

EChO Year End News

EChO Moves to New Location!

Despite the ever-changing landscape of uncertainty, the COVID pandemic has presented opportunities for transformation and growth here at EChO. Our Board, our staff, and our community have managed to step forward boldly into a bright new future.



As it has been for all of us, living through COVID precautions has presented challenges. To operate safely in our tight quarters at Bancroft Hall, (where our Food Bank and Client Services teams were located), was nearly impossible. Through the determination and resolve of our staff, the space was made workable over the spring and summer months.

But winter was coming and our Food Bank needed to move off the Bancroft porch and into a safe, warm, well-ventilated location. In addition, our leases at our Evergreen North location needed to be addressed.

The Board knew action needed to be taken quickly. The monthly rent at our Evergreen North and Bancroft Hall locations alone was money that could be better spent building equity for EChO. Finding a permanent home could increase the organization's financial security, establish operational stability, and create true permanence for us in our mountain community.

But how could our vision for a larger, permanent home become a reality during a pandemic?

Through the determination, resolve, and hard work of our Board, it became so.

After extensive analysis of our space and budgeting requirements, we identified what is now our new location at 27888 Meadow Drive (the former "Gathering Place" and years ago, the old Safeway grocery), just across from the Sinclair station. The owners, Brett and Peggy Edwards helped craft a purchase arrangement very favorable to EChO, allowing us to move in quickly, while affording us time to develop and implement a Capital Campaign to support our new home.



27888 Meadow Drive, downtown
Evergreen: EChO's new home

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With the assistance of many volunteers, our staff managed to move offices during the final weekend of October— moving all services except Resale under one roof.

This is a historic change. It is the first time that all of EChO's social service departments will operate from a centralized location. Just two short years ago, this idea was but a vision in the EChO strategic plan. Now the ability of our staff and our clients to navigate seamlessly between offerings and departments is a reality.

The EChO Capital Campaign— soon to launch in 2021— will be a priority for the board moving forward, and we will share details on that initiative as soon as possible. In the meantime, we will also be making modifications to our new home to ensure it best meets our needs.

We look forward to showing off our new home to the community as soon as COVID allows, and as a way to say 'Thank You' for all your wonderful support during this very trying year!

~Ray Dowdle, President EChO Board of Directors



EChO Board

Ray Dowdle, President
John Olson, Vice-President
Virginia Hartmere, Secretary
Sue Dunlop, Treasurer
Leslie Hess, Board Member
Mark Hines, Board Member
Gretchen MacArthur, Board Member
Joe Niemeyer, Board Member and Past President
Jan Stadler, Board Member
Bill Weisenborn, Board Member
Jim Benson, Advisory Board Member
Pat Korbel, Advisory Board Member
Art Martin, Advisory Board Member
Jean Wells, Advisory Board Member

EChO Staff

(click on a name to contact directly via email)

Kaethe Zellner, Interim Executive Director and Director of Services

Mary Petrich, Volunteer Services Director

Brenda Gibson, Job Center Director

Kathryn Cantrell, Job Center Specialist

Amy Lankutis, Advocate Supervisor

Jessica Schiefelbein, Client Advocate

Marguerite Sadler, Client Advocate

Peter Palladino, Client Advocate

Rachel Saylor, Client Advocate

Jo Haynes, Food Bank Manager

Katey Greene, Food Bank Assistant

Lori Tieszen, Food Bank Assistant

Tim Clancy, Shelter Program Manager

Maggie Jones, Front Desk

Susie Nuccio, Front Desk

Suzanne Dahlberg, Front Desk

Cindy Costello, Bookkeeper

Kim Gaudet, Resale Shop Manager

Luci Goss, Assistant ReSale Manager

Samantha Austin, Resale Backroom

Sheri Zorberst, Donation Clerk

Mary Sousa, Resale Floor Merchandiser

Lisa Keeler, Cashier

Roxann Borland, Resale Backroom

Sue Foster, Cashier

Mark Duckworth, Furniture Clerk



“There are far better things ahead, than any we leave behind.”

~C.S.Lewis



We are living through the greatest pandemic since 1918, which has significantly impacted the health and welfare of the Evergreen mountain community and truly devastated many of our EChO clients. The total of individuals and families EChO serves grew greater than one could expect.

For us to continue to provide top notch services, this year required firm determination from EChO-- ALL staff, volunteers, board members, donors and vendors. Our community dug deep into their personal (and institutional) resolves to serve and provide for our ever-growing population. Our staff improvised ways to provide the best services possible with the resources at hand and came up with novel, out-of-the-box answers to changing and challenging times. Volunteers found ways to continue to contribute much needed hours and donors continued to provide during these trying times.

