President’s Message
By Rick Mueller

I hope everyone had a nice holiday season. Everyone celebrates in different ways with dinners, family gatherings, special church services, parties, and presents. But most of us start the holidays spending some time thinking about the things we are truly thankful for and finish them making a commitment to try to do better so we have more to be thankful for next year. This has been a challenging season for me personally, but I still have many things to be thankful for. I am thankful for my health, a supportive family, many friends, a nice house to live in, and a business that I like to go to every day. Sometimes I have little problems that add up and I think my life is terrible until something happens to remind me what is important and how blest I am.

A few days after Christmas, a friend called and asked if I would give him a ride and loan him 47 cents. I thought this was a strange request so I asked him why. He said he had lost his car because he lost his job because he couldn’t stand because his legs were too swollen from the increased chemo treatments for his cancer. He needed a ride to the drug store to get a prescription he had gotten the day before for the pain but he only had 53 cents of his one dollar copay and that is why he needed 47 cents. I gave him his ride and while we were waiting for his prescription to be filled, he told me how blest he thought his life was. He was thankful for the nice warm apartment he had. He was thankful for the food he had to eat every day. He was thankful for his church and everyone that has helped him through these difficult times. When I dropped him off, he pulled a small present out of his bag and gave it to me. I opened it and it was an old picture frame with a picture of him in it. He laughed and said some day it will be worth a million dollars. Little did he know to me it already is. It sits on my desk and reminds me of all the things I have to be thankful for and that there are so many people that need our help because they don’t have many things to be thankful for. One out of every five in our community are like my friend and receive help from ECHO.

So if you feel like you have a lot to be thankful for this year, I am going to ask you to do one thing for me. Pull out that piece of paper you wrote on a few weeks ago that says New Year’s Resolutions on top and add one more item below “eat better”, “exercise more”, and “be more organized” (ok, maybe those are mine). Add “make someone else’s life better”. I promise it will help you more than those you help.
Leaving 2016 and Looking Ahead to 2017

People have asked me if I’m worried about what will happen because of the election. I say no, that I think there are always pluses and minuses to any way of doing things, and there are likely to be some challenges and opportunities, like we have had with all administrations. Our focus is to help fill in the gaps or provide help to people in emergencies. Services that ECHO provides do not eliminate poverty, or make the poor less poor. They help people survive tough situations.

ECHO donors want us to keep families in their homes, keep them fed, and help them with other basic needs. They are a blend of people helping others, to make Janesville a better place.

- Republicans and Democrats and people who like parts of both, or don’t like politics at all
- People in manufacturing, media, specialty businesses
- Social workers, engineers, teachers, bankers, attorneys, pastors
- Young, middle-aged and retired folks
- People from all walks of life

We don’t know for sure where our funds will come from. ECHO projects an annual budget, an estimate of donations that will come in and what services will be provided. If more comes in than projected, we will be able to meet more of the need. If the cash flow slows down, we have to cut services.

We each may feel that what we can contribute is just a drop in the bucket. But a steady succession of drops fills the bucket pretty quickly. This concept is evident at ECHO. One donation alone doesn’t change people’s lives—Everyone Cooperating to Help Others can help change lives. We couldn’t keep families in their homes, feed them, and help them with other basic needs without the help of this community.

Having food on your table is a basic need, and having a place to live is the core from which everything else is possible! Housing is the single largest cost for families. Low-income people pay 50-70% of their gross income on housing. Keeping a roof over people’s heads keeps them safe and makes our food service more useful to them!

We provided 3,540,924 meals in 2016! We paid for 497 months of rent assistance to keep families in their homes. I am still waiting to receive the Ruby Slippers I wished for on our 40th Anniversary seven years ago, so I can click my heels and every family will have a stable home.

