



SUMMER 2015

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## A Message from Executive Director Jeff Matthews

**Incredible!** I cannot believe a full year has gone by since I took the reins here at DESC. And I know that I speak for all DESC staff and volunteers when I say THANK YOU! As our extremely generous donors, sponsors, grantors, individuals, churches and civic organizations, your commitment to Jesus' mission is inspiring.

This year has been exceptionally challenging for DESC. We have made an attempt to streamline the delivery of our service ministries and implement several cost-cutting strategies, but some things NEVER change.

- The demand to meet the needs of our clients remains steady. In June, we served more than 1,000 families, which is a record for DESC.
- Our dedicated volunteers and staff remain tirelessly committed and hard-working to meet those demands, but we are in desperate need of more volunteers.
- Raising enough funds to provide for our clients continues to be an ongoing challenge.

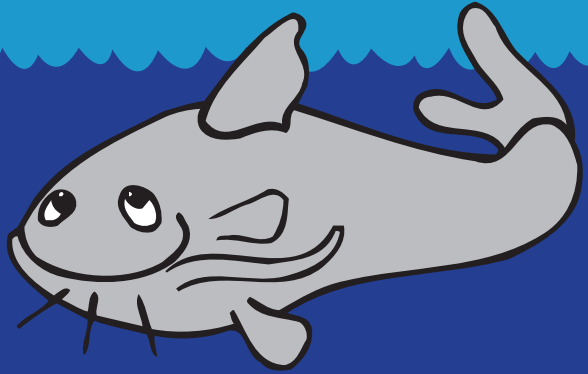
If you have yet to do so, I challenge each of you reading this to tell just two of your friends, colleagues, co-workers and family members about our wonderful ministry. Encourage them to take a tour and experience the lives we touch.

Share the joy of helping others with them! Please call me at **(904) 358-3935** or email me at [jeff@descjax.org](mailto:jeff@descjax.org) to coordinate tours, visits or discussions.


Thanks once again, to all of you, for making DESC such a vital ministry in the heart of downtown Jacksonville!

# BUBBA'S BACK

And You'll Never Guess  
Who's Singing His Praises!



**Save The Date**  
**November 12th, 2015**



**Watch your mailbox for more information!**

# GREAT UNDERWEAR CHALLENGE

Thanks to everyone who came out to Mellow Mushroom in Avondale for the Great Underwear Challenge. Together we exceeded our goal of \$50,000 to buy more underwear for our clients. We hope you had a great time and can't wait until next year!

Be sure to visit our Facebook page to see more photos at [www.facebook.com/DESCJax](http://www.facebook.com/DESCJax).



## SEWING HOPE FOR DESC

by Beth Wilson, Clothing Ministry Manager

Sharon Meehan has been a long-time supporter of DESC and helped organize the Clothing Ministry when it first opened more than 10 years ago. Since August of 2014, she and a few friends started sewing together and were looking for projects to get involved with to help the community. When they asked DESC what we needed most, we were desperate for elementary school clothing, in particular little girl's dresses and skirts.

The back to school rush for clothing always demands more than we can gather through donations. This group graciously set out to help fill these gaps by meeting at Sharon's house, in Venetia, on Tuesdays and creating girl's dresses and jumpers in various sizes and patterns. Thus, Sewing Hope for DESC was born. This group consists of a mix of talents and strengths that blend well together with Sharon Meehan (the Organizer), Karen Lee (Computer Savvy), Elaine Lundahl (Practical Advisor), Joan Altes (Creative Vision), Cheryl Peek (Bargain Hunter), Kellie Perkins ("Iron" Woman), and Helen Bliss (who sews at home).

Needless to say, the Clothing Ministry workers were all blown away, not only by the generosity of time and effort from this group, but also by the number of beautiful dresses that began accumulating in our empty bins. Some of the material was purchased and some was donated. Most were gorgeous floral prints, sturdy denim for jumpers, and other cute assorted designs and fabrics. Since then, DESC has been able to give EVERY girl client at least one dress, often more.



A child donates food for DESC at the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra food drive held May 2nd.