More clients and more new faces presented varying hardships on every level, yet EChO in its entirety moved to answer these needs. We upped our game: new grants were identified and new staff were hired and nourishing foods were sourced. We even established a full time home for EChO's cold weather shelter program. All this occurred while our leadership dug in with resolve to identify, purchase and move into a new permanent location for our entire EChO team. Such resolve is tremendous! We can now more safely and more consistently meet the needs of our community in our brave new world.

Of course we must also congratulate our clients. They too have mustered strong resolve to continue moving forward, to flex and bend to our morphed services, to meet necessary timelines and not-so-easy paperwork during a time of institutional inefficiency and backlog. They too have dug deep to move through this ever-changing world while trying to remain patient and appreciative.

To all I say thank you.

Moving forward into 2021 will most likely require even greater resolve as we begin to find solutions and answers to this pandemic. With the above words of C.S. Lewis as my guide, I turn to 2021 with a resolution to settle EChO services into our new location and to lead our community (of staff, volunteers, donors, board members and clients) into a stronger, even more cohesive alliance. On a personal level, with an ever-increasing busy schedule, my internal resolution is to wake up earlier each day to exercise in order to transform my mind and body!

We hope you too will resolve to join us in becoming a stronger, more cohesive organization in 2021. I challenge you to find your own resolve and find ways to restore hope and change lives in your new year.

In admiration of our strong resolve,

Kaethe Zellner, MSW
Interim Executive Director



Client Services Director - Kaethe Zellner

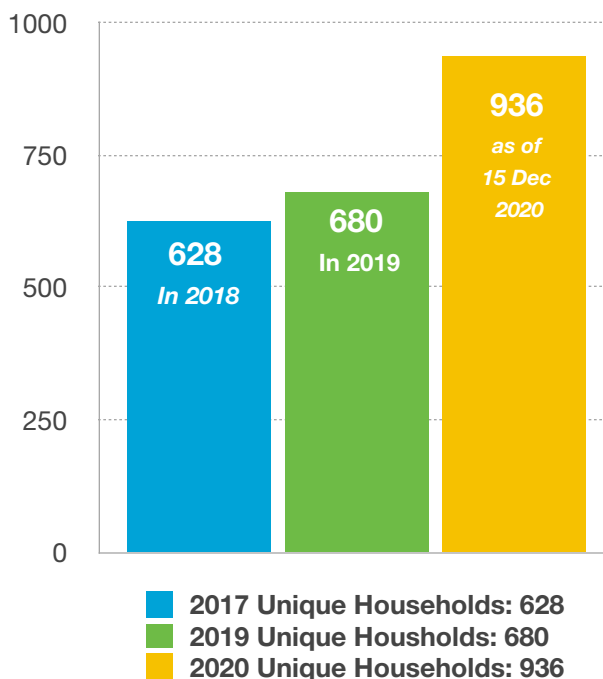
This year *has been a year of great change and challenge for all of us. Although a great deal of it has been difficult, the Client Services team has some accomplishments and exciting changes that we are proud of and excited to share. Our list of growth and change is extensive. The stories listed in this newsletter are but a few of our amazing accomplishments.*

Some EChO Service Statistics:

Facing Our Growing Crisis: To date in 2020, the Food Bank has served 936 unique families. That's an increase in 256 families since 2019!

Nourishing Our Children: This summer we fed 174 local children. We're extending this vital support to remote learners. This school year, we are feeding 76 children remote lunches.

Offering Hope When It Matters Most: In late summer alone EChO's Client Services Department, which offers a range of emergency and long-term assistance, provided 750 services to client needs.



EChO Food Bank Unique Households Served

CARES ACT Funding Helps Make Permanent ESP Space Possible

The stay-at-home order issued last spring severely affected our homeless population as they rely on public spaces and shelters for hygiene: washing hands, sanitary facilities and an occasional shower. With the support of the local Spero Recovery Center, EChO's Evergreen Shelter Program (ESP) was able to open 24/7 during that time. Guests finally had a safe place to stay with laundry and shower facilities and were provided three meals a day. We even housed our EChO Client Advocates on-site at the shelter during the stay-at home order.



Consequently, our ESP guests received to-notch services and critical guidance in the rigorous process of applying for government funded low-income housing.

for ESP guests at Bancroft Hall. Thus paving a new avenue for EChO to provide more efficiently the services we offer to our most vulnerable clients.

