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Spring 2024

The ECHO Times

President's Message

By Dori MacFarlane



Every day, ECHO serves clients who are either on the brink of or are currently experiencing homelessness. No two cases are the same, and one might be surprised to see some of the people who come in given the images of homelessness portrayed on TV shows and in movies as panhandlers, hustlers, people who don't want to work, and people who are lazy. However, those who are unhoused do have to work hard, but it doesn't usually get them into a position to afford housing. A person experiencing homelessness does not have a safe place to lay their head each evening; They don't even have a safe place to keep their belongings. They are moved from one location to

another because there are no permanent locations for them. On rainy or cold winter nights, there's no respite. They are unable to turn up the heat or crawl deep under their covers while the thunder roars or the sleet pelts down. Once someone loses their home, it becomes very difficult to maintain or find a job. When looking for a job they often don't have an address to use and are unable to get their mail. If they don't have a place to live, they do not have access to showers or laundry services. If they have cell phones, they don't have places to charge them.

Often clients will come in having to choose between a rent payment and a car repair, medical bill or some other unexpected or life-altering bill. When this happens, they can fill out a request for rent assistance. This application is filled out by both our client and their landlord. Including the landlord in the process lets them know that their tenant is making every effort to pay their rent. Once the application is filled out and returned to ECHO, an appointment is made for our client to meet with a client representative who will help determine if we are able to help them pay their rent. If we can help, we make the payment directly to the landlord. ECHO is able to offer qualified assistance to the majority of those who make appointments with us, and we are usually able to issue payment within 5-10 days of the appointment. If they do not qualify for assistance and have children, we will refer them to the Job Center, which may be able to help them with emergency assistance.

Although it is a goal of ECHO to keep people in their homes, we still have people experiencing homelessness in our community. ECHO is acutely aware of the plight of homelessness and works diligently to partner with other agencies in our community to combat it. My next article will address what ECHO does once a person or family becomes homeless. We have several programs to address this ever-growing population, and I'm eager to share them with you. If you're wondering what you can do now, please consider advocating to politicians about providing funding for affordable housing and funding to agencies who offer homeless services. Ask for changes in zoning and ordinances to make it easier to build all kinds of affordable housing (including, but not limited to tiny houses in various neighborhoods). Your continued support of local agencies that provide services is greatly appreciated. Thank you for caring about our neighbors.

Executive Director's Message

By Jessica Locher, Executive Director



ECHO has seen a lot of change since 1969 when we were formed. We were started by churches to be a clearinghouse of basic need services such as food and clothing. Many volunteers provided services that went along with the mission of the newly-formed organization. Paid staff was added over the years along with more volunteers as ECHO added more services. Staffing needs have also changed in recent years, as our housing and homeless programs have expanded and started requiring certain educational requirements and/or work experience. During this whole time, volunteers have been a lifeblood to ECHO and its food programs. ECHO has a dedicated group of volunteers who help ensure the food pantry and related food programs run smoothly with the help of our Food Resource and Volunteer Coordinator. We would like to thank the many businesses that support their employees in taking time out of their workday to volunteer with the food programs at ECHO.

Volunteers assist ECHO in other ways, too. Our Board of Directors is made up of individuals from our member churches and community representatives. They keep ECHO moving forward with our mission in mind and ensure we are being good stewards of the financial support received. ECHO also has volunteers who help us with our many service events like the monthly community meal, Easter baskets, school supplies, Thanksgiving baskets, Christmas toys, and the Christmas Dinner. ECHO volunteers provided over 10,000 hours in service throughout all of ECHO's programming! Thank you again to all our amazing volunteers as we come to the end of 2024 National Volunteer Week! If you would like to learn more about volunteer opportunities at ECHO, please join us at one of our monthly volunteer open houses on the first Tuesday of each month at 5:00 pm. If you are interested in volunteering, you can also fill out an application at <https://echojaneseville.org/volunteer/> and our Volunteer Coordinator will reach out to you. Remember no act of service is too small. They all make a difference to your neighbors seeking basic needs at ECHO.

