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Winter 2023

# The ECHO Times

## President's Message By Dori MacFarlane



I am writing this article on a cold and gloomy January day. I'm grateful for the warmth of my home and my office where I can sit quietly and reflect upon what my goals might be for ECHO. I am grateful for all of the amenities that I have at my fingertips. Some of us are so fortunate in our circumstances. It is truly humbling when I volunteer at ECHO and see some of our clients who are not as fortunate. One of ECHO's biggest challenges, presently, is the lack of affordable housing. We currently have the funds to help our clients attain affordable housing, but nowhere to put them. Our wait list is growing at an incredible pace, and it is so disheartening when a client is told that we have nowhere to put them. This situation is unacceptable, as everyone should have access to housing! One of my goals is for ECHO to find creative ways to house our clients. I'd love to hear any idea that you might have as to

how we could go about this. We are a village and we need to band together to take care of each and every one.

Another goal I have set for ECHO involves you. We need you in whatever capacity you can help ECHO. Take a moment and think about your skills, your talents, your abilities. How can you help us? Are you good with children? There are opportunities to interact with children when parents come to fill out food orders. Are you good at organizing? The volunteers at our warehouse would love your help! Are you a mastermind in the kitchen? The food pantry can use efficient people to help bag the groceries (and perhaps creative cooks to come up with meal ideas using the items that are bagged). We also could use yummy treats to add when we run our Empty Bowls event. Are you good at raising money? We need you on the fundraising committee! Are you unable to make a weekly commitment, but you'd like to help? We have events at which we're always looking for help. Are you a Pinterest guru? When we have events, we need someone to help organize and decorate. Are you handy? We currently have a house that sometimes needs repairs and have other opportunities for our handy men and women! Please consider how you can help out! If you'd like to brainstorm with one of us, give us a call. We'll help you figure out where to plug in.

Although I have many goals for ECHO, the last one that I will mention here is that I'd like to see our church board members come back to our meetings. Since Covid, we have seen a big drop off at our board meetings. We truly need the involvement of all of our board members so that we can be successful! If you are at one of our member churches, will you please check and see if someone is representing your church at our meetings? If not, would you please volunteer?

The Executive Committee and I are looking forward to serving ECHO alongside you! This year will have many challenges and we will meet them head-on with our dedicated staff, volunteers and Board of ECHO!

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## Immediate Past President's Message

By Heidi Jensen

It has been an honor and a blessing to serve as ECHO's Board President for the last two years and on the Board for the past five years. During this time, I have had the privilege of watching ECHO grow tremendously under new leadership. Many new programs, such as PATH outreach, have been implemented. Collaboration with other local agencies, such as the YMCA, City of Janesville and Project 16:49, has allowed ECHO to serve the community in exciting new ways. With these new partnerships and new leadership, ECHO has responded to the growing need for food and housing services in this community. The staff at ECHO works tirelessly to provide these services with the help of a team of dedicated volunteers. Thank you to all those who donate countless hours stocking shelves, filling food orders, creating holiday baskets, assisting with fundraising activities or any of the other ways to serve clients of ECHO.

A huge thank you to outgoing past President Nancy Hansen-Bennett. Your leadership, commitment and enthusiasm for spreading the mission of ECHO is truly inspiring.

This last year alone, ECHO provided 2,705,604 meals, 2,781 senior stock boxes, 282 months of rent, 10,553 motel nights, 600 thanksgiving baskets and 575 Christmas meals. That is astounding! And that is just a portion of the community services ECHO provides! None of this would be possible without the support ECHO receives from local businesses, school groups, volunteers, church communities and individual community members! Thank you for supporting ECHO!

## Growth and Partnerships

By Jessica Locher, Executive Director



The staff at ECHO are very proud of our growth and accomplishments over the last few years. We started a weekend food program for homeless students with the Janesville School District in Fall 2022 and weekend food program for youth at the YMCA of Northern Rock County in Summer 2021. We also expanded our emergency lodging program, Rapid Re-Housing program, and Housing and Resource Navigation. Much of the growth we have seen has been with new or strengthened partnerships. In this newsletter you will have the opportunity to learn more about our partnership with Project 16:49.

