



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



DESC NEWS

SUMMER 2014

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A Message from Mary Spuhler

In recent years, the Downtown Ecumenical Services Council has been told that it has a pervading culture of service, which in turn makes our workplace a happy space. Regardless of what we encounter on a daily basis, we strive to sustain a culture that inspires. As one volunteer recently said,

“We hear about a lot of bad, but we see a lot of hope here.”

In providing for the basic needs of those in emergency situations, our volunteers and employees continue to proclaim the love of Jesus Christ. Even though persons in crisis come through our doors throughout the day, the team at DESC continue to offer smiles, humor, patience, and, most importantly, direct help.

This summer, as I move from DESC into a life as a retiree, I shall be forever grateful to have worked 29 years in a place that continues to empower and serve thousands in our community.

I wish that Jeff Matthews be as richly blessed as myself as he assumes his new role as DESC's executive director.

A Message from the Executive Director

It is with both excitement and humility that I take over the reins of DESC from Mary Spuhler after her almost three decades of ministry and service to our clients. In serving as a board member for nine years, as well as the board president for the last two-and-half years, I appreciate all of Mary's hard work and the path she has paved for the future of DESC.

While Mary had graciously stayed on until July 1st to train me on the ins and outs of our operations and fundraising efforts, I look forward to upholding and building upon the firm foundation she had established.

I look forward to getting to know you, our donors and supporters, over the coming months and years. Please do not hesitate to call me at (904) 358-3935 or email me at jeff@descjax.org if I can be of any help.

On behalf of our board, staff, volunteers, and clients, thank you for your generosity and kindness to our fellow human beings in need.

Summer Time Sacrifices

When school lets out for the summer, most families struggle to come up with ways to keep their children entertained for the next couple of months. For the many families that we serve at DESC, their worries are compounded as they try to figure out how to keep them fed as well.

With children out of school, they no longer have the benefit of free breakfast and lunch.

This in turn means their parents and guardians must pay for three meals a day versus one. When this happens, sacrifices, in the form of late bills or missed medicine, must be made.

While donations of food items are appreciated, financial donations to DESC allow us to maximize your support and our impact, as we are able to stock our pantry with nutritional food purchased at a fraction of the price.

This summer, Anna is taking care of eight children, including her own children and her nieces and nephews. While she does look forward to spending their break with them, she has also had to learn how to stretch out her trip to the grocery store.

With each bag of groceries we give to families like Anna's, we make it possible for them to enjoy all that summer has to offer. If you have the means to help, please use the envelope enclosed in this newsletter.

Did You Know?

During the summer, families with school children come to DESC twice as often for grocery assistance so that they can feed their kids home on summer break who are not receiving school breakfasts and lunches.



Supporting Our Families

We are thankful for the moments God provides us to help those we are in a position to help. As a four-month follow-up, at least 90% of those aided with their finances are still stable and we are still the second-most referred agency of 2-1-1 at United Way.

DESC 2014 Year to Date:

Food	4,398 People Fed = \$32,294
Clothing	61,411 Items = \$184,233
Emergency Financial	125 Households = \$41,681
Volunteer Hours	2,038 Hours = \$45,107
Total Value	\$303,315
Funds Donated	\$90,000
Value-to-Donation Ratio	3.37 : 1

A Special Visit from Riverside Presbyterian

Beth Wilson, Clothing Manager

On Tuesdays and Thursdays during the month of June, we had the pleasure of welcoming upcoming 4th and 5th graders from the Riverside Presbyterian Church as they toured DESC as part of their VBS mission trip.

During their first visit, they met with Mary, and our beloved office dog Clarice, to learn more about our history and our three-fold mission of giving. She took them on a brief tour through our food pantry, which was overflowing with food from our recent summer grocery order.

Afterwards, they spent the rest of their visit in the Clothing Center, where together, we looked over some passages of scripture that highlight God's concern for the poor and our mission to provide them with necessary provisions.

The children were attentive and respectful when we moved the discussion towards the variety of reasons that bring people through our doors.

To help them understand our need for clothes, shoes, backpacks, and toiletry items, we asked the students to fill clothing orders for imaginary clients.

As they worked, they struggled, as we do in the clothing ministry, to find suitable clothing for a size small man



or woman, comfortable shoes that fit, or maternity clothing for women in need. They also learned our inventory of children's clothing items, and especially infant and baby items, hardly meet the demand we see every day.

While we appreciate our little visitors, the true reward came when many of the students returned shortly after their visit with their parents to donate clothing, books, shoes, blankets, and stuffed animals from their own closets and bedrooms.

We graciously accepted their donations, as in this particular season, these items never stay long on our shelves. We find ourselves needing school uniforms for returning students, as well as clothing, bibs, blankets, and wash cloths for babies and infants.

As many of our visiting students left DESC, many of them told us that when they grow older, they would like to return to give away clothing for real. It is our hope that we see their faces brighten our doors again.



Just a few of the incredible students who came back with some wonderful donations from their own rooms and closets.

What We Need To Help Those In Need

As we continue to move through these hot months of summer, we at DESC know that many of our clients sacrifice basic toiletries in order to pay for other primary necessities, including additional utility costs, as well as food and child care for children on summer break.