The sewing group has since expanded their efforts to include skirts for older girls. Our clients and volunteers have all been very appreciative for the extra attention to detail and effort that has gone into the making of each priceless homemade piece of clothing. To date we have given over more than 200 dresses and 50 skirts. What a blessing!

In addition to the sewing group, Christi Veleta, her mother Karen Clark, and Cheryl Peek are the official "garage sale ambassadors" who shop for clothing, materials, and donations on weekends. Other support comes from a long list of donors of fabric, sewing machines, furniture, thread, notions and monetary gifts which includes friends all over this area as well as out of state.

Please check out their Facebook page at [facebook.com/SewingHope4DESC](https://facebook.com/SewingHope4DESC) to see an array of the amazing materials and dresses they have created or to follow this dynamic group.



## THE SEWING HOPE FOR DESC FUND

We are sad to report that two of the sewing machines that are used to make this beautiful clothing has broken. We are taking donations to repair the machines. If you would like to donate to help Sewing Hope for DESC, you can go to [descjax.org/sewing4hope](https://descjax.org/sewing4hope). If you have an unused sewing machine, call Beth at (904) 358-0809.

## VOLUNTEER PHOTOS



Dave Tuttle with donated clothing to be sorted by Presbyterian Social Ministry Volunteers



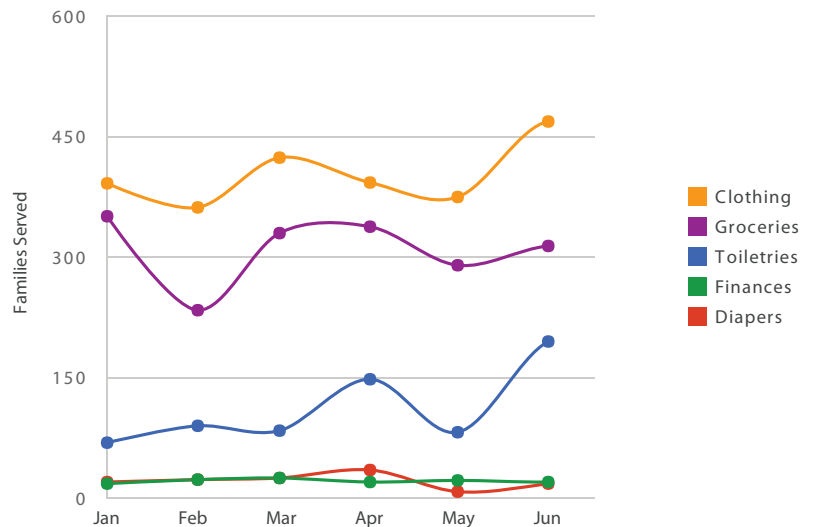
Mal and Lani Redington delivering grocery bags from South Jax Presbyterian's soup and sandwich drive



Minor and Nancy Chamblin delivering grocery bags from Riverside Presbyterian's soup and sandwich drive

## DESC NUMBERS THROUGH JUNE, 30 2015

Our new client database allows us to graph the number of families we serve in each area. As you can see, this June was a busy month. We served a record-breaking 1,000 families, despite the fact that income from donations and grants are more than \$80,000 lower than they normally are this time of year. We are grateful to have helped so many families and are faithful that we will receive the funding needed to continue.



Assistance Type	Numbers Provided	Value*
Groceries	4,772 People Received Groceries	\$35,040
Clothing	49,894 Clothing Items Given	\$149,682
Emergency Financial	153 Households Assisted	\$44,199
Volunteer Hours	3,922 Hours Donated	\$86,806
	<b>Total Value of Services Provided</b>	<b>\$315,727</b>
	Total Funds Donated	\$126,452
	<b>Value-to-Donation Ratio</b>	<b>2.50 : 1</b>

\*value calculated using lowest retail values for food and garage-sale values for clothing