Our emergency lodging program has seen a lot of growth, thanks to government grants that were available due to pandemic relief funds. Thanks to your support and pandemic relief grants, we went from providing 2,967 nights in 2019 and 4,308 nights in 2020 to providing 9,292 nights in 2021 and 10,553 nights in 2022. This is a significant growth for a much-needed program in our community, as we are lacking affordable housing for our lower-income neighbors. Affordable housing should not be a taboo topic and looked down upon. Affordable housing is a right that everyone should have no matter your socioeconomic status and it should also be safe and secure. With your support, we are hopeful that we will be able to continue to provide the same level of services from the past two years as pandemic relief grants disappear.

Because affordable housing should be a right for all, we formed a partnership with Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development. Together we were awarded funding from the City of Janesville's Pay It Forward to build six units of affordable housing for homeless families to live in for up to two years. During that time, we will assist them in removing barriers to self-sufficiency with weekly case management services. These units should be ready to be occupied by the end of 2023.

The above information is just a fraction of what is new or expanding at ECHO. I encourage you to set up a meeting with me or schedule a tour with Emily to learn more about ECHO and our mission of meeting housing, food and other basic human needs and addressing the barriers to self-sufficiency. Thank you again for all of your support!

## 2023 ECHO Executive Committee

**Dori MacFarlane**, President  
*Community Representative*

**Rick Mueller**, Vice-President  
*Community Representative*

**Greg Kraft**, Treasurer  
*Nativity of Mary Catholic Church*

**Rita Milbrandt**, Secretary  
*Good Shepherd Lutheran Church*

**Gloria Huschka**, Member at Large  
*Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church*

**Martin Huckstep** Member at Large  
*First Christian Church*

**Heidi Jensen**, Immediate Past President  
*Asbury United Methodist Church*



# REUSE + RECYCLE

brown paper bags

Please drop off your brown paper bags  
at 65 S High St., Janesville, WI



## 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

- 282 MONTHS OF RENT PAID TO KEEP FAMILIES HOUSED
- 10,553 NIGHTS IN A LOCAL MOTEL FOR THE HOMELESS
- 2,781 SENIORS RECEIVED A SENIOR STOCKBOX
- 2,705,604 MEALS PROVIDED
- 600 THANKSGIVING BASKETS PROVIDED
- 575 CHRISTMAS DAY MEALS SERVED

## ECHO NEEDS

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

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 donating 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](http://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.



# Help Battle Homelessness in Rock County

Leadership Development Academy (LDA) team, Rock Forward, is working with ECHO to raise funds and awareness of the homelessness issue in Rock County.

## What is LDA?

The Leadership Development Academy participants experience formal leadership training, extensive Real Colors development, stress management, self-awareness as a leader, expanded community exposure and involvement, and team building with a final team project.

### Project:

Create promotional videos to bring awareness to the Housing & Homelessness programs ECHO has for low-income families.

Team Rock Forward is working with Anthony Swindell of Up the Ante Productions to coordinate and produce short videos that define what ECHO does as an organization, what homelessness programs and resources they offer low-income families, and share success stories. ECHO will use these videos to help promote their services to the community and potential donors.

In addition to creating videos, team Rock Forward is looking to raise **\$15,000** to support the ECHO's motel voucher program.



ROCK FORWARD

### Team Members:

Jess Daniels - Corporate Contractors Inc.

Katarina Dries (YLDA) - Craig High School

Patrick Gasper - School District of Janesville

Kari Swirth - Irontek

Jamie Thiede - Johnson Financial Group

Lisa Tollefson - Rock County

Scot Truesdill - City of Janesville

\$25 - Toiletries/Food  
\$50 - One night in motel  
\$350 - One week in motel  
\$1400 - One month in motel

Scan me to  
donate online!





## Project 16:49 and ECHO

By Jessica Pfeifer

Hi! My name is Jessica Pfeifer and I am the new Systems Navigator for Project 16:49 in collaboration with ECHO, Inc. I started with Project 16:49 as an intern and during my internship I discovered my passion for working with young adults. I was able to continue with Project 16:49 by serving as an AmeriCorps member for two years after I completed my internship. I have three teenagers and have found that life at home has made it easier to connect with the youth. Navigating resources is something that can be difficult at any age. I am really excited about this new position that was created so that I can help our Rock and Walworth County youth do so.

Project 16:49 recently collaborated with ECHO on two Youth Homeless Demonstration Project grants to create:

- A systems navigator position to provide increased outreach, advocacy, and case management support to homeless youth in community settings
- A Rapid Rehousing Program to provide rent assistance plus case management for ten youth in scattered site apartments.