While we are always accepting toiletries to give away through our food ministry, we are especially asking for men's and women's deodorants.

We often hear first-hand from our clients about the embarrassment and shame they feel when they have to skip deodorant while being out in public in the summer heat. For our families, deodorant is not just a matter of hygiene, but also a matter of dignity and respect.

Additionally, our clients always have a need of:

- Backpacks
- Tote bags
- Razors and other toiletries
- Work boots
- Men's shoes and sneakers
- Diapers
- Monetary Support



To learn more about how you can help, visit descjax.org



a musical
tribute
honoring
Mary Spuhler



A Family Affair

For many of the individuals who volunteer and support the efforts of DESC, it is a family affair. When Dot and Percy Rosenbloom discovered that Ralph Hoyt, the father-in-law of their son Percy Jr., also volunteered his time at our organization, they realized this is certainly true for their family.

In the 10 years she had been at DESC, Dot has patiently answered the phones and diligently filed away forms and paperwork every Monday afternoon. Each week, she is touched by how much of an impact we make in our community with so little.

Additionally, as she and her husband are annual supporters of our organization, they are “blessed to support this important mission that helps so many who desperately need a ‘hand up’ in emergency situations.”

Ralph, too, is a volunteer that is ready to roll up his sleeves and help our mission to serve others. After a shift of stocking our pantry, picking up our weekly donation of bread, or answering the phones, he always signs off by telling us,

“Let me know how I can help. Call me if you need me.”

While he started out stocking food in our pantry, he has since been a major help in picking up donated bread on a weekly basis. When we started receiving more bread than we can store in our freezer, he purchased and donated a new freezer just for the bread.

We are thankful for the reliability and warm-natured spirits of volunteers and supporters like Dot, Percy, and Ralph. It is with their continued support that we are able to make a genuine difference in the lives of those in need.



Ralph Hoyt and Dot Rosenbloom

Relive the night with us, honoring our beloved friend and her 29 years of service to DESC, on our Facebook: [facebook.com/DESCjax](https://www.facebook.com/DESCjax)

Mary's Tribute & Endowment Fund

On June 5th, at the Garden Club of Jacksonville, current and longtime friends and supporters of DESC came together to celebrate and honor Mary Spuhler and her 29 years of service to our organization. It was a night to recognize not only her hard work, but also her monumental commitment to shaping and growing this ministry to what it is today.

As Mary is a lifelong music lover, the tribute featured musical performances from the Reverend Tony Chance, Andy Clarke, Lois Gurney and the Riverside Presbyterian Musicians, as well as from her daughters. Additionally, kind words and vivid recollections of Mary's time at DESC were shared by her longtime friends Ham Cooke, Cheryl Sapora, Jeff Meyer, and Al Rutland.

To further celebrate Mary's incredible ministry, we proudly unveiled the DESC Endowment Honoring Mary Spuhler. Held by the Community Foundation of Northeast Florida, this endowment will allow us to continue carrying out her vision while also ensuring the longevity of our organization for years to come. Through an outpouring of gifts from our many supporters, as well as lead gifts from the Weaver Family Foundation, the Lucy Gooding Charitable Trust and a friend of DESC, we have raised \$330,000 towards our \$500,000 goal. If you would like to make a donation, please mail your clearly-labeled check in the enclosed envelope.



DESC

Downtown Ecumenical Services Council

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Who We Are and What We Do

DESC was founded in 1981 by churches in urban Jacksonville to be an emergency service ministry striving to provide food, clothing and financial assistance to working families struggling to live at or below the poverty level.

Who Receives Aid

DESC helps those with emergency needs regardless of age, gender, or race. Financial assistance is limited to cases involving children, the elderly or those afflicted with disabilities or illness.

THANK YOU

Thanks to the many groups who have given to DESC in the first half of 2014.

4th Day of Cursillo Men's Group

Aeropostle
(Do Something.org)

Bank of America Foundation

Baptist Health

Brighton Collectibles

Carl S. Swisher Foundation

Carter Foundation

Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter Day Saints

City of Jacksonville

Community
Foundation of
Northeast Florida

Deermeadows Baptist

Dignity U Wear

Edna Sproull
Williams Foundation

Elevate Life Church

Faith United Methodist

First Presbyterian Church

First United
Methodist Church

Hiday & Ricke, P.A.

Holland & Knight Charitable
Foundation

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IM Sulzbacher Center

Jacksonville Women's Lawyer
Association

Jump N Jax

Kirbo Charitable
Foundation

Lacoste

Lucy Gooding Foundation Trust

Merrill Lynch

North Florida Lincoln

Ocean Street Books

Oceanway Middle School
Chorus Boosters

Ortega Cleaners

Presbyterian
Social Ministries

Prudential

PW of First Presbyterian
Church

Riverside Avenue
Christian Church

Riverside Presbyterian Church

Riverside Presbyterian Day
School

Seniors on a Mission

Shellback Riders

Smith Endodontics

South Jacksonville Presbyterian
Church

St. Paul's United
Methodist

St. John's
Episcopal Cathedral

St. Paul Lutheran

Teacher Supply Depot

The Lord's Foundation

The Players Championship

The Weaver Family Foundation

Timucuan Asset
Management

Westside Chapel