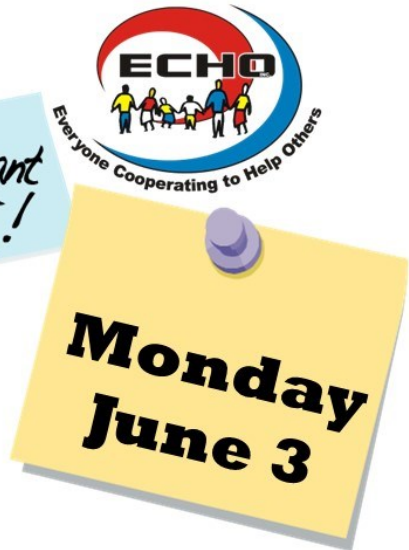


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Important
DATE!



Dine out at these participating Janesville restaurants:

- 808 Cheesecake Janesville
- 808 Hawaiian Style Poke
- Basics Coffee & Deli
- Charlie's Place
- Citrus Café
- Culver's (Milton-Ave)
- drafthouse
- GR's Sandwich Shoppe
- H&S Japanese Express
- Jeff's Kitchen— Open Special
- Knute's Bar & Grill
- Looking Glass
- Luke's Deli
- Mac's Pizza Shack
- My Apartment Pub
- Riley's Sports Bar
- Sandee's Thai Fusion
- Whiskey Ranch Janesville

Visit www.echojanesville.org for an updated restaurant list.



Restaurants will donate 10% of their June 3 receipts as they take action against hunger.





OTHER NEEDS

- Cereal
- Oatmeal
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly
- Pasta
- Pasta Sauce
- Soups
- Tuna
- Canned meals
- Personal care items
- Cleaning supplies

VOLUNTEER OPEN HOUSE

1ST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH 5PM

TOUR THE BUILDING AND LEARN MORE ABOUT VOLUNTEERING AT ECHO



Unfortunately, we have 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

Volunteer Take 5

Name:
Barb

How long have you volunteered at ECHO?
5 Years

How did you get involved at ECHO?

I've wanted to be involved in giving to the community and it was through a former co-worker of mine at SSM Health, April, that this all came together. Thank you, April!!

What do you do at ECHO?

Mainly working in the food pantry— packing orders, stocking shelves, unloading donations that come in and whatever else is needed.

What is your favorite thing about ECHO?

I actually look forward to this particular volunteer job! It's rewarding #1 to help those in need and #2 friendships formed with volunteers and staff have been more than I ever imagined.

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

All the work that is needed to make ECHO successful! The need for basic foods and personal items is unbelievable. The generosity of donations of food alone from so many stores right here in Janesville surprised me. We need them to continue so we can help all who are going through a rough time.



If you are interested in volunteering at ECHO, please go to our website: www.echojanesville.org/volunteer/ and fill out the application or stop by ECHO and ask for an application. Bring your sense of humor and a spirit of caring.



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



SHOEBOX PROJECT



- toothbrush
- toothpaste
- comb/brush
- bar soap
- shampoo
- conditioner
- washcloth
- lotion
- deodorant
- razor
- shaving cream
- chapstick

You can help those living on or just off the streets by supplying some of the basic necessities that most of us take for granted each day. This would be a great project for school, youth and service groups.

Simply collect the above items in a shoebox and bring them to the ECHO Office for distribution to those in need. Boxes can be personalized for men, women or children. Just make sure to mark the boxes so we know who should receive them.



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

For payment by credit card, visit our website above.

Your gift is tax deductible as provided by law.

Thank you for your support.

MEET OUR NEW STAFF



Hello! My name is Denise, and I am the newest member of Team ECHO, joining as the 2nd Housing and Resource Navigator. I am a state-certified Peer Support Specialist and have spent the last three years working in a Mental Health Crisis Stabilization Unit as a Behavioral Health Technician/Peer Support Specialist, where housing was a challenge for many of the clients. I have also been a Co-Facilitator of a Depression and Anxiety Support Group at a church here in Janesville since 2017. I am excited to bring my skills and experience to ECHO and am looking forward to serving our community in a new way. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my family and will be a first-time grandma in June!! I also love Mexican food, classic film, and theater.



REUSE + RECYCLE

brown paper bags

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



ON THE SECOND SATURDAY IN MAY:



Place a bag of
nonperishable food
next to your mailbox.



Your letter
carrier will
handle the
rest!



BIG BAND HANGAR DANCE



BENEFITTING:



**SATURDAY
JULY 20
7PM-10PM**

DANCE LESSONS AT 6PM
by John Curran
Madison Area Ballroom, Inc.

