Who Can We Trust?
President’s Message
By Rick Mueller

In today’s busy world we are all inundated with intimate requests that in the past would have been reserved for very close friends and family. It might come from a welcoming voice on the phone, a well-written letter in the mail, or a nice young man at the front door. What are all of these people asking for? Our money. Nonprofits today have to be as good at raising money as they are at providing service just to survive. While most are legitimate organizations working for the betterment of society, some are not. We have all heard of the telemarketing company that solicited donations and then only gave 5% to the charity and kept the rest for “expenses”, or the CEO who decided to take his family on a lavish vacation using funds meant to go to clients of his charity.

The big question is: who can we trust? How do we know the difference between the smooth-talking scammer and the sincere volunteer trying to raise money for a cause they truly believe in? I don’t claim to be an expert but I have learned a few things, sometimes the hard way, and am happy to share with everyone. First, do your homework. Check out their website and social media like Facebook and Twitter. Check the newspaper and internet to see what others are saying. Are the solicitors transparent in where their money comes from and where it goes to? Ask what percentage of your donation will go to direct services. If they can’t or won’t tell you, something is not right. Do they have a local board of directors that knows the needs of the community? Check with other organizations like the United Way or the Better Business Bureau to see what they say about the organization. Finally, ask clients that receive services what they think about the organization.

So why am I rambling on about how to evaluate charitable organizations? Because I want you to know that you can trust ECHO. It is led by people who live in our community and believe in ECHO’s mission. ECHO staff are the most dedicated and passionate people I know. 98% of all ECHO money is used for direct client services, a statistic most organizations can only dream about. ECHO is very efficient in how it does business.

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**ECHO Earns the Coveted Four Star Rating**

Everyone Cooperating to Help Others received a letter from Charity Navigator on April 1, 2016, congratulating us on earning the coveted Four Star Rating from Charity Navigator, because of having sound fiscal management and a commitment to accountability and transparency. Charity Navigator is America’s largest independent charity evaluator. Since 2002, using objective, data-driven analysis, Charity Navigator has awarded only the most fiscally responsible organizations a four star rating.

Charity Navigator indicated in our letter that they highlight the fine work of efficient, ethical and open charities. Their goal is to provide donors with essential information needed to give them greater confidence in the charitable choice they make. They stated that based on their most recent information available, we have issued a new rating for your organization – ECHO has earned a four star rating....your organization ...consistently executes its mission in a fiscally responsible way. They state that about a quarter of the charities they evaluate have received this highest rating and indicated that getting the four star rating demands rigor, responsibility and commitment to openness, and further state that ECHO’s supporters should feel much more confident that their hard-earned dollars are being used efficiently and responsibly.

I have always felt that one should do what’s right and do it the right way – with transparency, good stewardship, openness, kindness, and even humor. I believe in ECHO’s mission and am proud to have worked here for over 21 years with an incredible ECHO Team - a staff that is dedicated to our mission and to greeting our clients every day with a smile and desire to do what we can to help them meet basic food, housing and other personal need while they work to overcome their struggles to overcome obstacles to self-sufficiency.

It is nice to receive confirmation from a well-respected independent evaluator that they agree with what we have felt for many years. I have always felt that it is important to be open about our financials and services and have created many monthly and annual reports to do that, always disseminating those in the community and on our website regularly.

Taking additional steps and adding our 990 and audited financial statements to our website clinched the deal in moving us from a three star to four star rating. Thanks to Jessica Locher who found out what was needed and implemented that. These financial reports show primarily donors’ financial gifts, with only a portion of the value of in-kind donations reflected. The numbers are impressive, but ECHO’s record is even more impressive when all of the in-kind donations and services are accounted for. I became ECHO’s Executive Director in January 1995, and in 1999, I created ECHO’s annual Dollars Sense Report that combines our services for the year, what was spent on those services, incorporating program accounting, and what the in-kind value of donated goods and services add to that. The result – 98% off what is given to us is used for Direct Assistance to the people we serve and 2% for Administration.

ECHO is a small grassroots charity that does a lot in an efficient, accountable, transparent and ethical way. Thank you, Charity Navigator, for re-evaluating ECHO and recognizing that. Those of you reading this newsletter probably already had confidence in ECHO, and we hope you now have even more confidence in us and will continue to support us and that you will help spread the word to others. Local support is our lifeblood. Thank you all, Karen
Housewarming Bucket

ECHO is committed to helping homeless individuals find and keep housing. Most homeless individuals and families move into their homes without many possessions. Although no one person or agency can help with all of a person’s needs; ECHO is starting “HOUSEWARMING BUCKET”. The Housewarming Bucket will be given out to individuals and families who are living in motels who will soon be moving into permanent housing. ECHO would like to ask for your help in gathering these basic needs to give to people coming out of homelessness and moving into their new home. Please donate a Housewarming Bucket today.

