



BUILDING CONNECTIONS

.....SPRING 2021

GETTING BACK ON HIS FEET

There is no way to predict when a sudden life upheaval may upend your sense of safety and security. Peter* knows this all too well, as an unexpected medical emergency struck one day.

Peter suffered a massive stroke that left him with permanent physical disabilities and trouble walking. To add insult to injury, medical bills quickly piled up and left him chronically homeless. To be nearer to his family, Peter moved back to the area, but unfortunately, those plans did not work out.

With nowhere else to go, Peter took to sleeping in baseball dugouts in Mount Joy until he eventually called 211. ECHOS Social Services Director and Chart Worker, Leigh Ann, met with Peter and assessed his needs. At the time, ECHOS Emergency Winter Shelter was not yet open for the season. So on behalf of Peter, Leigh Ann advocated to get him housing at the Columbia Shelter until December, when ECHOS' shelter opened.

Upon his arrival at ECHOS' shelter, Peter began diligently working with the ECHOS shelter team to regain stability in his life. At the shelter, he was provided with basic necessities and hygiene items, a scooter chair, a supportive environment, access to technology, and assistance with securing resources like identification and benefits.

ECHOS also provided "an ear to talk to, and someone to listen to my problems and give good advice," said Peter. Perhaps most importantly, the supports and emergency housing provided Peter with a safe and stable "home base" where he could finally recover fully from his stroke... and get back on his feet in more ways than one. ECHOS cheered Peter on and connected him to the resources he needed to start taking steps forward. According to Peter, that encouragement from ECHOS was pivotal. "I needed the encouragement to get moving," he said. "And keep moving."

"Being patient pays off," Peter explained, of the progress he's made in moving forward. "Being homeless and all, I've got to want to make things better for myself. I can't expect others to do it for me. ECHOS really does care, but I had to want it and do it too."

As Peter continued to put in the work with the support of ECHOS staff, an unexpected blessing came his way – the former tenant paid his security deposit for the apartment that Peter is now independently housed in. This apartment is suitable to his medical needs, and the future is looking bright for Peter once again. "ECHOS meant a new beginning," Peter shared. "A new start in life. ECHOS means knowing there are people out there that care."

Since Peter has experienced his own fresh start through ECHOS, he wants the community to know about the work ECHOS does for so many others. "There is help and support if you need it, from people who really care," he said. "They go above and beyond to help."

**Name changed to maintain privacy*

"Working with this client was especially inspiring because of his daily expressed gratitude. Peter treated everyone with kindness and respect and always remained calm and patient"

– Fran, Winter Shelter Case Manager



TRANSFORMATION

RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES

In the fall of 2020, property owners, United Churches Elizabethtown Area (UCEA), of Community Place on Washington (CPOW) officially broke ground for the complex expansion. Since then, crews have been diligently working to construct the new building for the expanded social services center! This new building will be the home of ECHOS' offices, a larger Emergency Winter Shelter, an Enrichment Center, and six apartments for clients. It will offer a staffing space of approximately 3,000 square feet and confidential meeting rooms for services, intake sessions, education, and case management. Further, this expanded center will provide space for additional localized community partners and resources. ECHOS expects to move into its new location this fall.

Consider taking part in this sweeping community mobilization of neighbors helping neighbors! Property owners are selling bonds through Great Nation Investment Corporation to help finance the construction, giving YOU the opportunity to invest in our community. Your investment will strengthen our community's ability to provide services that address the root issues of poverty and homelessness, increase the efficiency and effectiveness of programs, and truly meet every unique need encountered. Bonds will be sold until June and are first come, first served. For more information, contact Bob Enck at renck3@comcast.net.

Take a peek at the progress below!



11/17/2020



11/19/2020



1/11/2021



1/25/2021



3/18/2021



Anticipated Final Project
subject to change

WELCOMING

OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BRIE ANDERSON, B.S.

Q&A WITH BRIE

Tell the ECHOS community about yourself and your education.

I was born and raised in York, Pennsylvania, where I graduated from Penn State York with a B.S. in Human Development and Family Studies. During the final semester of my senior year, I completed a legislative fellowship with the Pennsylvania House of Representatives on the Aging and Older Adult Services Committee. This fellowship inspired my decision to pursue a Master of Public Administration, which I am nearly finished with! Outside of my core public administration courses, I have focused on nonprofit management, leadership, and development.

What is a fun fact about yourself?

In my free time, I walk and hike with my rescue dog named Bear. He was removed from a neglectful situation by PA Caring for K-9s and fostered in Harrisburg. I adopted him on April 1, 2017, when he was about 6 months old. Now he is 4 and the smartest dog ever! Another fun fact is that my mom used to make me read for two-and-a-half hours every day in the summer. Reading is now one of my favorite hobbies!

What brought you to ECHOS?

I initially started college as a Public Relations major at Millersville University but transferred to Penn State York to pursue a Human Development and Family Studies major after facing personal challenges. This experience led me to develop a passion to understand not only my own experiences and adversities, but also how I could use this passion to help others. I started my professional experiences in direct service working with individuals diagnosed with mental illness, older adults, and survivors of domestic and sexual violence. I later realized that I enjoyed the macro-level work I was doing through systems advocacy, prevention, education, and administration. My previous administrative work experience in the non-profit sector is how I gained the knowledge to work at ECHOS, but I was drawn here by the transparency and passion I saw in the organization.

