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Winter 2024

# The ECHO Times

## President's Message By Dori MacFarlane



My 94-year-old mom grew up during the depression. She was the second youngest of twelve children, and my grandpa died when she was young. My grandma was left trying to feed and care for her brood on her own. Although Grandma managed the best that she could, she did not make enough money to sustain a large family and she relied on assistance. Listening to some of my mom's stories makes my heart hurt for that little girl.

When my grandpa was alive, he fed any hungry person that showed up at the door. They lived near the railroad tracks and somehow, every wandering man ended up seated at their table enjoying a home-cooked meal. After Grandpa died, my grandma was the one relying on others. The meals my mom remembers best were the ones where people carefully picked out what they were going to give them, the bags of groceries that made sense. It was obvious that empathetic people picked out the food and gave my grandma dignity by making sure that her children were eating well-balanced, delicious meals. Of course, this did not always happen, and my mom has certain foods that, to this day, she cannot tolerate. I often think about this when I donate canned goods and other food items to ECHO. If I don't enjoy the food that I'm donating, will someone else? I need to remind myself that the food that I am giving is being put into a grocery bag and being given to somebody else. If I don't want to eat it, there's a chance that others won't either.

We have donors who specifically go to the grocery store with the idea that they are buying meals for someone's family. They try to think about what their own family likes to eat and buy accordingly. One of our volunteers, Andy, likes to buy items that make full meals and bag them up with the recipe. That is such a thoughtful way to help out those who are going through a rough time.

Remembering that each of our clients has dignity and deserves to have good quality, delicious meals is key when donating food items to ECHO. Try to picture a family around a dinner table enjoying the food that you so generously donated. That will truly warm your heart.



### IN THIS ISSUE

◆ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE.....2	◆ CROP HUNGER WALK, EASTER.....7
◆ AUCTION, EASTER.....3	◆ BIG BAND HANGAR DANCE, PISTONS & PROPS.....8
◆ NEEDS, VOLUNTEER OPEN HOUSE .....4	◆ THANK YOUS- MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS.....9-10
◆ VOLUNTEER TAKE 5.....5	◆ FOOD & FUND DRIVES.....11
◆ SHOEBOX PROJECT, DONATION .....6	◆ CALENDAR OF EVENTS—BUSINESS SUPPORTERS.....12

# Executive Director Message

By Jessica Locher, Executive Director



Last year I talked about how affordable housing is a right for all and how it should not be a taboo topic. This year I am going to echo that again, as affordable housing is still a major topic of discussion and need in Rock County. Affordable housing is a right that everyone should have no matter their socioeconomic status and it should also be safe and secure. ECHO is currently finalizing our next five-year strategic plan. Affordable housing is a very high priority in the plan. ECHO will continue to put a huge emphasis on our housing and homeless services as we have over the past 20 years.

ECHO opened the doors to its first transitional-living house in March 2020. The house was given to ECHO by the City of Janesville in 2019 through their tax foreclosure program. The City's Neighborhood and Community Services department also provided funding to help rehabilitate the house into safe and sanitary conditions. The mission of ECHO's Transitional Living Program (TLP) is to provide support for homeless families to establish independent lives and move from homelessness to permanent housing. The TLP provides up to 18 months of weekly case management and housing to qualified households. The program's case management includes advocacy, support, and crisis services. To help families along on their journey, participants will also be required to set and progress on long- and short-term goals. Tenants will be provided individualized case management that is designed to help them obtain income and to prepare them to become renters in a market rate rental unit after the program ends. As necessary, ECHO will assist participants with accessing different services such as FoodShare, W-2, Social Security, and more.

ECHO partnered with Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development (WPHD) back in early 2022 and jointly applied for the Pay It Forward grant from the City of Janesville. The awarded grant has allowed WPHD to start building three brand new duplexes for ECHO to use as part of our TLP. Unfortunately, due to delays caused by COVID, the duplexes will not be ready to be occupied until later this year. We are still very excited to be able to work with six new families on their barriers to self-sufficiency.

