



Eastern Hillsborough County  
and clothing and offer access  
programs and resources.



2020-2021 Annual Report



Bridging the  
gap between  
crisis and  
stability



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## Sarah's Story

After a recent job loss, Sarah visited ECHO for the first time.

As the volunteers loaded up her cart, she looked with disbelief and said: "Oh, you can't be serious. All of this is for me? I was expecting just a box!"

Because of you, we can abundantly provide for our neighbors, first with food and then with connections to life stabilizing programs and resources.

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## Our Mission

To assist residents of Hillsborough County with emergency food, clothing and access to life-stabilizing programs and resources.

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# Message from Eleanor Saunders Executive Director

## *2020-2021 was a year of thriving!*

The last twelve months have been challenging, but ECHO has thrived.

Let that sink in a moment: thrived.

Last June, neighbors were pouring in for our back to work assistance. So, we hired a full time director to expand the program. In December, we began to offer in depth advocacy and financial assistance. In January, we opened a thrift store. In May, we hosted a gratitude breakfast, and in June, we opened the doors to our brand new Riverview Opportunity Center.

But, in our business, all the programs in the world are meaningless without a compassionate way to deliver them.

As a board and staff, we are constantly asking:

- Can we serve our neighbors better?
- Can our welcome centers be more welcoming?
- Can our food pantries look and feel more like little markets?
- Can we offer our neighbors more choices and solutions?
- Are there ways to bring about additional options for stability?

ECHO is constantly refining, evolving, improving, growing and thriving.

Your contribution to this work makes all of the above possible. We are nothing without our generous community.





***Our Vision: To live in a community without hunger, where those in need are connected with life-changing services.***

This year, our vision led us to . . .

- Open an Opportunity Center in Riverview
- Expand our Back to Work programming
- Provide financial assistance through our new Advocacy department
- Create an additional stream of revenue via ECHO Thrift

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# Riverview Expansion

After opening our Riverview campus in 2018, we quickly realized that space was a serious issue. In order to go beyond simply providing food and clothing, we needed room to grow. There was a second building...right next door...empty...waiting. It took a few years to grow our operations and capacity to the point where we could confidently sign a lease and open the doors!

The Riverview Opportunity Center acts as a hybrid space. Our neighbors use it to register for food and clothing, but it also houses our back to work and advocacy programs. The comfortable chairs and coffee bar make it the perfect place for those in crisis to slow down and take in the many opportunities and options available to them.





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# Our Opportunity Centers

In our Opportunity Centers, you will find racks brimming with employment and training opportunities. There is an ever-evolving roster of workshops. Topics run the gamut: from sewing to monetizing your Instagram account, GED in Spanish, GED in English, ESL, one on one financial literacy sessions, and technical certifications.

***But, every single offering has the same goal: to create opportunities for our neighbors to provide for themselves.***



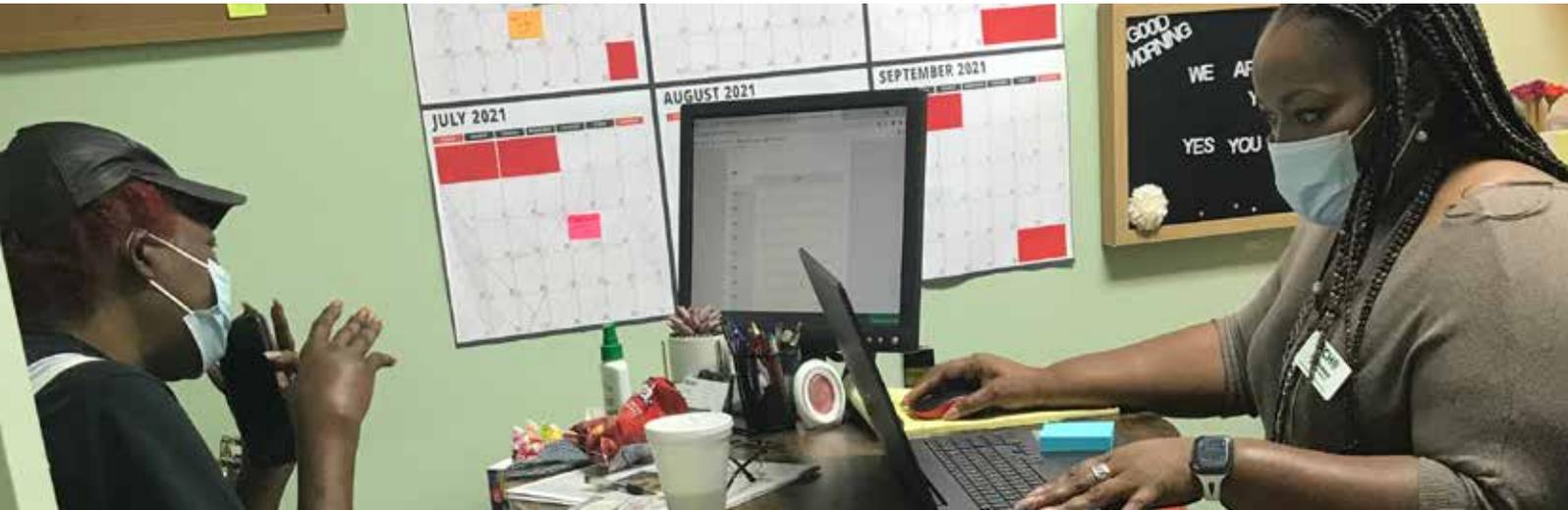
The program has exploded over the last year. In addition to workshops and classes, our back to work team diligently provides one on one job coaching, mobile job outreach, resume writing, and warm hand offs to local employers.