What have you enjoyed so far about your time at ECHOS and what are you most looking forward to?

I've really enjoyed getting to know the amazing ECHOS staff, and I'm excited to develop relationships with each of ECHOS' supporters! I am inspired by the strength, commitment, and devotion the ECHOS staff has shown, and I am energized by the growth this organization has seen in less than five years. The work of the dedicated staff, board members, volunteers, and community partners is truly inspiring! It is a privilege to join this fantastic team. I am most looking forward to the Community Place on Washington complex expansion and all that it entails for ECHOS and the community. This new social services center will allow for growth in services, the expansion of community partnerships, and the strengthening of programs to meet the holistic needs of our neighbors experiencing adversities.



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A WARM SHELTER AND BRIGHT HOPE

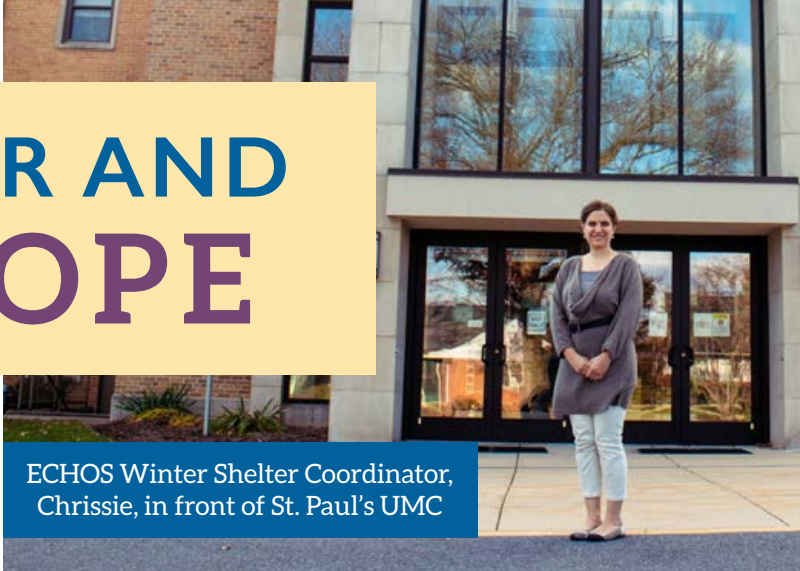
The Emergency Winter Shelter provides intense case management to every individual who walks through ECHOS' doors, drawing upon their natural supports and strengthening skills like budgeting, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and communication. ECHOS is committed to meeting the essential needs of guests, not just shelter, but food, basic hygiene, and a supportive environment. The shelter also provides access to collaborative services like the local clothing bank, medical services, substance abuse services, behavioral health services, household furnishings, and haircuts.

This season, the shelter hosted 33 individuals, including 4 children. This is a reduction compared to prior years but can be attributed to pandemic relief efforts and extended eviction moratoriums that remain in effect today. Despite the decrease, staff and volunteers remained vigilant to our guests' intense needs, as the pandemic cultivated a rise in mental health symptoms, increased barriers to connection, and a competitive housing market.

ECHOS is grateful for the partnerships that blossomed amid the chaos and allowed us to continue serving our neighbors. Particularly, St. Paul's United Methodist Church, who hosted the shelter for three years prior to the move to CPOW, opened their doors once again. Generous volunteers moved the shelter back to the church, where the larger space allowed guests, volunteers, and staff to spread out and prevent the spread of COVID-19. St. Paul's was vital to the shelter operations, immediately addressing maintenance issues, plowing the parking lots after each snowstorm, and consistently extending compassion to our shelter guests, volunteers, and staff. ECHOS then converted the CPOW shelter space into a quarantine area for guests who needed testing because of displayed symptoms (diligent safety measures resulted in no positive test results!).



The volunteer team that helped move the Emergency Winter Shelter to St. Paul's UMC



ECHOS Winter Shelter Coordinator, Chrissie, in front of St. Paul's UMC

We are grateful to all the volunteers who make the shelter possible. Thank you for devoting time and energy to helping our community! Your willingness to serve those in need, even amid a global pandemic, is inspiring; and we could not be more thankful. We have enjoyed a consistent group of dedicated people, and we hope that many of our new volunteers will come back next year. Volunteers shared they enjoyed connecting with the guests and being a vital instrument to community stability. Stated best by one volunteer, "I love working with the people. The guests and other volunteers are wonderful, and I just love it."

As we move forward, ECHOS is excited for the new shelter, anticipated next season as part of the CPOW complex expansion. Here, greater capacity and onsite facilities will be available, providing ample space for social distancing and other safety measures. The new shelter is intentionally designed to be a therapeutic space, empowering guests toward self-resiliency. We are particularly optimistic and excited to offer services without the threat of COVID-19. Winter Shelter Coordinator, Chrissie, stated, "I look forward to operating a shelter where I don't have to enforce distance between people but instead can encourage closeness and mutual support."