**Included in the Housewarming Bucket:**
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Kleenex
- All-purpose cleaning cloth
- Kitchen towel
- Magic Erasers
- Sponges
- Dish soap
- All-purpose cleaner
- Anti-bacterial wipes
- Plastic bowls
- Cups
- Spoons

Volunteers Needed

If you can help unload and sort food on Saturday, May 14, please call Fran at 754-5333

ECHO Mailbag

I would like to take time out of my day to send a special “thanks” to you all for such nice Easter Baskets that were given to my kids. I really appreciate everything you all have done for my family. Thank you once again for your time, support and patience.

Ronni and Family

Thank you for supplying my children with Easter baskets this year. They really enjoyed them!

Anonymous Client

Thank you for all the good you do for humanity.

Mary Hefferan

I am proud to be a small part of the work you do, and I know that Tony speaks highly of your efforts.

Donald Smithson

We support and admire the work ECHO is doing to help homeless and needy families in Rock County.

Mary & Bob Morin

Thank you for meeting the needs of our community in so many ways that we can’t. Hope this helps continue to do that.

John & Cathy Burt

We appreciate all that ECHO does to provide help to needy families.

Rosemary and Family
With Gratitude for Your Generous Support

The 2016 Janesville CROP Hunger Walk began with color, a splash and with compassion for the children of the world and those right here in our community who do not have enough nutritious food to eat.

The color was provided by Vivian Alvin, a Cargill United Methodist Youth member who did creative face painting for children and adults who walked on Sunday afternoon April 24th. The splash was the sound of an entire pie landing on the face of Pastor Krysta Deede of Cargill United Methodist Church who challenged the youth group to raise $500.00 for CROP. They raised $702.00. She kept her promise and let them hurl a pie at her face…..gently, of course!

The compassion for children of the world began with retired Senator Tim Cullen, who led the Walk. He was followed closely by more than 200 people who gave their time and financial resources to care about others.

As of the writing of this article we have raised $38,000, with more funds coming in every day. Thank you for your incredible generosity. Your donations have helped:

- Purchase groceries for 22,000 people in Janesville who are living at or below the poverty line.
- Provide a box of groceries for 5,822 senior citizens in Janesville who are just barely getting by in retirement years.
- Provide 735 Christmas dinners for your neighbors who would have little reason to celebrate if not for your generosity.
- Save the lives of children in developing countries who are dying needlessly because of drinking water that is neither clean nor safe and from lack of good nutritious food.

Your generosity has saved lives. THANK YOU!

**GO GREEN. REQUEST YOUR NEWSLETTER BY E-MAIL AT www.echojanesville.org**

**NEEDED: LARGE BROWN PAPER BAGS, PLASTIC BAGS, TWIST TIES AND PLASTIC BOTTLES**

Drop them off at ECHO Mon.-Fri. 9am-Noon, or Mon.-Thur. 1-4pm

**ECHO Needs**

Soup and Crackers  
Mac & Cheese  
Cereal  
Peanut Butter & Jelly  
Canned Meals  
Instant Coffee  
Feminine Supplies  
Toilet Paper  
Diapers
ECHO is more than just a Food Pantry.

emergency food gift cards  transportation  seeds for gardens
pet food pantry  counseling  community meals
Easter baskets  diapers and wipes  motel vouchers
groceries  cleaning supplies  bus tokens
Christmas toys  clothing vouchers  rent assistance
nutritional classes  case management  school supplies
birthday cakes  personal care items  gas cards
Thanksgiving baskets

For a full list of our services and how you can help, visit www.ECHOjanesville.org or call (608) 754-5333

$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.
President’s Message  
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One donor recently stated she would rather donate money instead of food because she knows that for every dollar she donates ECHO will turn it into three or more, because of buying strength they have. ECHO’s reach is deep into our community with one in five people receiving ECHO services. And finally, ECHO’s newest feather in its cap is that it is now a four star charity, Charity Navigator’s highest designation. But don’t just believe me. Do your homework. Then turn your trust into action. Drop off some food, send in a check, come in and volunteer. We need your help.

We are ECHO.

Bicycles and Fans Needed

ECHO assists clients with fans to keep cool in warm weather & bikes for clients to get to jobs.

Last year ECHO was able to provide
94 clients with fans.
Last year ECHO was able to provide
28 clients with bicycles.
Please consider donating a
bicycle or fan to those in need.