The number of unduplicated HHs served in 2016 was almost 3,300 HHs, about 13,000 people. We expected to serve 3,600 HHs, but we had significant cut-backs in services due to funding constraints. Think about 3,300 different HHs coming through our doors in 2016 and most of them at least several times! Case Management to help these families we helped with our various services in 2016 came to 12,232 hours. For more information on our services, see ECHO Services Report 2016. Look for this report and other reports on our website. ECHO Dollars & Sense Report 2016 will be available in February—it will show you the value of donated goods, what we spent on services.

The bottom line every year is that 98% goes to direct assistance and only 2% administration. ECHO staff has done an incredible job of helping clients, each of them having to be seen by a social services staff member, every time they come in. We couldn’t do this without your support and want you to see the effect your contributions make. Here is an example of just one family we helped – I will call her Theresa.

Theresa came to ECHO for food while she was staying at the House of Mercy. She is a recovering addict and was living with a person who was still using. Her daughter had been in foster care over a year. Theresa had to be clean and sober for six consecutive months to get custody back. She knew she had to get away from her friends that were still using and find housing so she could have a place for her daughter. She only had three months left before she could have custody.

During her stay at House of Mercy, Theresa obtained employment, worked on parenting classes through Child Protective Services (CPS), and got her driver’s license. ECHO was able to coordinate well with House of Mercy and get her right into an apartment after her shelter stay. (Continued on next page)
Karen’s Korner (Continued from previous page)

She found a wonderful landlord who knew Theresa’s history but also saw her determination and was willing to give her a chance. ECHO paid her security deposit and first month’s rent to get into the apartment. Theresa’s first month in her new apartment was a struggle. She was working a temp job and took off one day to apply for Section 8 Rental Assistance. It was important to sign up on the day the waitlist opened because the list can get very long. Theresa took off one more day to go to a job interview for a position that would be permanent and pay her five more dollars per hour! The temp position was automatically terminated, because of the two days she took off work. She was waiting in limbo for a week, but luckily heard back from the permanent position. She was hired full time and went from making $8/hour at her temp job to $13/hour at the new place. The job is tough, but she loves the challenge.

Unfortunately, this raise cut off her food share and health insurance. Because she was coming out of homelessness, ECHO was able to help her with multiple months of rent to stabilize her housing through a special grant, instead of our typical one-month maximum per year rent program. We provided food, bus tokens, clothing vouchers and other ECHO services, and linked her to other community services. She was able to get some of what she needed and get by for her 90-day probation period at work.

During her months of struggle, Theresa had weekly visitation with her daughter. CPS began letting her have her daughter for overnights and weekends. Her daughter Carly was officially reunited with Theresa. Theresa now has full health care benefits for herself and her daughter. We helped her celebrate her daughter’s birthday by providing a present and cake. Theresa is more determined than ever to keep her life together and keep moving forward.

Sustainability is a challenge. When I write grant proposals, funders ask for details about agency mission, who we serve, how the funds will be used, etc. They typically ask the question, “How will you sustain this program?” This is a reasonable question, but it is a very tough one to answer. The success at carrying out our mission leads to increased costs, because more successful programs serve more clients. The costs increase, for the rents we pay for clients, the food we provide, and the many other support services and staffing, which would require a proportionate increase in support. Sustainability is determined by funders. Great programs don’t appear out of thin air. It takes perseverance and financial resources, but it also takes relationships, face-to-face, hundreds of times a year, and, with that, together, we can change things. It is difficult for a program that literally changes people’s lives for the better to become self-sustaining.

What we can do together is limitless. If it matters to you, it matters to us. It continues to be gratifying to me as I enter my 23rd year at ECHO, that through the spirit and support of this community, ECHO helps keep a roof over people’s heads and food on their tables, making it possible for people to tackle obstacles in their path toward achieving more self-sufficiency. ECHO donors give to help people they don’t know, but care about, expecting nothing in return. That makes a difference at ECHO and in this community. Let’s hope that 2017 is truly a new year, not just a new number, a year with new opportunities, new attitudes, new voices, new messages, and new visions. Thank You for your support.

