed to those who sign up on SignUpGenius website which can be accessed through www.echo-inc.org after the middle of June. Hours cannot be used to fulfill court-ordered service. If you have questions, email echobackpacks@gmail.com.

Donations of school supplies are eagerly welcomed! Please see the list of needed items on our website under the "Donate Goods/ School Supplies" tab. Some types and sizes of products are very specific because we are following guidelines of schools in our service area, and because we want to serve all children equally. In mid-June, ECHO will post a wishlist on Amazon.com that donors can access from this ECHO website page. Donors can order supplies to be delivered directly to ECHO.



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 and click the Volunteer tab and go to Adult Volunteer Positions Needed Right Now, or email Volunteercoordinator@echo-inc.org.

Volunteer Needs – June 2024

Clothing – 2 volunteers Thursday evenings

Clothing Support – 1 volunteer Monday mornings

Counselors – Tuesday morning counselor - Spanish speaking

1 counselor Tuesday or Thursday evening

Assistant Counselor Tuesday and Thursday evenings

Client Engagement Chair leads the Counselor team that is responsible for helping ECHO meet the first step of assisting neighbors in need - determining individual eligibility for ECHO support and the nature of that support.

Counselor AdminSupport volunteers support Counselors and Assistant Counselors in meeting their mission to engage clients to determine individual eligibility for ECHO support and the nature of that support. 8 volunteers needed (1 per shift)

Donation Door - 1 volunteer Monday mornings

Food room – 2 volunteers Thursday evenings

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.

**Housewares – 1 volunteer Tuesday and Thursday evenings,
1 volunteer Saturday mornings**



FAITH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

ECHO Congregations Model Cooperation and Friendship

by Jane Curtis, Outreach Chair

Currently, it seems that the differences between people and groups are a focus of attention. In a world where disparities create division that can turn into conflict, many ECHO congregations are modeling outreach and cooperation. In addition to participating in ECHO whose membership includes many different faith communities working together for a common goal, these congregations are seeking ways to forge unity and friendship.



When the Rev. Beth Braxton began her ministry at Burke Presbyterian Church (BPC), the congregation of Adat Reyim was using the BPC building for Sabbath services on Friday evenings. She invited Rabbi Poreth, the rabbi at that time, to join her in creating a joint Thanksgiving service. Rabbi Bruce Aft, who followed Rabbi Poreth, enthusiastically adopted the idea of joint worship between the two congregations. Soon after, St. Mary's Roman Catholic congregation was invited to join in the interfaith service. Pastor Jason Snow of Burke United Methodist (BUMC) reports that his congregation has participated in this service since 2017 and has hosted it twice. ECHO Board Representatives Kathy Pester of BPC and Nancy Sherman of Adat Reyim note that members of the Muslim community of the ADAMS Center and Hindu neighbors from the Durga Temple, along with Sydenstricker United Methodist as well as Buddhist and Turkish groups have participated in what is now a forty-year tradition.

Duke Taylor, ECHO Board representative of Abiding Presence Lutheran Church, reports that his congregation and Temple B'nai Shalom of Fairfax Station "are looking forward to their 38th joint Thanksgiving Service this November." The bond between the two congregations is greater than a single shared worship service. Pastor Meredith Keseley and Rabbi David Widzer, in the spirit of cooperation initiated by the founders of the friendship, Rabbi Amy Perlin and Pastor Tom Bailey, hosted a joint discussion series on "Caring for God's Creation: Interfaith Learning" this past winter. This summer the two congregations will jointly offer a musical theatre day camp for 6th through 12th graders to produce "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat."

continued . . .

continued...ECHO Congregations Model Cooperation and Friendship

Andrea Hellier who represents St. Andrew's Episcopal reports that her congregation provides the Peace Islamic Center with a space for worship. She says, "an Eagle Scout Project this year created a pathway between St. Andrew's and Adat Reyim.

Pastor Snow of Burke United Methodist Church says his congregation has sometimes participated in a Ramadan meal with the Ezher Bloom congregation and the Rumi Forum. BUMC hosts a monthly gathering of local clergy from various faiths to hear presentations on the work of local aid groups and government agencies such as ECHO, Facets, and the Area Agency on Aging. BUMC receives support for their Food Co-op from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints faith community. In addition to providing volunteers and food donations, the LDS faith community has donated a generator to keep the refrigerator running if power goes out.

Jenny Pate, Springfield United Methodist Church's (SUMC) ECHO Board Representative, says that her congregation has been partnering with Grace Presbyterian and St. Christopher's Episcopal for joint services during Holy Week and will hold a joint Vacation Bible School this summer for children and adults. The three congregations have formed the Springfield Youth Collective to bring their young members together once a month for service and learning.

Linda Rookard, ECHO Board Representative of The Church of the Nativity (Nativity) in Burke, reports that her congregation participates in an ecumenical Christian non-profit called Food for the Poor (FFTP). According to their website, "Food For The Poor is neutral, impartial, apolitical, and encompassing of all religions and beliefs." Linda says they work "to provide housing, clean water, sanitation, schools, clinics" in Haiti, Jamaica and Honduras. Nativity has also partnered with the Appalachian Construction Crew, Inc. whose mission is building homes for disadvantaged people in rural Appalachia.

On June 27, Nativity is holding an ecumenical mini seminar on strengthening families while serving communities of faith. The panel will include representatives from Nativity, Prince of Peace Lutheran, St. Andrew's Episcopal, Burke United Methodist, and the Burke Ward of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Registration is available on Nativity's website www.nativityburke.org/ecumenical-seminar. The leaders hope "the seminar will highlight the overarching similarities between different perspectives in a way that unifies people instead of dividing them."