The City of Janesville's Neighborhood and Community Services department reached out to us again in late Spring 2023 with another tax-foreclosed house that they were willing to donate to ECHO if ECHO would like to continue expanding the TLP. After researching the costs of rehabbing the house and seeking bids, ECHO decided to become homeowners again and accept the donation of the house. Rehab on the new house begins this month. We are excited to announce the Janesville Foundation is providing a \$25,000 matching grant for the new TLP house. Donations towards the TLP matching grant can be made online at <https://echojanesville.org/donate/> or sent by mail to 65 S. High St., Janesville, WI with TLP in the memo section of your check. Funding from the City of Janesville's Neighborhood and Community Services department, the \$25,000 matching grant offered by the Janesville Foundation and your donations will help cover the whole cost of rehabbing the home that will be ready for a family to occupy by Summer 2024. Any donations made in excess of the rehab costs will be used to maintain the units or assist with obtaining additional TLP units.

The TLP is one of many housing/homeless services ECHO offers. I encourage you to set up a tour with Emily Arthur or me 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 your support!

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## 2024 ECHO Executive Committee

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

**Gloria Huschka**, Treasurer  
*Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church*

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

**Rita Milbrandt**, Member at Large  
*Good Shepherd Lutheran Church*

**Dylan Thomas**, Secretary  
*Trinity Episcopal Church*

**Martin Huckstep**, Member at Large  
*Community Representative*

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

# ECHO, Inc. Online Auction

All brand new items! Something for everyone!



February 16th starting at 8am – February 28th at 6pm

**Auction Website: <https://bit.ly/4bb9W2G>**

This is a fundraiser for ECHO, Inc.



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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 18th





## 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

- 367 MONTHS OF RENT PAID TO KEEP FAMILIES HOUSED
- 6,678 NIGHTS IN A LOCAL MOTEL FOR THE HOMELESS
- 2,380 SENIORS RECEIVED A SENIOR STOCKBOX
- 2,693,049 MEALS PROVIDED
- 600 THANKSGIVING BASKETS PROVIDED
- 675 CHRISTMAS DAY MEALS SERVED

*Thank you for helping ECHO's mission of meeting housing, food and other basic human needs and addressing the barriers to self-sufficiency.*



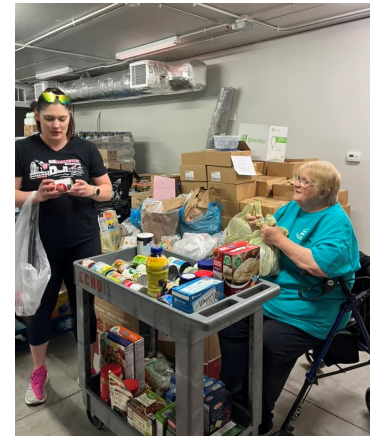
# ECHO NEEDS

- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Deodorant
- Bar Soap
- Toothpaste
- Razors
- Laundry Soap
- Cleaning Supplies
- Diapers size 5,6 and 7

## 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:**  
*Debby*

**How long have you volunteered at ECHO?**  
*2 years*

**How did you get involved at ECHO?**  
*I knew about ECHO services for many years. After I retired and after covid, I decided to volunteer.*

**What do you do at ECHO?**  
*I volunteer in the pantry packing client orders. I also do senior stock boxes.*

**What is your favorite thing about ECHO?**  
*I enjoy working with the other volunteers and staff. Also, I like meeting clients using the senior stock box service. It's nice to give back to the Janesville community.*

**What is one thing about ECHO that surprised you when you started volunteering?**  
*The amount of food donations and the variety of items surprised me.*



If you are interested in volunteering at ECHO, please go to our website: [www.echojanesville.org/volunteer/](http://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!  
[aboden@echojanesville.org](mailto:aboden@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](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.

# CROP HUNGER WALK

ENDING HUNGER ONE STEP AT A TIME

SAVE THE DATE  
SUNDAY, APRIL 28



## The 2024 Janesville Area CROP Hunger Walk is scheduled for April 28

Janesville area walkers will help end hunger one step at a time on Sunday, April 28, during the 47<sup>th</sup> 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.

The local theme for this year's walk is "Take Your Kid to Walk Day."

"We hope the theme will encourage multi-generational families to walk together," said Kathy Holcombe, event coordinator. "What a great way to pass on the joys of service and a heart for justice to our children."

Last year's Janesville area walk raised more than \$48,300 with more than \$12,000 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 \$1.32 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.

Fourteen teams participated in the 2023 walk, and organizers hope that number will increase this year. 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 [crophungerwalk@charter.net](mailto:crophungerwalk@charter.net).

