

FALL 2023

NEWS FROM THE DESC

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Victoria decided to ask for help because she knew it was best for her family.

'Y'all are my people'

Victoria is a strong mother of six who has been tested far more than most of us can ever imagine. She suffered multiple abuses at an early age, and thus began her journey of survival and faith.

Forced to leave her childhood home, Victoria endured years with no support or structure. She had children young and then found herself in a domestic abusive relationship. She and her children fled and found protection at a homeless shelter.

Victoria admits it was hard to ask for help, but it was necessary for her children. Looking back on those days, Victoria says that time in her life brought her closer to her children.

The small family felt safe and protected by the caring workers in the shelter, and they became involved in a downtown church.

DESC also became part of that support network for Victoria's family by providing clothing for her growing children and encouragement to her during the difficult days. She says she felt the Lord wrapped His hands around her and her kids with love and protection and she was so thankful.

Years later while working as a terminal operator for the railroad, Victoria suffered a devastating injury that left her with a permanent disability and a new set of financial difficulties.

Through it all, Victoria's faith never wavered. She says she spent hours worshipping and acknowledging God's greatness through all of it, knowing her family would be OK.

"God gives me joy! You can't buy it and people can't give it," Victoria said. "You have to break generational curses, no matter how you grow up. We created our family of love. They are healthy, and they love Jesus."

Continued on Page 3

Making ends meet

Don is one of our senior clients who lives in the downtown area and walks in regularly for groceries and occasionally for clothing.

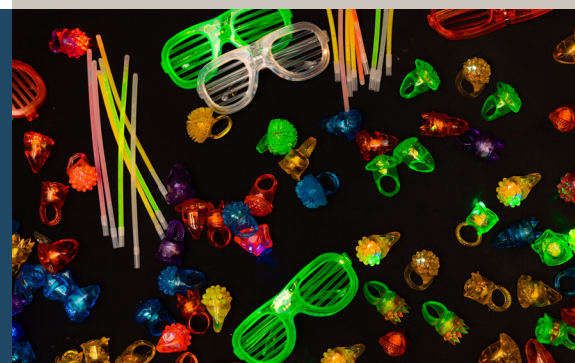
Living just a few blocks away in an affordable senior housing unit, Don is no stranger to the challenges of downtown living. For years, he lived happily in a garage apartment in a quiet neighborhood. The wave of dramatic rent increases during the pandemic forced Don to move, but he was fortunate to get a spot at his complex at the last minute.

Like so many of our senior clients, Don relies on Social Security as his only income source. His retirement savings in his 401k have been depleted. Don does his best to stay positive but admits that the current economy has presented challenges and struggles that can bring him down.

Continued on Page 3

DESC DEFENDERS: Into the Future

More on pages 4-6





From DESC Board Chair Pamela Prier

Pumpkin spice has been in stores and restaurants for months, but we are just entering fall in earnest. It's interesting that so many foods are given the pumpkin spice treatment and how many people are excited about the special flavor.

The folks who come to DESC aren't too concerned about the unique tastes of the season. Instead, they just hope to get enough groceries to feed themselves and their families when their cabinets are bare.

And when they receive their boxes and bags of food, these same people are genuinely grateful for the food and the extra helping of encouragement. They often describe the bounty of food as one of God's blessings.

I think this says a lot about the blessings in our lives. All of us have them, no matter our circumstances thanks to God's grace and love.

There are many blessings at DESC this season! We just wrapped up the most successful fundraising event in our 40-year history! We raised more than ever while renewing friendships with long-standing donors and making new ones with first-time contributors, and we gave donors a look into the future of DESC.

We owe a lot of gratitude to our Honorary Chairs, **Randy and Allison DeFoor**, as well as our Event Chair, **Alex Benavides**, Fundraising Chair, **Julie Handley** and all on our hard-working committee. Blessings, all of them! Read more on pages 4 - 6.

More blessings for DESC are the volunteers who keep our programs running smoothly. If you want to join this dedicated group, let us know. We can use more volunteers from drivers to Board members.

Blessings

And as pumpkin spice turns to eggnog and candy canes, we'll be getting ready for the holy season of Christmas. While that time of year means an increase in clients, we also know it means an increase in much needed additional food drives, clothing drives and more.

Part of our Christmas tradition is a direct mail appeal for contributions. We hope that if you're in the position to help financially, you will!