Both initiatives allow us to better serve the needs of more of our community's homeless youth, and likely would not have happened without ECHO's partnership.

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## Easter Baskets for Children

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

Items needed for the baskets are:

- ◆ **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. Please drop off by March 31.





## CROP Hunger Walk set for April 30



Janesville area walkers will “Bee the Change” to help end hunger on Sunday, April 30, during the 46th annual Janesville Area CROP Hunger Walk.

Organizers hope to raise \$50,000, and ECHO again will receive 25 percent of the total amount donated. The remaining funds will help the efforts of Church World Service (CWS), a faith-based organization that fights hunger and poverty in communities around the globe.

“Bee the Change” is the theme for this year’s walk in recognition of CWS’s efforts to help families in Kenya establish bee colonies so they can earn money by harvesting and selling honey. CWS provides families with a set of beehives, supplies to hang the beehives, harvesting equipment, training and honey-processing units.

On April 30, walkers can choose a 5K route that starts at Cargill United Methodist Church, 2000 Wesley Ave., Janesville, makes a loop along Milwaukee Street, Randall Avenue, Racine Street, through Palmer Park and back to the church via Lexington Drive. A shorter 2.5K route also is available. Registration for the walk will take place from 1 to 1:30 p.m.

Last year’s Janesville area walk raised more than \$49,000 with about \$12,250 going to ECHO, a Janesville-based organization that helps provide temporary housing, food and transportation to people in need. Through the years, the Janesville area walk has raised more than \$1.28 million.

Walkers can sign up online individually or as a team at [www.crophungerwalk.org/janesvillewi](http://www.crophungerwalk.org/janesvillewi). Just click on “Register,” fill in your details, and you’ll find lots of tools to help you get started. There is no registration fee to participate, but walkers are encouraged to collect donations to support the cause.

Sixteen teams participated in the 2022 walk, and organizers hope that number will increase this year. Event coordinator Kathy Holcombe encourages area congregations, businesses and other groups to get involved in the fight to end hunger. For more information, contact Holcombe at 608-752-8117 or [crophjanesville@charter.net](mailto:crophjanesville@charter.net).

A breakfast meeting for team captains is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Saturday, March 4, at ECHO, 65 S. High St., Janesville. Recruiting materials will be distributed at the meeting, followed by a tour of ECHO. Captains planning to attend the meeting can RSVP to Holcombe at the number or email listed above.

If you’re not available to walk on April 30, consider making a tax-deductible online contribution at [www.crophungerwalk.org/janesvillewi](http://www.crophungerwalk.org/janesvillewi). Regardless of its size, your gift will help people in your neighborhood and around the world.

# Calendar



**This year’s calendar raffle ticket sales will launch on April 14th at our Swing Into Spring Dance**



*MacFarlane*  
PHEASANTS, Inc.

# SWING INTO SPRING



BENEFITTING:



## BIG BAND HANGAR DANCE



FRIDAY

APRIL 14TH

7PM-10PM

DANCE LESSONS AT 6PM

REVV AVIATION HANGAR

4606 S Atlantis Dr.  
Janesville, WI 53546

MUSIC BY:

THE FIRST ALL-FEMALE BIG BAND FROM MADISON, WISCONSIN  
**LADIES Must SWING**

**\$30**



Tickets:

[echoinc.square.site](http://echoinc.square.site)

Desserts  
Provided By:



SPONSORED BY:

**revv** AVIATION

**Educators**  
CREDIT UNION

Achieving more together.





# Volunteer Take 5

Names: Cindy and John Deuth

How long have you volunteered at ECHO?

*Cindy– 3 years John– 10 months*

How did you get involved at ECHO?

*We saw an article in the paper about ECHO asking for volunteers.*

What do you do at ECHO?

*We stock the pantry and fill pantry orders*

What is your favorite thing about ECHO?

*We love helping people and working with other volunteers.*

What is one thing about ECHO that surprised you when you started volunteering?

*We were surprised at how generous donating companies are and how nice the people are that we work with.*



**Looking for ways your employees can volunteer and make a difference in the community?  
Let us know!**



**Unfortunately, we have recently had multiple donations and packages stolen from our driveway.**

**Please, do not leave any donations when we are closed.**

**Donation Hours:  
M-TH 8:00am-4pm  
F 8:00am-12pm**



# Thank You!

**Thanksgiving Baskets** - Thank you to the donors and 25 volunteers who came out to help pack and hand out the Thanksgiving baskets. The Thanksgiving Baskets provided food for 600 families.