President’s Message (Continued from Page 1)

If you don’t believe me, ask one of the hundreds who volunteered to distribute food for Thanksgiving or one of the many that volunteered to serve dinner on Christmas Day how they felt. Gandhi said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” If we all resolve to help each other this year, there will be more of us to help and fewer that need our help next year. If you are not sure how to get started, call our “Be the change “ hot line at 608-754-5333. We have lots of ideas.


We are ECHO
Spring Intern Introduction

Hello Everyone!

My name is Lena Rodriguez, and I will be interning at ECHO for my final semester as a social work undergraduate. I am 22 years old and currently a student at UW-Whitewater, majoring in social work with a minor in Family, Health, and Disabilities. Originally, I went into college thinking I wanted to major in psychology and eventually become a child therapist. After taking a couple psychology classes and talking with my adviser, I realized I wanted to help and work with people more hands on, so I took some social work courses and enjoyed them so much more, which led me to where I am today!

Choosing ECHO as one of my choices to intern was simple, once I browsed through the website and learned the priorities and purpose of the agency. I knew I wanted to intern at a place where I would be able to work with people experiencing being low-income and homeless, since this population has been my main interest throughout my last few years. The main thing that determined my interest in ECHO was exactly what it stands for, Everyone Cooperating to Help Others! While interning at ECHO, I hope to learn as much as possible about working with low-income individuals and more about ECHO, as well as gaining experience as a social worker in this field.

A little more about myself - I am from Rockford, Illinois, but live in Whitewater most of the year for school and work. I work at Qdoba Mexican Eats. In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, and love to go hiking and be creative in artistic ways. In my future, I hope to travel as much as possible and see as much of the world as I can!

I am excited to begin my internship at ECHO and look forward to working with and learning from everyone!

Farewell from Caitlin DeCremer

In the fall of 2012, I was completing my Bachelor Degree. I was placed at ECHO, a non-profit agency in my hometown. Growing up in Janesville, I was very blessed throughout my childhood. I never knew what it felt to be hungry and not have food. I never knew what it felt like to be cold and not have a roof over my head. I was never scared, broken, and hopeless as some of the clients of ECHO have presented. The amount of need in this community took me by surprise. I was motivated to do my part in offering a hand up to our less fortunate neighbors in Janesville.

In December of 2013, I felt honored to be offered a position at ECHO. I couldn’t have thought of a better way to begin my professional career. The real life skills I gained from working with the low-income population and homeless of Janesville cannot be matched by schoolwork. I am so grateful for my chance to provide services to those in need. I would like to thank the staff of ECHO for taking me under their wings and guiding me along my journey at this wonderful agency.

As my last day at ECHO approaches, I am saddened. I will truly miss the wonderful people I have come across during my time here. Thank you to all of the staff, volunteers, donors, and even clients for making my time here so amazing! I will forever treasure my experiences working here.
**2017 ECHO Executive Committee**

Gloria Huschka, President
Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church

Nancy Hansen-Bennett, Vice-President
Cargill United Methodist Church

Rick Mueller, Treasurer
Community Representative

Alicia Jenski, Secretary
Community Representative

Betty Gilbert- Member at Large
Trinity Episcopal Church

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**2017 Janesville CROP Hunger Walk**

40 Years of Promises Kept

By Deb Fisher

“*Therefore, the Lord will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel.*” Isaiah 7:14

The Bible is filled with promises from God that are kept. As Christians, we attach great significance to the verse from Isaiah which promises the birth of Emmanuel, God with us. The promise was fulfilled with the birth of Jesus the Christ to the young woman, Mary.

During the past 40 years Janesville has kept promises to the hungry in both our community and in developing countries across the globe. In 2016 the Janesville CROP Hunger Walk raised $45,662.66. Those funds helped our neighbors who do not have enough food to feed their families. The families served by ECHO include senior citizens who cannot make their Social Security check stretch far enough. They include single moms struggling to raise their children. They include many who work for minimum wage, which does not begin to cover their family expenses. You made a difference for your neighbors.