Financial support from the CARES Act allowed EChO to procure approval from Jefferson County to hire a full-time ESP shelter coordinator and overnight shelter staff for the 2020-2021 season. We also managed to establish a permanent home



EChO's new Shelter Program Coordinator, Tim Clancy opens the doors at Bancroft Hall, ESP's permanent location.



Job Center

Director - Brenda Gibson

This year the EChO Job Center has continued to develop new relationships with local agencies to offer expanded services to our diverse client base. We have established referral resources for people with criminal histories, for those seeking high school equivalency exams, and for those training in various trades and seeking apprentice partnerships in the areas of: culinary, construction and IT computer skills. Most recently we engaged with the National Job Corps, offering free tuition, room and board to young adults 16-24 seeking skills training in over 50 trades from dental hygienist to heavy equipment operator. Our email blast reaches 160+ job seekers per week and includes 80-100 employment opportunities available within 15 mile radius of Evergreen, links to virtual job fairs, and helpful hints for job seekers.

Email us to set an appointment, to take a class, or to become a job center employer!!

The COVID pandemic has brought its own set of challenges to job seekers. In 2020 we have seen a 100% increase in community members seeking assistance for job search and unemployment support.

Did you know there are three different types of unemployment benefits currently offered by the state of Colorado? Determining which type for an individual's circumstances is not easy. Yes, you can request a phone call with an unemployment case manager, but those appointments are scarce and are booking well into February of 2021. *Who among us could go without a paycheck for 3 months?* Here at the EChO Job Center, we can help your file and provide on-going support in understanding and seeking unemployment benefits. During these challenging times, our clients requesting such assistance have included: VPs of global corporations, bus drivers, accountants, healthcare workers, grocery store clerks, and event planners, just to name a few.

Services Offered at the EChO Job Center:

The Job Center offers employment support on a case-by-case basis. We do this by:

- One-on-One Tech Time
- Job Coaching
- Job Search Support
- Computer Lab
- Mock Interviews
- Local Job Postings
- On-line Application Support
- Computer Skills Workshops
- One-on-One Resume Support
- Hiring Events
- Unemployment benefit assistance

Come visit us at our new location:

27888 Meadow Drive, downtown Evergreen

Recently, we assisted a client in awarding a full scholarship worth more than \$25,000 from a local IT Training Program. We also successfully prepared documentation and filed an appeal for a client for her to recover over \$15,000.00 in retroactive unemployment benefits!

These are our neighbors, our friends, our community members who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and suddenly find themselves in uncharted, unfamiliar territory.

If you need assistance, email us to set an appointment!



Food Bank

Manager - Jo Haynes

During the continued covid crisis, more than 250 new families have come to the EChO food bank for assistance-- putting the total number of families we support over 936! While thousands of pounds of food have come in from donations, even more has moved out. Never before have I witnessed such fast growth in need here in our mountain town. Food literally moved off the shelves and out of Bancroft at a faster clip than it came in. We could barely keep up with need.... Without the continued generosity of our donors, small and large, the shelves on the Bancroft porch would have gone bare.



Many of our new families and individuals had reliable, good paying jobs, money in the bank and then in the spring— they had nothing. They came to the food bank and asked, how does this work, **"I never thought I would ever be in this position in my life."** They could not have fathomed that they would need to turn to outside help to feed their families. One client shared, *"Without the help of the food bank, I don't know what I would have done...I would have to make a choice to either feed my family or pay the rent."* She continued, *"and the summer lunch/remote lunches have been a godsend, with the kids home all day long, all they want to do is eat."*

Lori Tieszen,
Food Bank
Assistant reports
EChO provided
more than 254
Thanksgiving
meals last month

We feel very fortunate as an organization to have the support of our community to assist those who find themselves in the position of not having what they need to get by. Providing nourishment to families and individuals helps us fulfill a basic need.

As the winter season arrives, and I mull over the holiday dinners and the excitement of the season, I can see a new year on the horizon, I am filled with gratitude for our community and our clients. And for a fresh start in a new place with endless possibilities. While COVID conditions continue to morph our practices and protocols, the prospect of a new year still shines forth. The **holiday food drive** will continue to draw shoppers and donors. If you would like to donate, **please visit EChO's website.**

2021 FOOD BANK NEEDS:

- **Microwavable rice & grains**
- **High Protein Soup:**
 - Campbell's Chunky
 - Progresso
 - Chef-Boy-R-Dee
- **Canned Fruit**
- **Toothpaste**
- **Shaving Cream**
- **Deodorant**

As we move forward into 2021, the food bank's resolve is to remain flexible, to be able to meet our shoppers needs in the best method possible, and with our Colorado Proud funds, we will be providing Colorado grown, grass fed beef and bison meat. As for me, I resolve to meet any and all challenges of the new year with ease and grace because I know that whatever challenges comes up, I don't have to face it alone. I have an awesome team of staff, volunteers, board members, donors and clients, and together we can make it through anything!