Thanks for being one of the blessings for DESC! Your contributions to help those experiencing poverty or emergency situations is greatly appreciated. We pray for a peaceful and happy holiday season.

Welcome Barzler, Hart as new Board members

Welcome **Robert Barzler** and **Lanette Hart** to the DESC Board of Directors. We are honored to have them join the Board and help proclaim God's love by meeting the needs of people in emergency situations or experiencing poverty.

Robert is a retired community volunteer who is **Riverside Avenue Christian Church's** Board designee. He has been delivering donations from the church for months and pitching in for bread delivery too. Robert has experience volunteering with a similar organization in Oregon.

Lanette owns Hart and Associates, a public relations consulting firm. She has years of leadership roles with the Florida Public Relations Association and the Universal Accreditation Board. Her parents were missionaries who moved to the states to provide spiritual guidance to the Black community during the Civil Rights era.

"We are so glad to have Lanette and Robert join the DESC Board," **Pamela Prier**, Board Chair said. "They bring such interesting perspectives, new talents and varied experiences that will help our organization grow while we tackle challenges around poverty and homelessness."

With the additions, the DESC Board stands at 18 members strong with a combination of church designees and community representatives who are charged with governance and fiduciary oversight for the organization.



DESC's long-term vision is for individuals and families to achieve and sustain financial stability and independence. By answering Jesus' call for us to assist the poor and homeless, DESC uplifts families and individuals in real-time crisis.

Families receive care with dignity.

Thanks to extremely generous donors and amazing volunteers and staff, our neighbors struggling with hardships receive a helping hand with emergency financial assistance, groceries, clothing and case management.

Special Thanks for Special Donors

♥ We are so grateful for grants from **Bank of America, Cavan Family Foundation, Edna Sproull Williams Foundation, The Henry and Lucy Gooding Endowment, Krause Family Foundation, the Olive Tree Foundation, the Thomas M. and Irene B. Kirbo Charitable Foundation** and **United Way of Northeast Florida.**

♥ The children visiting DESC received extra help thanks to the **Mitch22 Foundation** and **Larry Roziers** who donated 75 backpacks and school supplies, clothing and shoes. School supplies were also donated by **Christi Veleta.**

♥ Thanks to **BOOKS-A-GO GO & Betty Metz**, the children have a nice collection of books. Thank you to **South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church** and **Mandarin United Methodist Church** for collecting socks and underwear for "Undie Sunday."

♥ We're grateful to those who host drives to keep our pantry full. Thank you to the **Bolles DESC Club, Riverside Presbyterian Church & VBS** and **Audrey** from **Creekside High School** for donating canned and boxed goods.

♥ We have had so many kind folks host drives or gather clothing, supplies, toys and more. Thanks to **Riverside Presbyterian Day School, Presbyterian House** and **Grace Beyer** for hosting clothing drives. **Southside United Methodist Church Youth Ministry, Trinity Lutheran Church** and **The Bolles School** each donated various items

including clothes, shoes, books, toiletries, bedding, suitcases, towels and water bottles. **Riverside Presbyterian Church** hosted a "Blue Jean, Ballcaps and Shorts Challenge," and they donated the storage bins everything was collected in! Also, thanks to **St. John's Cathedral** for suitcases, backpacks and totes.



Grace Beyer and her father with their giant clothing donation.

- ♥ This year, nine-year-old **Eloise** asked for donations in lieu of birthday gifts. How kind!
- ♥ **Family Promise** and **Kendall Alley** donated boxes of Bombas socks!
- ♥ A big thank you to **1st Place Sports** who donated two full vans of race shirts and shoes.
- ♥ **Deermeadows Baptist Church** gave children's clothing, shoes and toys from their annual Kids Shop Event.
- ♥ **Jan Carpenter** graciously purchased shorts for summer.
- ♥ **Sewing Hope** created pantry bags for clients to carry their groceries, as well as cute dresses for our children's clothing center.
- ♥ Many groups gathered toiletries, including the **Jacksonville Bar Association** and **Family Promise**, plus a deodorant drive by the **South Jacksonville Presbyterian**

Church. And, **The Florida Junior Classical League, Bolles Latin Club** and **Bolles DESC Club** purchased and put together toiletry kits and knapsacks.

- ♥ Thank you **Lakeside Church of Christ** for adorable stuffed baby bears!
- ♥ **WeeTRADE** donated a record-breaking amount of children's clothing, accessories and toys. (pictured below)



My people (cont.)