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# Advocacy Program

Over the last 34 years, we have witnessed firsthand how emergency food and clothing is only the tip of an enormous, soul-crushing, iceberg. Hunger is simply a symptom of multi-faceted, complex issues: an eviction is looming, the utilities have been turned off, families are living in pay by the month motels or cars. While our social service partnerships are strong, they are not always equipped to provide immediate assistance or cover a TECO bill or the security deposit on a new apartment. Through the generous support of our donors, we finally had the capacity to hire a full time advocate: a seasoned leader who knew how to navigate the systems of SNAP enrollment, affordable housing waiting lists, immediate shelter options, and utility companies. In addition, through the generosity of the ECHO community, financial assistance is now available to those who are willing to create and follow through on family stability goals. Since day one, Iris' calendar has been booked solid by neighbors desperate for assistance. Plans are already underway to add another advocate to our team within the next few months.



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# How you helped . . . **14,279** neighbors in need

**97,058** meals  
provided to neighbors in need

Families in need  
provided with  
clothing valued at  
**\$1,922,365**

**694** individuals  
participated in  
programs that  
empowered them  
to succeed.

**15,521**  
volunteer hours  
provided a  
cost savings of  
**\$414,338**

## How you can continue to help

### Donate

Give securely online, become a monthly donor or start a facebook fundraiser. You can also donate food, along with new or gently used clothing. Toiletries, new undergarments, and socks are **always** in short supply!

### Volunteer

When you volunteer at ECHO you are making a difference in your community. Whether you can serve only one time per month, week or day, we have a place for you.

### Advocate

Through social media you can become an advocate for ECHO. Like our post, comment and share. You can find us on facebook, twitter, instagram and linkedin.

### Shop

Now you can shop and help ECHO at the same time. Shop at ECHO Thrift or use [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and choose ECHO as your charity.



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# Accountability

ECHO is committed to giving the public online access to our financials (Form 990, Audited Financials, and Annual Report). Also available on our website are the following: Whistle Blower Protection Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Donor Policy, Donor Bill of Rights, and Client Privacy Policy. Being transparent and fiscally responsible is important to ECHO. We are proud to have received the highest rating of approval from Charity Navigator and Guidestar.



Sarah Michie

★★★★★ 7 days ago

This is the perfect place to find both vintage and nowadays clothing and other cool stuff for an amazingly low price. They have books, movies, knickknacks, and lots of other great things here. I once found a beautiful jewelry box here for only \$8 and a cute old stool for only \$6! This is my go-to place for home-decor.

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## ECHO Thrift

ECHO has been in the clothing business for years, so it was with great promise that we transitioned from a small boutique to a full-fledged thrift store. The enterprise has exceeded expectations. Not only does it expose the mission to new faces, but it has created an opportunity to streamline our sorting process. Now, the clothing rooms at both Brandon and Riverview receive exactly what is needed most. Any extra, is of course, sold at the Thrift.

This additional stream of revenue has helped fuel our expansion, making it possible to reach even more neighbors in need!





# 2020-2021 Board of Directors

**Melissa Haskins**  
President

**Olga Bolet**  
Vice President

**Michelle Hernandez**  
Secretary

**Larry Bowling**  
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Tom Gallo  
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Mark Gaudio  
Board Member

Brian Goodhead  
Board Member

Connie Huber  
Board Member

Christine Peters  
Board Member

Zach Kamish  
Board Member

Lisa Tackus  
Board Member

Anthony Taylor  
Board Member

# Our Partners & Supporters



The Mabel & Ellsworth Simmons  
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION, INC.



Rebuilder Members (individuals Giving \$1000 or more annually)



### **ECHO BRANDON**

813-685-0935

507 N. Parsons Ave. Brandon, FL 33510

Monday-Friday:

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Tuesdays re-open 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

### **ECHO SOUTH COUNTY**

813-540-9880

7807 Capitano Street Riverview, FL 33578

Monday-Friday:

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

### **ECHO THRIFT**

424 W. Brandon Blvd.

Brandon, FL 33511

Tuesday-Saturday

10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

### **ECHO HANDMADE**

[echohandmade.org](http://echohandmade.org)

# ECHO

bridging the gap between crisis and stability



Learn more about ECHO at [echofl.org](http://echofl.org)