REVV AVIATION HANGAR
4606 S Atlantis Dr.
Janesville, WI 53546

\$40



SCAN ME

givebutter.com/c/hangardance

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Thank-Yous!

Sam's Club Volunteers– Recently Sams Club sent volunteers to help on various projects here at ECHO. Thank you to those volunteers for their time and donation of snack items for our food pantry.

Transitional Living Program Matching Donations– Thank you to the Janesville Foundation for providing a \$25,000 matching grant for our new Transitional Living Program house. We have almost reached our goal for this matching program. Please consider making a donation. Donations can be mailed to our office using Attn: TLP Matching, or done on our website. www.echojanesville.org

ECHO Volunteers– Thank you to our amazing volunteers here at ECHO. Fun fact, our food program side of the building is mostly volunteers! We have around 10-15 volunteers each day. Thank you to Nowlan Personal Injury Law Team and MacFarlane Pheasants for generously donating throughout this year to provide tokens of appreciation to our volunteers.



COMEDY FOR A CAUSE

COMEDY CABIN

May 30th 7pm

BENEFITTING:



SCAN FOR TICKETS

www.cabinlaughs.com 120 N Crosby Ave Suite 4

FUNDS FOR FRIENDS PROGRAM



Save your receipts from Sentry with a “Funds for Friends” sticker on each one (ask for a sticker from the customer service counter)

Mail or deliver your receipts to ECHO to
65 S High St. Janesville, WI 53548

ECHO will receive 1% back based on the purchase price

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.

Anna Briezinski
Patricia Carroll
Daniel DuBois
Paul & Gerri Dahlke
Marilyn Ellis
Mary Guenther

Eric Johnson
Edward Knutson
Gene Larson
Anne Lucey
Joan Luedtke
Harry Menz

Richard Pastula
Elizabeth Peterson
James & Norine Turner
Gerald Zielke

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.

Gary & Susan Stillwell

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.)



ECHO TRIVIA MOMENT:

How long has Jessica Locher, our Executive Director, been with ECHO?

ANSWER CAN BE FOUND ON THE BOTTOM OF PAGE 11.



SENIOR "STOCKBOX" PROGRAM

Free Food for income eligible seniors (60 & over)

Registration and distribution at ECHO
Monday and Wednesdays from 1- 4 pm

Box contents vary, but may include: cereal, pasta or rice, canned goods, canned meat, juice, and Wisconsin cheese.

Wisconsin ID Required - Please contact ECHO for more information, including the income limit 608-754-5333

Sponsored by the Hunger Task Force in Milwaukee

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
Cleaning Authority
Country Quality Dairy
Crystal Farms
Daniels Sentry Food Stores
Dollar General
E & D Water Works
Edward Jones
Emerald Grove UCC
Faith Lutheran Church
Festival Foods
First Christian Church
First Congregational Church
First Lutheran Church
First Presbyterian Church
Gardner Bakery
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
Rolling Hills Dairy Producers
St. John Lutheran Church
St. John Vianney Church
St. Mark's Lutheran Church
St. Mary's Hospital, Janesville
St. Mary's School
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
St. Patrick Catholic Church
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
St. Peter's Lutheran Church
St. William Catholic Church
Sam's Club
Schnucks
Seneca Foods
Sentry Foods
Stop-N-Go
The City of Janesville
Trinity Episcopal Church
Walmart



**Would your business be willing to set
out a donation bin on your counter?
Contact us:
earthur@echojanesville.org**

Trivia Answer: Jessica started at ECHO as an intern in May of 2004.



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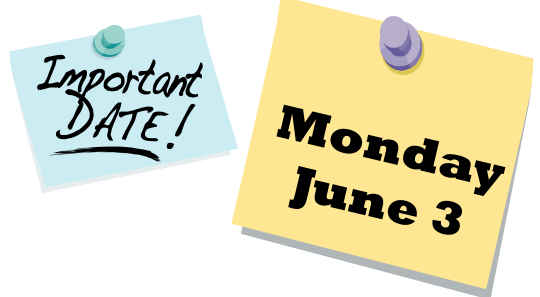
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ECHO Calendar of Events

- 5/11 Stamp Out Hunger
- 5/30 Comedy Cabin Night Benefitting ECHO
- 6/3 Eat Out for Hunger
 All day at participating restaurants. Details on our website.
- 7/20 Big Band Hangar Dance
 In partnership with Pistons and Props. www.pistonsprops.com



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