New Food Bank Location:
27888 Meadow Drive in downtown Evergreen

EChO Client Advocates

A Place to Call Home.

*By the time the stay-at-home order ended and the shelter closed on May 15, 2020, EChO client advocates had secured successfully housing for eight homeless individuals and even found privately donated automobiles for two more homeless women so they would not have to live on the street during a pandemic. Since May, we have housed 12 additional clients. **We congratulate our client services advocate, Amy Lankutis, who recently received the "Housing First Award" from the Metro Denver Continuum of Care for housing 14 EChO clients during the pandemic, March through October, including one client, Drew:***

Drew, a supermarket employee in our mountain community lost his job during COVID in April of 2020 and soon found himself homeless. Shortly after, Drew's physician diagnosed him with medical issues that put him at high-risk for contracting COVID. He was warned he should not seek employment that places him in a public setting. Heeding such a caution would be difficult. Drew worried how he would find the funds to survive, much less put a roof over his head. He attempted Social Security Disability approval— a process that can take over a year — and had not received answers. Living on a meager monthly public assistance Aid to the Needy fund of \$217 monthly, Drew's resources were few.



Amy and a volunteer moving Drew into his new home.

How can an individual in such a financial position find a permanent housing solution? In three short words: EChO Client Advocates.

Drew came to us for assistance. We connected him with Client Advocate and Housing Navigator Amy Lankutis who helped him identify and apply for a HUD Non-Elderly Disabled Voucher (NED). A NED voucher will allow him to pay 30% of his income on rent. Such vouchers are extremely difficult to obtain. The paperwork and medical documentation are significant and time-consuming. Layering COVID delays on top made everything even more difficult. Fortunately for Drew, Amy had become somewhat of an expert on the HUD NED voucher requirements. She worked tedious hours together with Drew on the detailed government paperwork. Through Amy's unflagging support, Drew received a hard-to-come-by voucher after three months of waiting.



Drew in his new home

However, getting a voucher and using a voucher are entirely separate steps. To be placed using a voucher requires identifying a landlord who will accept it, which in turn requires the apartment passing inspection according to HUD rules. With true resolve, Amy got to work, establishing relationships and identifying locations. She coached Drew through the rental application process; and together after a long 12 weeks, they made Drew's desire for a roof over his head became a reality.

Just in time for the holidays, Drew has moved into permanent housing. With the help of EChO resale, he even managed to furnish his place. He now has a safe environment to call home!

*Helping with housing also includes assistance with rent and mortgage. Through the tireless efforts of our Client Advocates team, we applied for and received multiple grants to help many families and individuals rack by the economic downturn COVID-9 caused to remain in their homes. From January to end of November, we have helped **143 families** or individuals with rent or mortgage assistance. These grants also designated funds to hire an additional client services team member and increase the weekly hours for existing team members.*



EChO Resale and Home Furnishings Store

Manager - Kim Gaudet

The strong determination and resolve of our mountain community and of the ECHO staff and volunteers to meet the ever-changing challenges of 2020 is mesmerizing. Even when COVID changed and challenged us on an almost daily basis at Resale, we still managed to find new ways of conducting business to better serve the community. It truly is a powerful energy to witness and be a part of.

Like many businesses, we closed our doors mid-March to early May. Most of our employees shifted their efforts to fulfill nutrition needs at the food bank and staffing needs at our overnight shelter. Others of us worked to pivot the Resale sales effort on line. We gathered any item with “new” tags and opened on-line stores at **Poshmark**, **Ebay** and **Chairish**.

From this, we managed to continue our sales and made up some of our lost sales goals.