With your help, vulnerable children in developing countries are reaching their milestone 5th birthday---healthy and well nourished. Struggling families are learning new farming techniques that help them put food on the table and earn much-needed income. Impoverished communities are developing reliable systems to provide safe, clean water. You are literally changing lives!

We received some interesting information last summer that I thought you would like to know. There were approximately 25,000 churches that participated in the CROP Hunger Walk last year. Three churches from Janesville were in the top 100 for total funds raised:

#7 Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
#43 St. John Lutheran Church  
#45 Cargill United Methodist Church

Some important dates for 2017:

**Saturday, February 18:** Chipotle Fund Raiser: 50% of the total bill for each person who eats at Chipotle 4:30-8:30 pm and identifies as eating for the CROP Hunger Walk will go to our Walk.

**Saturday, March 4, 8:30 am:** breakfast at Citrus Café for all Recruiters and Pastors.

**Sunday, April 23, 1:00:** the 40th Janesville CROP Hunger Walk will gather at Cargill United Methodist Church at 2000 Wesley Avenue in Janesville.
Volunteer Take 5

Name: Joan Tiffany
How long have you volunteered at ECHO? 22 years.
How did you get involved at ECHO? Asbury United Methodist Church is a member of ECHO and I decided to volunteer.
What do you do at ECHO? Pack food orders every Wednesday.
What is your favorite thing about ECHO? The people I volunteer with are wonderful.
What is one thing about ECHO that surprised you when you started volunteering? So many people need help.

LIKE US ON

www.facebook.com/ECHOJanesville

ECHO Needs
Soup and Crackers
Mac & Cheese
Cereal
Peanut Butter & Jelly
Canned Meals
Instant Coffee
Feminine Supplies
Diapers

2016 Service Highlights
◇ Provided services to 3,274 unduplicated households
◇ Provided 3,540,924 meals
◇ Provided 1,571 nights in a motel to the homeless
◇ Provided 497 months of rent to prevent homelessness
◇ Provided 81 households with transportation assistance

We have homeless and hungry families in our community that need a roof over their heads to prepare food we provide.
Will you please consider making a difference by making a donation to help those in need?

$30 □ $60 □ $120 □ $250 □ $500 □ Other □ $__________

Name: ________________________ Phone #: ___________ E-Mail: ________________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________ Zip Code: ______________

Donations can also be made online at www.echojanesville.org
For payment by credit card, visit our website above.

Your gift is tax deductible as provided by law. Thank you for your support.
Your $1 donation will be used to help families in our community who are in need.

*Purchase a heart at these participating locations for their Valentine wall for Valentine’s Day.*

- Basics Cooperative
- Bass Creek Espresso
- Blackhawk Community C.U.
- Citrus Café
- Commercial Bank
- Culvers
- East Point Sportz Pub
- Harris Ace Hardware
- My Apartment
- Perfectly Plus Consignment Shop
- Perfectly Precious Consignment Shop
- Shady Nook
- Trading Spaces
- Wedge Inn East

More locations to come!!!!

**TOUCHING HEARTS AT**

**NEEDED LARGE BROWN PAPER BAGS, PLASTIC BAGS, TWIST TIES & PLASTIC BOTTLES**

Drop them off at ECHO (65 S. High St., Janesville)
Mon.-Fri. 9am-Noon, or Mon.-Thur. 1-4pm
SWING into SPRING

Saturday, March 25, 2017
7:00-11:00pm
Pontiac Convention Center

Featuring music by LADIES Must SWING

Cash Bar - Silent Auction - Raffle

Tickets: $12
Available at ECHO - 65 S High St
or at www.echojanesville.org
Thank You!