**Adopt-a-Family (AAF)** - On behalf of the ECHO clients, staff, and board, we would like to say THANK YOU to the donors who call ECHO every year to adopt a family, as well as the first time Adopt-A-Family donors. With the continued challenges everyone faced in 2022, our wonderful donors still came together to adopt 53 families. Your generosity makes it possible to continue this great program year after year.

**Christmas Toys** - Many thanks to those who donated cash or gift cards to help provide a Christmas for 396 children in need with the Christmas Toy Program. Thank you also to the many wonderful ECHO elves who helped create goodie bags full of stocking stuffer items for each family to receive.

**Christmas Dinner** - ECHO would like to thank the volunteers who came to the Christmas Dinner and helped serve 575 meals. St. William Catholic Church again graciously donated their space for the dinner. ECHO would also like to give a big shout-out to our chef, Jon Gordon, and his volunteers who made all of the yummy food with the help of the BTC Culinary program who prepped all the turkeys. We hope to see you at the Christmas Dinner on Monday, December 25, 2023 at St. William Catholic Church.

**Festival Foods Turkey Trot** - Thank you Festival Foods for sponsoring this amazing event! After switching to a virtual at-home event in 2020, the Turkey Trot came back stronger than ever with a new downtown location in 2021. In 2022 attendance increased again for this amazing holiday tradition. This event provides support to our general services each year. We are so appreciative of being a part of this event with the Boys & Girls Club of Janesville and YMCA of Northern Rock County.

**Basics Cooperative** - Thank you to Basics for having ECHO as one of their 2022 Register Round Up benefactors.

**Parker DECA** - ECHO would like to thank Parker HS DECA for their donation of 1,493 pounds of food.

To the right are just a few of the many businesses and organizations who supported ECHO this past holiday season. A few of those are: SSM Health, Tricor Insurance, "Santa", Steve Caya Attorney at Law. We appreciate everyone's support but do not have enough space for every photo.





## 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.

David Brown  
Mary Clemensen  
Richard DuBois  
James DuCharme  
Mike Esch  
Mary Jo & Jim Fox  
Ray Friewald  
Bill Giese  
Bob Goepfert  
Priscilla Goodger  
Norbert Hoag  
Lorraine Homan

Jean Jensen  
Marilyn Kelley  
Jeanne Kitson  
Neil Lawrence  
James McLean  
Marie Menz  
Mary Mueller  
Joan Neeno  
Alan Neugebauer  
Wayne R. Nuernberg  
Dee Patt  
Kathy Punzel

Dr. Jim Rivers  
Ramona & Kenneth Scharine  
Marian Scheurell  
Dorothy & Charlie Smith  
Mary Smith  
Grace Spoden  
Ginny Spors  
Al Switalla  
Mike Switalla  
James & Norine Turner  
Avalon Widner  
Kathryn Zetzman

## 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.

Cathy & Carl Andren  
Jacqui & John Bishop-Van Horn  
Deb & Jim Brewer  
Jack & Kris Burnett  
Martha & Jack Burnett  
Julie & Dudley Chang  
Bernard & Angline Danczyk  
Kris Ellefson and Craig Lipetri  
Mary Hayney  
Judy Helbing

Felix & Laura Kielpinski  
Dorothy Knutson's Grandchildren/  
Great grandchildren  
Larsen Family  
Brett & Kelly Lipetri  
Karen & Rob Lisser  
Jim & Emily Lund  
JT & Ellie McCrone Family  
Mo & Chelsea McCrone  
Skip & Sue McCrone

Samantha & Andrew McDonald  
Moore Family  
Warren Rose  
Kris Schieve  
Karen & Bill Spae  
Dave & Jody Van Horn  
Steve & Franklin Van Horn  
Weisz Siblings  
Mike Wimmer  
Bud & Katie Wolf

### 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.)

BENEFITTING:

