



SPRING 2017

NEWS FROM THE DESC

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A Step in the Right Direction— A Campaign for New Shoes and Work Boots!



John Hodgeman shows off his new workboots

Early in January 2017, 44-year-old construction worker John Hodgeman presented himself to DESC clothing asking for work boots. John had a job offer with a roofing company for a project on Monroe Street. However, his employment was contingent on proper work site footwear.

(Article continues on Page 3)





From Board President Clay Meux

Dear DESC Supporters and Friends,

As President of DESC, I am thrilled and excited to report to our clients, friends, volunteers, donors and supporters that 2016 was an outstanding year and we are off to a great start in 2017. In 2016, we fed 4,293 families, we clothed 5,626 families (163,104 items of clothing), and we provided emergency financial support for 246 households. In order to accomplish all of those incredible feats, we were blessed with 7,698 hours from our volunteers.

It is my personal belief that if we can feed, clothe and assist with housing for individuals in need, that they will in turn be able to go out and find

ways to support themselves, support their families and contribute to our community. What a blessing to have DESC and its staff and volunteers to assist in providing those three basic needs for members in our community who just need a little bit of help. It is very humbling to be working with DESC when you see all the good that it does.

The Board is now in the process of searching for an Executive Director and our process will be thoughtful and hopefully swift. The Board developed a job description after reviewing all the current job duties that need to be performed by an Executive Director. It is the Board's goal (and hope) that an Executive Director will be in place by June or July, however, the Board is united in its opinion that the timeline is not as important as getting the "right person" for the job.

It is extremely important that we find an individual who can identify with the mission of DESC and go forward with the passion and desire to care for our clients who need help while at the same time, continuing to insure that DESC fulfills its mission which is

to proclaim the love of Jesus Christ by providing for the basic needs of those in emergency situations.

Our Board is committed to insuring that the next Executive Director will continue to lead DESC and build on the foundation which has been so solidly placed by all of the churches, staff, volunteers and friends who have been caring for the DESC mission for over thirty years. It is an honor and privilege to help with DESC and I am confident that 2017 will be another great year for DESC as we continue to care for those in our community who need help.

If anyone is interested in helping DESC and celebrating DESC, the first opportunity you will have (other than coming down and volunteering whenever you have time) will be the Great Electric Emergency. The Great Electric Emergency will be April 25 at Mellow Mushroom Avondale from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. We hope to see all of you there to celebrate the mission of DESC.

Gratefully,
Clay Meux



MAKING
A DIRECT
DIFFERENCE

By fulfilling Jesus' mission to the poor and homeless by bringing peace and hope, DESC, a faith-based organization, uplifts families and individuals in real-time crisis. By providing emergency food, clothing, and financial assistance, our dedicated staff and volunteers offer our neighbors a helping hand during hardship.

We provide care responsibly.

For more than 30 years, we have refined our process to serve countless individuals. Through strategic partnerships with key organizations and thoughtfully managed systems, we maximize our impact within the community. descjax.org

The Blessing of Work Boots

Continued from Cover



Salli Solow

It is frequent that many of our clients want to work and have the opportunities through the labor pool but not the necessary boots required for the job. We wrote down John's size along with several other gentlemen who had requested work boots also that week.

"The need for men's shoes and work boots continues to be a priority at DESC."

-Salli Solow

Aware of this critical need, Volunteer Salli Solow organized a campaign to collect money for men's shoes and work boots. For Salli's birthday, she created a GoFundMe page where she requested money in lieu of gifts for this cause. Salli also made an appeal at the Where's Bubba event and raised more funds. As per Salli, "The average homeless person walks 10-15 miles per week just to get to the services they need to survive."

Volunteer Gay Hynes goes weekly to the local thrift stores in search of men's shoes. Gay generously purchases any shoes she finds but the selection is slim. DESC will gladly accept funding to purchase men's shoes and work boots as well as donations of men's shoes and work boots.

John came back on January 5th to receive his brand new work boots. John said "DESC has blessed me with some new boots. I personally could not afford but needed desperately to help myself be safe and look official at my new job. Thanks to the kind help here at this wonderful place and for all that you clothe and feed. God is good."

An Extraordinary Volunteer

Judy Davis first came to DESC six years ago from the Sulzbacher Center where she was managing their clothing closet which was closing due to a lack of space. When she came to "check out DESC," to determine if our ministry was worthwhile to receive the bulk of the children's clothing she had received, she quickly became a believer.