ECHO Welcomes Julie Cunningham
as a new Client Advocate

Hi, I am a life-long resident of Janesville and I am very excited to start working at ECHO, Inc. I am married and have two beautiful daughters, Rachael and Ashley. I graduated with a degree in Social Work from UW-Whitewater. Previously I have worked for United Way of North Rock County, where I was the Volunteer Network Coordinator and also assisted with First Call Information and Referral Program. For the last three plus years I have worked at the Salvation Army, where I was the Volunteer and Special Events Coordinator.

In my free time I love to travel (but mostly plan vacations that I will take someday), go to movies and play trivia. I am looking forward to the new experiences I will have at ECHO, and meeting all the staff, volunteers and everyone that receives assistance from ECHO. Please stop by and say Hi!
This was a great time for the staff of ECHO along with our Board of Directors to say thank you to our many volunteers. We appreciate all that you do to help, from our food pantry to fundraising events and everything in between. Your dedication and time in volunteering for ECHO are priceless. THANK YOU!

If you would like to volunteer at ECHO, please call Fran at 754-5333 to schedule a visit to fill out the volunteer application.

Name: Sandy Lexa

How long have you volunteered at ECHO? For decades - since approximately 1978.

How did you get involved at ECHO? LaVerne Sandgren, the executive director at the time, and Pastor Sandgren came and talked at church. A group of people and I met with them after church and decided to see how we could volunteer.

What do you do at ECHO? I am an ECHO Board Member, help in pantry and with fundraising by getting silent auction items. I also help with the quarterly newsletter mailing and special events. It keeps me going!

What is your favorite thing about ECHO? It is a local organization with local support - people helping people. Whether the donation is small or large, everyone is greatly appreciated for their support.

What is one thing about ECHO that surprised you when you started volunteering? The different people that volunteered at ECHO. Also the number of services ECHO supplies.

Life is an ECHO - What you send out, you get back!

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK 2016
April 10-16 2016

This was a great time for the staff of ECHO along with our Board of Directors to say thank you to our many volunteers. We appreciate all that you do to help, from our food pantry to fundraising events and everything in between. Your dedication and time in volunteering for ECHO are priceless. THANK YOU!
Upcoming Events

Eat Out for Hunger

This year we would like to invite you to join us in the fight against hunger! Participating establishments donate 10% of Monday, June 6th gross sales to ECHO.

PARTICIPATING ESTABLISHMENTS:

Citrus Cafe
Culver’s – Milton Ave. and Court St.
Dairy Queen – Court St.
Eagle Inn
East Point Sportz Pub
GR Sandwich
HHFRRRGGH
H&S Express Hibachi & Sushi
Kealy’s Kafe
Luke’s Deli
Lucy’s Loon Lake Coffee & Deli
Mac’s Pizza Shack
Milwaukee Grill
My Apartment Pub & Grill
Panda Garden
Peking Chinese
Prime Quarter
Riley’s Sports Bar & Grill
Sneakers Sports Bar
Wedge Inn East

Check www.echojanesville.org for an updated list

11th Anniversary

11th Anniversary
Saturday, Sept. 24, 2016 at the Janesville Country Club
More info coming soon at www.echojanesville.org

ECHO Holiday Express

Sunday, November 27, 2016 at the Pontiac Convention Center
Touching Hearts at ECHO
Thank you to our Touching Heart business participants: Basics Cooperative, Bass Creek Espresso, Blackhawk Community Credit Union, Choice Cleaners, Citrus Café, Commercial Bank, Culver’s, East Point Sportz Pub, Fuddruckers, Harris Ace Hardware, My Apartment, Shady Nook, Trading Spaces, and Wedge Inn East. Many thanks to the individuals and churches who also participated in Touching Hearts at ECHO!

Swing into Spring
Thank you to all who attended Swing into Spring. We greatly appreciate those who donated items for the silent auction. We appreciate the Moose Lodge for their hospitality on March 12th and Ladies Must Swing for providing a great night of music. Thank you to the following for sponsoring the night: Boucher Automotive Group, Lamar Outdoor Advertising, South Central WI Builders Association. We hope to see you there next year!

Easter Baskets
Thank you to those who donated items and baskets for the Easter Basket program for children. Many volunteers showed up on March 21st to put together 289 baskets that were distributed to children throughout Rock County. ECHO appreciates all the support from the donors and volunteers at this most blessed time of the year.

www.facebook.com/ECHOJanesville

Save the Date

For one night, community members spend the night outside to raise funds as well as to discuss, think and learn about homelessness in our community.

Event proceeds will benefit the programs and services of: ECHO, Edgerton Community Outreach, GIFTS, House of Mercy and Project 16:49.

Sign up at www.rock-hitf.org

For more information or to sponsor the event, please contact Tammy at (608) 314-5501 or ed@project1649.org

Friday, November 4, 2016
Rock County Fairgrounds
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.