Thanksgiving Baskets - Thank you to the donors and over 300 volunteers who came out to help pack and hand out 600 baskets. The Thanksgiving Baskets provided food for 1,692 people.

Holiday Express - Thank you to everyone who helped out and came to the ECHO Holiday Express. Many individuals, young and old, viewed Polar Express, visited with Santa, and made holiday crafts on November 27 at the Pontiac Convention Center. Many thanks to those who helped keep the event low-cost to those who attended this great event! Put November 26 on your calendar for this year’s Holiday Express.

Adopt a Family (AAF) - Once again the generosity of the Janesville residents was seen by the ECHO staff and clients during the Christmas season. SO many donors participated in the Adopt-A-Family Christmas program, that ECHO was able to help 87 families (108 Adults & 241 Children) with Christmas gifts. Drop off day is always a bit overwhelming and chaotic. I’m sure you can imagine the volume of gifts coming in, and those of you who have delivered gifts to the ECHO office have seen first-hand the Community Room stuffed to the max due to the generosity of the ECHO donors. It’s truly wonderful how much you care for people you do not even know. I was blessed with many Thank-you’s, hugs, and tears of happiness from the clients who participated in the Adopt-A-Family program, to pass along to their Donor Family. On behalf of the many Adopt-A-Family recipients, ECHO Staff, and ECHO Board we would like to say THANK YOU to the donors who call ECHO every year to adopt a family, as well as the many first time, Adopt-A-Family donors. Your generosity makes it possible to continue this great program year after year. 

Tonya Frerichs, Client Advocate

Christmas Toys - Many thanks to those who donated toys and/or cash to help provide a Christmas for 478 children in need with the Christmas Toy Program. Thank you also to the many wonderful ECHO elves who helped sort toys and assist parents on the day of the event.

Christmas Dinner - ECHO also thanks the many volunteers who came to the Christmas Dinner and helped serve 752 meals at St. William Catholic Church, who graciously donated their space for the dinner. ECHO would also like to give a big shout out to Chef Stan Arnold and his many volunteers who made all of the yummy food.

Easter Baskets for Children

ECHO will be packing and distributing Easter baskets to children who would otherwise go without during this most blessed holiday.

- Children’s Easter baskets
- Individually wrapped candy
- Plastic eggs
- Plastic basket wrap

Items can be dropped off at the ECHO Office during regular business hours Monday-Friday 9am-Noon or Monday-Thursday 1-4pm or by appointment by calling 754-5333.

Volunteers are needed on:

- **Monday, April 10 at 9:30AM** to pack Easter baskets at the ECHO Office.
- **Tuesday - Thursday, April 11 to April 13, 9AM - 4PM** to distribute baskets at the ECHO office.
In Memoriam:
Since our last newsletter, we received contributions in memory of the following ECHO friends. Their families and friends are in our thoughts and prayers.

Vern Anderson  Betty Gilbertson  Betty Rosen
Lois Brennan  Gene Jarstad  Fannie Shefte
Amos Budahn  Bernie Johnson  Louise Shekels
David Budahn  Mary Johnson  Maxine Snyder
Ruth Budahn  Mary Kleinhinz  Harry Spellman
Ian D. Christine  Arlan Knutson  Ginny Spors
Kay Deeney  David Langowski  Joyce Stankiewicz
Daniel Detert  Linda Miller  Jack & Betty Stoney
Carol Hunter  Elizabeth Peterson  James & Norine Turner
Donald Hustad  Jacob Richter  Sue Vinson

In Honor:
We join the families and friends in congratulating the following ECHO friends who were honored by donations in celebration of their birthday, anniversary, or special occasion.