"It is all about making connections with people and sharing what each other has so that everyone can get what they need."

- Judy Davis

She was very impressed with the fact that we serve anyone who comes to our doors for help. As many of our donations come from all over the city, Judy opened her front porch up for deliveries and it has been a steady river of receiving ever since. Not only do mountains of very nice clothing get dropped off, but also an assortment of toys, books, strollers, furniture, bedding, dishes and all sorts of useful household goods.

Judy is the master of replacement of needed items and coordinates not only with DESC, but many non-profit organizations and north side churches to help those in need.

In addition to working in the clothing ministry, Judy worked with Sulzbacher, DignityUWear, and continues to pick up clothing donations from various organizations, residences, churches, consignment sales, and condominium complexes, all to share with DESC and other agencies. She also helps recruit new volunteers and she facilitates our volunteer appreciation lunches.

Throughout the past year, Judy has taken her clothing closet ideas and resources and applied them to help DESC revamp our food pantry. As we began to branch out to provide fresh foods, vegetables, meats, and dairy, Judy helped us build and sustain relationships with the local food pantries, enabling us to give more and better quality food to all of our clients.

Judy is instrumental in the acquisition of pallets of fresh food. She is also integral in distribution and refrigeration of food in our newly revamped pantry. Judy works tirelessly, demonstrating compassion, empathy and humor in everything she does for DESC, its staff, clients, and volunteers. She loves what she does and exhibits a servant heart every day. We are so grateful for Judy!

Bubba Helps Kick Off the Holiday Season!

After popping up all over Jacksonville, Bubba was ready to party at the Haskell Building at DESC's Fall fundraiser on November 19th. Honorary hosts, **Sherrie and Warner Webb**, greeted the guests as they entered to the down home bluegrass music of **Woods and Bridges** and hors d'oeuvres. They even found folks fishing for Bubba right in the Haskell Lobby. What a wonderful evening as the crowd celebrated the ministry of DESC and learned about the many ways this ministry provides food, clothing and financial assistance for some Jacksonville's neediest families. After a seated dinner, Bubba the Party Boss, kept it flowin' with a deejay and dancing.

Highlights of the evening included recognizing our Presenting Sponsor, **The Meyer Family along with Congaree and Penn Farm & Mills**. We were blessed to have another presenting sponsor, a new donor to DESC who chose to remain an anonymous "Angel Unaware." Our presenting sponsors were joined by over 30 major sponsors. Together with attendees and our wonderful in-kind donors, this event gave DESC an early Christmas present raising \$98,744 net!

A favorite feature of the evening was the unique celebration of Salli Solow's BIG birthday. As one of our dedicated volunteers, Salli challenged the crowd to "Take A Step in the Right Direction and Raise Money for 300 Pairs of Shoes." Our most requested item is men's shoes - especially work boots which are required for many jobs. Salli decided this would be the best birthday present and she was thrilled when many joined in to raise money for a total of 137 pairs of shoes, 88 tennis shoes and 49 work boots.

As the evening closed, all agreed that the legacy of this old catfish is truly a unique tradition that has created many wonderful memories and touched the lives of so many at DESC.



Left to right: Warner Webb, Nancy & John Burroughs, Sherrie Webb, and Clay Meux



Martha Barrett with Doug & Nora Milne



PG. 4 *The kids loved dressing up for the photo booth!*



Presenting Sponsor Anne, Scott, and Lindsay Meyer



Left to right: Olivia Meux, Kristin Swiercek, Tricia Todd, Elizabeth Meux, and Salley Todd



Dan Banks, Mary Love Strum, and Warner Webb

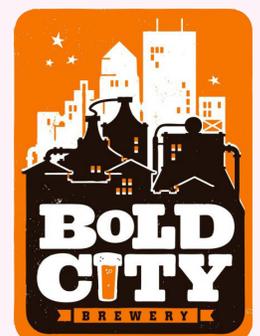


Olivia Meux, Top winner of the Bubba Fishing Tournament

Special Thanks to Our In-Kind Donors



HASKELL



Jeremy Paterno
Photographer

The Dessert Brigade

Betsy Throws a Diaper Party



Betsy Faircloth

Betsy Faircloth enjoys parties. At the Where's Bubba celebration, she enjoyed the excitement and enthusiasm of the DESC staff, volunteers and supporters. Soon after the party, she decided to visit DESC to see what was going on down in the basement on North Ocean Street. She saw people shoulder to shoulder in the waiting room — homeless men, single mothers with babies, the elderly being helped downstairs by others.