A breakfast meeting for team captains is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Saturday, March 2, at St. John Lutheran Church, 302 N. Parker Drive, Janesville. Team captains will receive materials and ideas to help them encourage people to join the walk and collect donations. Refreshments will be available from 8 to 8:30 a.m.

If you're not available to walk on April 28, 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.

**FREE EASTER BUNNY PHOTOS**  
**KIDS ACTIVITIES**  
**BAKE SALE**  
**SILENT AUCTION**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 23 10AM-1PM**

**UPTOWN JANESVILLE**  
**2500 MILTON AVE**

A FUNDRAISER / COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENT FOR ECHO

# BIG BAND HANGAR DANCE

BENEFITTING:



**NEW DATE!**

**SATURDAY**

**JULY 20**

**7PM-10PM**

DANCE LESSONS AT 6PM

SAME GREAT MUSIC BY THE:

THE FIRST ALL-FEMALE BIG BAND FROM MADISON, WISCONSIN

**LADIES Must SWING**

MORE INFORMATION TO COME ON OUR  
SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE.  
[WWW.ECHOJANESVILLE.ORG](http://WWW.ECHOJANESVILLE.ORG)



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& ACTIVITY AREA



# Thank-You's!

**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 over the holiday season.

**Big Radio's Kids Helping Kids** – Many thanks for hosting the Annual Big Radio Twelve Hour Radiothon and Kids Helping Kids Drive-Thru Donation Drive. Your support has meant that people in need in our community have received help with the most basic of human needs during the holiday season. We appreciate being a part of this annual event with Big Radio, Blain's Farm & Fleet, Salvation Army, and the many other event sponsors.

**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. In 2023, our wonderful donors came together to adopt 47 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 466 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 675 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 amazing volunteers who made all the delicious food with the help of the BTC Culinary program who prepped all the turkeys. We hope to see you at the Christmas Dinner on Wednesday, December 25, 2024, 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. The attendance increased again in 2023 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.

**Hallman Lindsay** - Thank you, Hallman Lindsay and local Janesville Store Manager, Chris Zimmerman. We appreciate their support of ECHO's upcoming food pantry maintenance. The local Hallman Lindsay store donated all the paint so the food pantry could be repainted for the first time since 2002.

To the right are just a few of the many businesses and organizations who supported ECHO this past holiday season. 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.

**Orin & Orma Allison  
Charlotte Butters  
William Butters  
Frank Donahue  
Cathy Haddox**

**Donna Johnson  
John & Kass Nandory  
Kenneth & Ramona Scharine  
Jacqueline Schwengels  
Larry & Ginny Spors**

**James & Norine Turner  
Karolyn Upham  
Bruce Vermillion**

## *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.

**Rhonda Armstrong  
Stan & Nancy Arnold  
Andy Brewer & Jesse Shorts  
Deb & Jim Brewer  
Elliot & Breanna Brewer  
Margie & Larry Burdette  
Jack & Kristina Burnett  
Martha & Jack Burnett**

**Mary Hayney  
Gary Jacobson  
Larson Family  
Brett & Kelly Lipetri  
Karen Lisser  
Kay, Dan & Kyle Moore  
Jackson Patch  
Jimmy Patch**

**Mike Patch  
Warren Rose  
Bob & Kathe Schaffner  
Don & Carolyn Seierstad  
Karen & Bill Spae  
Grace Spoden  
Linda & Doug Williams**

*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.)



## **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, include 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  
Forward Dental  
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

Land Title  
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  
Old National Bank  
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. 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  
Trinity Episcopal Church  
Walmart



**Would your business be willing to set out a donation bin on your counter?**

**Contact us:**

**[earthur@echojanesville.org](mailto:earthur@echojanesville.org)**



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**ECHO Calendar of Events**

- 2/16-2/28 Online Auction
- 3/8 and 3/22 Timber Hill Winery- Wineo Bingo
- 3/23 ECHO Easter Event
- 3/26-3/28 Children's Easter Basket Distribution
- 4/28 CROP Hunger Walk
- 5/30 Comedy Cabin Night Benefitting ECHO
- 6/3 Eat Out for Hunger  
 All day at participating restaurants. Details to follow.
- 7/20 Big Band Hangar Dance  
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