Carl & Cathy Andren  David Ellis  Donna Padilla
Rhonda Armstrong  Mike Gilland  Liam Raese
Margaret Burdette  Good Shepherd Musicians  Jane Reid
Jill Costantino  Sr. Lauretana Gorman  Scott Reid
Jan Budahn Foley  Mat & Peggy Haeger  Susan Riedel
Karen Budahn Lisser  Summer Huckstep  Tony Smithson
Jill Costantino  Jean Illingsworth  Mr. & Mrs. Al Utzig
Rev. Janice Diejenthaler  Joan Jimenez  Michelle Vechinsky
Richard Dunagan  Jim & Emily Lund  Wimmer Family & Friends
The Dunwiddie Family  Pat McDonald

We thank you all for thinking of ECHO!
Memorial and honorarium card packets are available at the ECHO office or through participating churches. Each packet contains:

1. An ECHO information sheet and envelope for you to mail or bring in your donation to ECHO.
2. A postcard to send to the person or family to let them know that a donation was made to ECHO in honor or memory of the person you are remembering.
3. Checks may be made payable to ECHO, Inc.
(Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law.)
Food and Fund Drives

Special thanks to the following businesses and organizations that held food, fund and other drives:

A&H Trucking
Agard & Lipker
All Saints Church
Alpha Delta Kappa
Andes Candies
Aramark
Asbury United Methodist Church
Bimbo Bakeries USA
Bird’s Eye
Boardtracker Harley Davidson
Brownberry Bread
Butternut Bakery
Cargill United Methodist Church
Catholic Charities
Chambers & Owen
Contemplative Prayer Group
Country Quality Dairy
Crystal Farms
Daniel’s Sentry Food Stores
Dunkin’ Donuts
E & D Water Works
Faith Lutheran Church
First Congregational Church
First Lutheran Church
First Presbyterian Church
Gardner Bakery
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Hedberg Public Library
Hendricks Properties
Hormel
Hufcor
Humane Society of Southern Wisconsin
Hunger Task Force - Milwaukee
Kids Against Hunger

Little Debbie
Local #1077 Rock County Employees
MacFarlane Pheasant Farm
Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church
Mt. Zion United Methodist Church
Nativity of Mary Catholic Church and School
NHA-WIC
Olive Garden
Our Savior Lutheran Church
Peace Lutheran Church
Pelsue Orthodontics
Pepsi
Pick’n Save
Quaker Steak and Lube
Red Hatless
Retired & Senior Volunteer Program
Riverplace Senior Housing
Rock County Jail Chaplaincy
Rock Prairie Presbyterian Church
St. John Lutheran Church
St. John Vianney Church
St. Mark’s Lutheran Church
St. Mary Hospital/ Dean Clinic
St. Matthew Lutheran Church & School
St. Patrick Catholic Church
St. Paul Lutheran Church
St. Peter’s Lutheran Church
St. William Catholic Church
Sam’s Club
Schnucks
Seneca Foods
Starbucks
Trinity Episcopal Church
Unitarian Church

Thank you all for your continued positive work in our community!

Sincerely, Elaine

Thank you all for your continued positive work in our community!

Sincerely, Elaine

Thank you for all you do to help people in need. Also thanks to all your volunteers that work so hard to help others.

Sincerely, Ellen

Blessings to you for the work you do for Janesville! Merry Christmas and may God bless you all in 2017!

Mary

ECHO does fantastic work and we are proud of your contribution to the needy in the area.

Jack & Donna
ECHO Calendar of Events

♦ 3/25 Swing into Spring – 7 PM at the Pontiac Convention Center

♦ 4/11-4/13 Children’s Easter Basket Distribution – at the ECHO Office

♦ 6/5 Eat Out for Hunger – All day at participating restaurants

♦ 7/11 Community Appreciation Day - Rotary Botanical Gardens

♦ 8/25 School Supply Distribution – at St. John Lutheran Church

♦ 10/28 Empty Bowl Soup Fundraiser – 11 AM - 2 PM at Parker High School

♦ 11/18 Thanksgiving Basket Dist.– at the Rock Co. 4-H Fairgrounds

♦ 11/26 ECHO Holiday Express – 1-4 PM at the Pontiac Convention Center.