She saw them leaving with white plastic bags full of clothes and tote bags of food. As she looked around she also saw a large bookcase of boxes marked size 2, size 4, Newborn, and Pullups; however these boxes were empty.

Betsy is an amazing woman who has a kind and loving husband, wonderful children and grandchildren, and good friends. Most importantly, she has a caring and generous spirit. When she began thinking about her birthday party, she remembered those empty boxes.

So when she invited her friends to her birthday party, she asked them to bring diapers. No fancy gifts, just diapers. The party was a huge success. There was cake and singing and presents – just diapers – lots of diapers - over a thousand diapers!

Betsy, thank you for filling those empty boxes. Happy Birthday from all of us at DESC!



DESC & Neighbors Pull Together for Ruth

Ruth called to find help with overdue rent. The morning of her DESC appointment, she called to reschedule. She had been admitted to the hospital to reevaluate her chemotherapy treatment. A week later, she took a cab from Shands directly to DESC.

While she was in the hospital, a neighbor had called to tell her she had received an eviction notice and her electricity had been disconnected. The neighbor had collected enough money from friends to turn her power back on, but the landlord was unwilling to wait for the overdue rent. And her refrigerator was empty. After a lengthy and honest conversation with her landlord, he agreed to accept our check as total payment for the current month and wait for the remainder until her next Social Security check arrived.

Because of Farmshare, The Gooding Foundation, Thanksgiving food drives and many wonderful donors, Ruth left with a chicken, ground beef, fresh eggs, salad greens, potatoes, okra, tomatoes, squash, apples, bananas, peanut butter, bread, soup, yogurt, cookies, shampoo, soap and a smile on her face. Her nephew came to pick her up. As he carried her bags of food up the stairs, Ruth came back to the office to express her thanks with hugs and tears.



Dave Tuttle and DESC

As DESC went through a transition last Spring, Board Member and Executive Director of Presbyterian Social Ministries, Dave Tuttle agreed to serve both agencies.

All at DESC have been most grateful for this gentle and hardworking man. The good news is that Dave and PSM will continue as one of the strategic partners of our clothing ministry. Originally the clothing ministry was Dave's idea and today it is a key program serving the needy of Jacksonville. Thank you, Dave and Presbyterian Social Ministries, for a job well done!!



Dave Tuttle

The Great Electric Emergency Charges Up

Commander Current and Captain Underwear are excited to announce that DESC Board Member Theresa Bennett Hill and her husband Shay are chairing The 2017 Great Electric Emergency.



*The Great Electric Emergency Chairs
Theresa Bennett Hill & Shay Hill*

Theresa and Shay are tackling the challenge to keep the lights on for needy families citywide. This mission reflects many of the things this couple values. Theresa is the granddaughter of Jacksonville's beloved U.S. Representative Charlie Bennett and Shay is Board Chair at Riverside Avenue Christian Church.

They are committed to helping those in need. It is exciting that the next generation of one of DESC's founding churches Riverside Avenue Christian Church is leading this event.

Theresa is a FirstAtlantic Bank Officer and Shay is an Environmental Scientist. In the opinion of the Commander and Captain, they're a couple of Super Heroes!

OUR ALWAYS NEED LIST

There are always core items that our clients ask for when they come in. Below is our current list:

- Children's clothing for all elementary school age sizes
- Men's work boots
- Men's large shirts and jeans
- Backpacks and Totes
- Toiletries like deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and shampoos and conditioners

You can see our updated Always Need List on our website at www.descjax.org/needs.



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THE GREAT ELECTRIC EMERGENCY!



Help Commander Current and Captain Underwear bring electricity to our neighbors in need.

Create a team. Raise money. Celebrate with us.

All proceeds will go toward helping families with children, disabled members, and senior citizens who are in danger of losing their homes.

Mellow Mushroom in Avondale
3611 St. Johns Avenue, Jacksonville 32205
April 25, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
greatelectricemergency.com



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Downtown Ecumenical Services Council