TUESDAY  
**FEB**  
**28**  
5pm-7pm

HELP US, HELP OTHERS

A PERCENTAGE OF ALL SALES WILL  
BE DONATED TO ECHO

THE SUGAR EXCHANGE  
119 N MAIN ST  
DOWNTOWN JANESVILLE



## ***Food and Fund Drives***

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

All Saints Church  
Amazon  
Asbury United Methodist Church  
Bimbo Bakeries USA  
Birds Eye  
Cargill United Methodist Church  
Catholic Charities  
Chambers & Owen  
Chick-Fil-A  
Country Quality Dairy  
Crystal Farms  
Daniels Sentry Food Stores  
Dollar General  
E & D Water Works  
Emerald Grove UCC  
Faith Lutheran Church  
Festival Foods  
First Christian Church  
First Congregational Church  
First Lutheran Church  
First Presbyterian Church  
Gardner Bakery  
Generac  
Girl Scouts  
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
Hedberg Public Library  
Hendricks Properties  
Hunger Task Force - Milwaukee  
Hy-Vee  
Jay's Big Rolls  
Join Janesville  
Jones Dairy Farm

Kwik Trip Stores  
Little Debbie  
MacFarlane Pheasant Farm  
Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church  
Mt. Zion United Methodist Church  
Nativity of Mary Catholic Church and School  
New Life Assembly of God/Convoy of Hope  
NHA-WIC  
Olive Garden  
Our Savior Lutheran Church  
Panera Bread  
Peace Lutheran Church  
Pepsi  
Riverplace Senior Housing  
Rock Prairie Presbyterian Church  
St. John Lutheran Church  
St. John Vianney Church  
St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
St. Mary's Hospital, Janesville  
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church  
St. Patrick Catholic Church  
St. Paul Lutheran Church  
St. Peter's Lutheran Church  
St. William Catholic Church  
Sam's Club  
Schnucks  
Seneca Foods  
Sentry Foods  
Stop-N-Go  
Texas Road House  
Tree House Foods  
Trinity Episcopal Church  
Walmart



**Chick-fil-A Janesville (WI)**



2627 Humes Rd. Janesville, WI 53545

**10% of sales will be donated to ECHO**

Mention **ECHO** when ordering (DINE IN or DRIVE THRU)

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15 5PM-8PM**



**ECHO, Inc.**  
**65 S. High St.,**  
**Janesville, WI 53548**  
Phone: 608-754-5333  
Fax: 608-754-9199  
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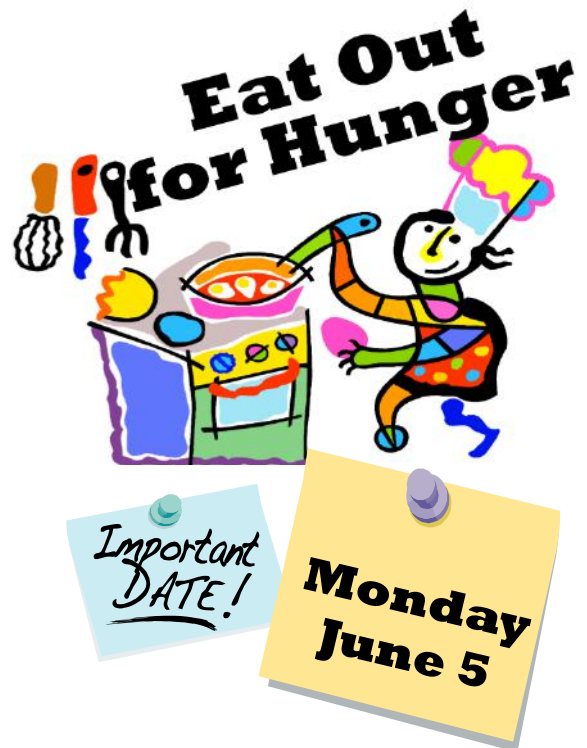
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## **ECHO Calendar of Events**

- ♦ **2/28 Sugar Exchange Fundraiser** 5-7pm
- ♦ **3/15 Chick-Fil-A Fundraiser** 5-8pm
- ♦ **4/4-4/6 Children's Easter Basket Distribution**  
at the ECHO Office
- ♦ **4/14 Swing Into Spring Hangar Dance** 7-10pm  
at Revv Aviation
- ♦ **4/30 CROP Hunger Walk**
- ♦ **6/5 Eat Out for Hunger**  
All day at participating restaurants. Details to follow.
- ♦ **8/25 School Supply Distribution**



## **Generous Business Sponsors**



**United Way**  
**Blackhawk Region**  
**Funded Partner**