Edith “Edie” Agard  Ellen Holmberg  Alta Reilly
Fred Blum  Florence Holznhecht  Madeline “Cookie” Robbins
Alan Brunker  Ardis Iverson  Ruth Schilling
Margaret Coen  Suzanne Janes  Kathryn Schmidley
Ryan Copeland  Phyllis Kail  Elsie Schmidt Paul
Jim Cox  Robert “Bob” Kuranz  Fannie Shefte
Don & Mary Eckert  Vivian Lipke Utzig  Louise Shekels
Gordy Engebretson  Barbara Lueck  Charlie Smith
Eunice Erdman  Sister M. Anne McGregor  Dolores Toebaas
Rojean Erlien  Dolores H. McKillip  Jeffrey Tollefson
Robert Finnane, Sr.  Jacqueline Monahan  James & Norine Turner
Patricia Fredricks  Geraldine Moore  Shirley Urbanowski
Leonard Griffith  Karen Pennycook  David Wanninger
Arnold Haney  Elizabeth “Betty” Peterson  Larry Wiedenfeld
Jerry Herman  Barbara Pratt

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.

Nancy & Al Bennett  Judy Latka
Carolyn Brandeen - Birthday  Karen Lisser
David Brown  Henry McCluskey - Birthday
The Faithful People of Cargill Church  Kyle McCluskey
Barb & Terry Cisler  Jane & Kevin Michelson
ECHO Staff  C. Oberle
Mat Haeger - 60th Birthday  Joe Oberle - Birthday and 1st Communion
Bob Hiller  Michael & Judy Stoney - 35th Anniversary

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

| 4-H Consolidated                       | Jones Dairy Farm                  |
| Afton Community Church                | Kwik Trip                          |
| A & H Trucking                        | MacFarlane Pheasant Farm           |
| All Saints Anglican Church            | Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church        |
| Asbury United Methodist Church        | Mt. Zion United Methodist Church   |
| Bimbo Bakeries USA                    | Nativity of Mary Catholic Church   |
| Birds Eye                             | and School                         |
| Butternut Bakery                      | NHA-WIC                            |
| Cargill United Methodist Church       | Olive Garden                       |
| Catholic Charities                    | Panera Bread                       |
| Cedar Crest                           | Peace Lutheran Church              |
| Chambers & Owen                       | Perfectly Plus Women’s Consignment |
| Country Quality Dairy                 | Pepsi                              |
| Crystal Farms                         | Pick’n Save                        |
| Daniel’s Sentry Food Stores           | Retired Lunch Bunch                |
| Data Dimensions                       | Riverplace Senior Housing          |
| Daylilies Choral Group                | Rock/Green Realtors                |
| Delta Kappa                           | Rock Prairie Presbyterian          |
| Dunkin’ Donuts                        | Roundy’s Food                      |
| E & D Water Works                     | Ruby’s Pantry                      |
| Faith Lutheran Church                 | SCWBA                              |
| Festival Foods                        | St. John’s Lutheran Church         |
| First Congregational Church           | St. John Vianney Church            |
| First Lutheran Church                 | St. Mark Lutheran Church           |
| First Presbyterian Church             | St. Matthew Lutheran Church & School|
| Gardner Bakery                        | St. Patrick Catholic Church        |
| Good Shepherd Lutheran Church         | St. Paul Lutheran Church           |
| Hedberg Public Library                | St. Peter’s Lutheran Church        |
| Hendricks Properties                  | St. William Catholic Church        |
| Hormel                                | Sam’s Club                         |
| Humane Society of Southern Wisconsin  | Schnucks                           |
| Hunger Task Force - Milwaukee         | Seneca Foods                       |
| Impact Confections                    | Starbucks                          |
| Janesville CROP Hunger Walk           | TJ Maxx Associates                 |
| Jay’s Big Rolls                       | Trinity Episcopal Church           |
|                                       | WCBVI                              |

“WE CAN’T HELP EVERYONE, BUT EVERYONE CAN HELP SOMEONE.”

-RONALD REAGAN
**ECHO Calendar of Events**

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

♦ **8/26 School Supply Distribution** –
   at St. John Lutheran Church

♦ **9/24 Culinary Delight** –
   at Janesville Country Club

♦ **10/22 Empty Bowl Soup Fundraiser** –
   11 AM - 2 PM at Parker High School

♦ **11/4 Sleep Out to End Homelessness** –
   at the Rock Co. 4-H Fairgrounds

♦ **11/19 Thanksgiving Basket Distribution** –
   at the Rock Co. 4-H Fairgrounds

♦ **11/27 ECHO Holiday Express** –
   1-4 PM at the Pontiac Convention Center

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For removal from our mailing list, call (608)754-5333, notify us in writing, or email office@echojanesville.org