As many of you are aware, our donation process also changed as COVID information changed—and it changed many times! First we learned we needed to allow any donations to sit for three to four days before processing them. As a result, we moved our donation door and processing over to our inventory warehouse. Now we returned to the normal drop-off location. The return challenged us to organize and manage incoming clothing and item donations. So we established an appointment-only system and a link was put on the EChO website. Such a move helped us continue to provide services in a safe and healthy manner. **WE ARE NOW ACCEPTING UNLIMITED CLOTHING DONATIONS!**

We realize these new and evolving procedures have been difficult for our donors and want to thank you for your patience and support. We are operating the store with about half the staff and volunteers. We are diligent about cleaning every night and following CDC regulations and take extra precautions to clean the store before opening and throughout the day. We want our customers to feel comfortable and safe shopping at our store. We are extremely grateful to all of our donors and customers and look forward to welcoming you to our new location in 2021! Once there, we will try to increase the amount of donations we can accept and again become a robust shopping experience as soon as conditions allow.

A 2021 resolution for Resale:
Move into our new home on Meadow Drive with amazing possibilities!

Kim's 2021 personal resolution:
Letting myself heal.

To Donate

Gently-Used Clothing and items:

- Up to two bag or box limit on non-clothing items
- Unlimited clothing accepted
- Donations now being accepted on the east side of the Resale building — the original donation door.
- For larger items and furniture donations: send photos to furniture@evergreenchristianoutreach.org for an approved appointment.



Despite COVID, ReSale found ways to enjoy the Halloween season

Thank you for the extra support and stay safe and healthy. ***I do believe we will all come through this a bit differently but see a resolve to become more united as a society and in our community.***

WE ARE NOW ACCEPTING UNLIMITED CLOTHING DONATIONS



Director of Volunteer Services - Mary Petrich

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rallied to keep EChO afloat during this time of crisis. They helped to pack, move and set up the food bank and offices to the new location which was not a small undertaking. They staffed the new food bank, unloaded trucks, stocked shelves and assisted shoppers. To ensure that EChO has a continued source of funding, volunteers worked at the Resale Shop cashiering, steaming and stocking. Volunteers have continued to prepare meals and deliver groceries to homebound clients who are particularly vulnerable. It is a collaborative effort that supports the community that EChO serves.

A definition from the Cambridge dictionary defines the word positive as “giving cause for hope.” EChO volunteers embody that description. They display a resolve of focusing on the good and positive in a situation. With that frame of mind, one is able to think good thoughts and envision a better future as well as the determination to make it happen. To all our volunteers, EChO extends a huge Thank You for all you do!

to take advantage of educational opportunities to enhance my personal growth as well as my competency at work.

I want to explore innovative ways to empower, recognize and motivate volunteers to ensure retention so that our organization has the workforce needed to fulfill its mission.

Mary's 2021 Personal Resolution: I resolve to take advantage of educational opportunities to enhance my personal growth as well as my competency at work.

Want to Volunteer? We need positive minds like yours!

- EChO Resale Shop
- Food Bank
- Cold Weather Shelter Program
- Job Center

Call Mary at 303-670-1796 or send an email: Mary@evergreenchristianoutreach.org



Simple Ways You Can Help

We are indeed grateful for the outpouring of support from our generous and creative community. We deeply appreciate the mountain community's care and support during this unprecedented year. Thank you.



Connect Your King Soopers Rewards Card to EChO

Click here: <https://www.kingsoopers.com/i/community/community-rewards>. Select Evergreen Christian Outreach as your charity. (Or enter organization number RY784). Confirm your selection. A percentage of your monthly total purchases goes to EChO. It's easy and once you are registered, this automatically occurs every time you shop at King Soopers.



Shop at: Smile.Amazon.com (rather than just at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)). With

on-line shopping you can contribute a percentage of your purchases to EChO! Click here: [smile.Amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and sign in as usual. Go to the Amazon Smile button and select Evergreen Christian Outreach as your beneficiary. For future purchases from Amazon, be sure to go to smile.Amazon.com instead. A percentage of your shopping will be donated to us by Amazon. Your Prime benefits will NOT be impacted.



Cars Helping Charities: "Dead or Alive" - your extra vehicle can help

EChO! They will pick up your vehicle and convert it to cash with proceeds coming to EChO. For more info: <https://evergreenchristianoutreach.org/donate/donate-a-car.html>



The Whittlesey family processing firewood last October to donate.



Become a Job Center Employer. Share your job openings with us! **Call EChO Job Center at**

303-670-7123.



Share Your Chopped Wood! It can be that simple. **Call EChO at 303-670-1796** to learn more.



Make a Financial Donation: Did you know....that you can set up an online donation that is charged directly to your credit card on a monthly basis? All donations can make a HUGE difference. To schedule your \$10, \$50 OR donation of ANY amount, click here: [Make a Donation to EChO.](#)



Cars Helping Charities