Lives Changed Through Emergency Winter Shelter

Here are a few examples of the lives changed through shelter:

- An elderly man was connected to an assisted living facility where his intense medical needs could be attended to.
- A woman going through a recent separation began the process toward healing and conducted her very own housing search.
- A middle-aged man accessed the computer lab and found employment that provided a livable wage.
- A chronically homeless senior secured documentation and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to meet his basic needs and find affordable housing.



"I appreciate the work you put into helping my child. It's nice to not feel alone."
- parent of EASD student

WALKING ALONGSIDE STUDENTS IN CRISIS

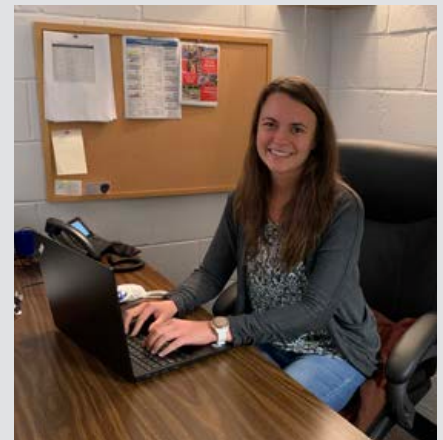
ECHOS Youth Crisis Response Counselor is a new program in collaboration with the Elizabethtown Area School District (EASD). Originally piloted in November 2019 to provide on-call crisis counseling to middle and high school students experiencing thoughts of suicide or self-harm, ECHOS and EASD witnessed an astounding and unexpected need. Within 98 school days, 37 students were served! This prompted ECHOS and EASD to collaborate further, advocating to the school board for a full-time position. The school recognized this immense need and approved the start of this full-time program for the 2020-2021 school year.

Since this school year began, ECHOS Youth Crisis Response Counselor has served 71 students within 128 school days, providing over 150 hours of counseling to students and 30 hours of outreach with parents! When asked what this position means to them, one student shared, "I like that I can tell you anything...like anything. You're safe to me."

ECHOS Youth Crisis Response Counselor provides competency in addressing the mental health needs of students, as well as supports for families with students in crisis. During the school year, the counselor addresses students' safety concerns, assists with access to mental health services in the community, and promotes hope and wellness. During the summer, the counselor will remain connected with the students to offer consistent and positive supports while providing coping strategies to manage crises.

Offering crisis counseling in the school provides immediate and reliable support to teens in distress, reduces the risk of suicide, alleviates staff burn out for school social workers and counselors (who are busy attending to specialty areas of academics, truancy, and supportive services), and partners parents with services and education to better understand and connect with their teens. Crisis counseling focuses on evidenced-based modalities to enable students to develop better coping skills and identify opportunities for making healthy decisions and informed choices.

Adolescence is often a difficult time due to social interactions, exploration of self-identity, and pressure of school performance. With the continuation of COVID-19 and the uncertainties that arise from it, students are experiencing an increase in anxiety, depression, and emotional distress. "It has been eye-opening this year to see how the isolation, social distancing, and decrease of interactions has affected our society, and the teens are no exception to this. It's an honor to meet with these students, with the hope they leave the time spent together feeling wanted, valued, seen, heard, noticed, and hopeful," says Rachel, ECHOS Youth Crisis Counselor.

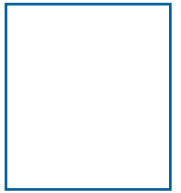


ECHOS Youth Crisis Counselor, Rachel, at her EASD office.



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ECHOS of HOPE Gala

Thursday, October 21, 2021 | 6 p.m.
STONE GABLES ESTATE | STAR BARN

SAVE THE DATE



Will you Partner with ECHOS?

As ECHOS continues to sustain and expand its programs, we depend on YOU - our generous and loyal community. Your support enables us to continue providing high-level services to families in need. One of the values of partnering with ECHOS is the assurance that your donations are used to their maximum capacity, as we strive to be good stewards of the resources you entrust to us. With multiple ways to give, there is a platform for everyone.

The official registration and financial information of Elizabethtown Community Housing & Outreach Services may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.



ECHOS has grown its community of monthly partners, increasing our

Circle of Giving to 24 members! We invite you to give monthly so that we can apply your donations where support is needed most. Just \$55 could provide an interview outfit and haircut to an eager young man seeking a higher wage job or two tanks of gas for a family struggling to make it to medical appointments. Build a connection with us that will impact countless lives by visiting www.echoslancaster.org/givingcircle and completing the one-time, easy sign up.

Legacy Planning

Looking for another way to partner with us? You can give to enhance the future sustainability of ECHOS through legacy and estate planning. Consider a bequest in your will, a gift of life insurance, a donation from your IRA, or the gift of an appreciated asset such as stock or real estate. To learn more about the creative and strategic ways to give, visit www.echoslancaster.org/give/planned-giving or contact giving@echoslancaster.org.

On behalf of ECHOS, thank you for partnering with us to empower stability among our vulnerable neighbors. Together, we invest in the community to which we all belong.