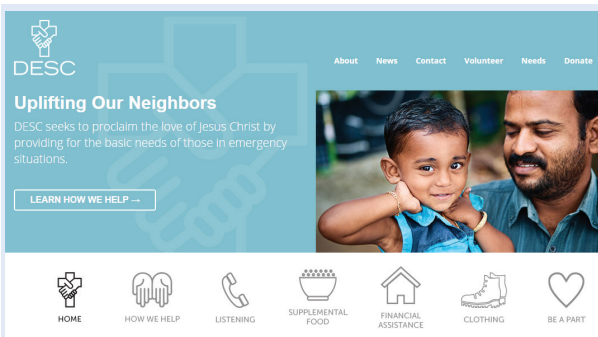
Jeff Matthews thanks Linda Robbins of First United Methodist Church ACTS Circle for 50 decorated Easter Baskets



Clothing Ministry volunteers enjoy their annual luncheon organized by our Clothing Manger Beth Wilson



From Left to Right: Sewing Hope for DESC team Christi Veleta, Karen Lee, Elaine Lundahl, Joan Altes, Sharon Meehan, and Beth Wilson



## SHARE BLESSINGS

*by Beth Wilson, Clothing Ministry Manager*

Today at the DESC window a client "Sonja" asked us for underwear, socks and bedding. She had had an unfortunate bed bug invasion in her apartment and lost everything. I feel compelled to share her story as it was so touching.

Sonja and her son were living in an apartment in the Arlington area. Occasionally she would open her home to acquaintances that were having temporary hardships. Recently, she opened her heart and home to someone in passing, who later admitted to knowingly bringing bed bugs from a hotel where they previously stayed. Sonja readily admitted to an angry outburst and evicting this person. Sonja had never dealt with bed bugs before but knew she had to get rid of EVERYTHING in her apartment. She lost all her furniture, clothing and belongings. The only thing she had left were her kitchen utensils.

Sonja came down to DESC for help. She said she had not been here in a while and that starting with clothing was the first step of getting her life back. Because of the wonderful response to our underwear campaign, we were able to give Sonja plenty of much needed underwear, socks, and bras, as well as clothing, bedding, blankets, sleepwear and groceries. She was overwhelmed by our ability to help in this time of crisis.

Sonja told us that the next Sunday she went to church and asked forgiveness for her outburst to her guest. She said she rededicated her life to Christ that day and is now free of this burden, has been forgiven, and is full of praise. She says her apartment is empty but her heart is full!

## 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
- Women's Shorts (medium thru extra large)
- Men's Jeans (all sizes)
- Men's Shoes (all sizes)
- Men's Work Boots (all sizes)
- Men's Shorts (medium thru extra large)
- Backpacks

You can see our updated Always Need List on our website at [www.descjax.org/needs](http://www.descjax.org/needs).



# DESC

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215 N. Ocean Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

[www.descjax.org](http://www.descjax.org)

 [facebook.com/DESCjax](https://facebook.com/DESCjax)

## 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.

Downtown Ecumenical Services Council  
215 N. Ocean Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

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# GIVING THANKS

We would like to offer thanks to the many groups who have given to DESC in 2015 thus far!

ACTS Circle of First United Methodist Church

Aeropostle (DoSomething.org)

Bank of America Foundation

Baptist Health

Bedell, Dittmar, Devault, Pillans & Coxe, P.A.

Carl S. Swisher Foundation

Carter Foundation

Community Foundation of Northeast Florida

Dignity U Wear

Dollar General

Edna Sproull Williams Foundation

Faith United Methodist

First Presbyterian Church

First United Methodist Church

The Hall-Haliburton Foundation

Holland & Knight Charitable Foundation

Hope Lutheran Church

IM Sulzbacher Center

Jacksonville Women's Lawyer Association

Jump N Jax

Kirbo Charitable Foundation

Lacoste

The Lord's Foundation

Lucy Gooding Foundation Trust

Lynnwood Christian Church

Merrill Lynch

Meyer Agricultural

North Florida Lincoln

Ocean Street Books

Presbyterian Social Ministries

Prudential

Riverside Avenue Christian Church

Riverside Presbyterian Church

Riverside Presbyterian Day School

Sewing Hope for DESC

Seniors on a Mission

South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church

St. John's Episcopal Cathedral

St. Paul Lutheran

Teacher Supply Depot

Unity Church for Creative Living

The Weaver Family Foundation

Westside Chapel