Today, Victoria and two grown sons (one a teacher and the other an FSCJ student) along with four more (ages 12-19) all live, work and play together. They're usually on the basketball court as a carryover from their days in the shelter.

Victoria says that DESC's clothing has been incredibly helpful including receiving interview clothes, school clothes, work boots and slip resistant shoes (for a son's job in fast food).

DESC also helps with much-needed groceries for family meals. "Y'all are my people," Victoria said. "You inspire us to live right and make good decisions."

Ends meet (cont.)



Don is grateful for help.

Coming to DESC and three other food pantries helps Don stretch his income so he can meet his financial commitments. Every now and then, he rides the bus to the Publix in his old neighborhood because he feels safer there, knows the workers and likes that they recycle.

Don moved to Jacksonville in 1997 from Long Island after losing his mother. He worked all his life in the auto industry, starting as the parts counter man, then moving on to service manager.

He also drove Yellow Cabs at night and worked part-time on the golf course, caddying, driving carts and working in the pro shop.

Don is grateful to DESC for the food assistance and is complimentary of the way he is treated. He really likes all the produce and canned goods he receives. He is also incredibly grateful for his two "wonderful, wonderful children" who mean the world to him.

DESC DEFENDERS INTO THE FUTURE



Another Amazing, Record-Breaking Evening!

DESC's 40th anniversary celebration exceeded all expectations. Not only did we enjoy fellowship with friends, new and old, we also had our most successful fundraiser yet! With your help, we raised more than **\$340,000!!** Thank you to everyone who donated. We couldn't have done it without you!

Thank you, **Randy and Allison DeFoor**, for kindly serving as our Honorary Chairs. We also want to thank **Tenikka Hughes** from **Action News Jax** for being an amazing emcee once again!



*Allison and Randy DeFoor,
Honorary Chairs.*



*Lyra Hall and Alex Benavides,
Event Chair.*



*Reggie Hayward and David
Clark during Fund-A-Need.*



*Gay Nightingale, Fran Moulder
and Dudley Grace.*



Pam Prier, Board Chair, announces 103 sponsors!



Vince Ferrigno and Christian Abrahamson.



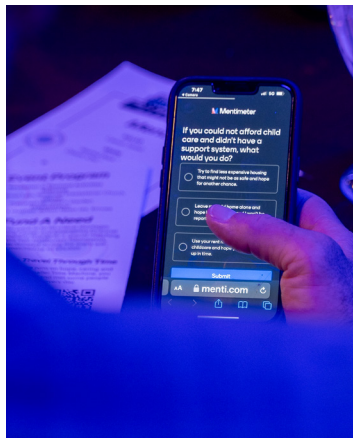
The custom-made DESC Time Machine, built by Event Chair, Alex Benavides.



Will Messer donates to Fund-A-Need.



Tenikka Hughes presents the interactive responses.



Question from the interactive portion of the program.

Thanks to our volunteer photographers Alison Abernathy, Mike Erdelyi and Richard Brown!

Host Committee

Honorary Chairs

Randy and Allison DeFoor

Julie and Neal Anderson

Steve and Angela Atkins

Maria and Guillermo Benavides

Matt and Karen Carlucci

Marilyn Carpenter

Sandra Corbett

LeAnna and Husein Cumber

Damon and Cassandra Green

Brenda and DeAndre Jackson

David and Monique Miller

Ted and Mary Claire Miller

Joyce Morgan

Fran Moulder

Kathy and Bud Para

Tom and Amy Slater

Fundraising Teams

(ranked by funds raised)



IntergALactics



The Pamtastic 4



DESC Frontliners

Tenacious T
 Guy with the Truck
 The Jesse Team
 Hedrick's Heroes
 Fund'er Roos
 Visible Love Gang
 Exigo Sales & Marketing
 2 Docs in a Box
 South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church

Presenting Sponsors



HALL-HALLIBURTON
FOUNDATION

Delores Barr Weaver Fund
Legacy,
established 2012

Platinum



*John and Jean
Grant-Dooley*



*Ed and Jo
Pratt-Dannals*

Gold

AME Senior Housing Board • John and Patti Anderson • Julie and Neal Anderson
A DESC Angel • English-El Enterprises, LLC • Vince and Linda Ferrigno • John and Susan Humes
Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation, Inc. • Dick and Melissa Lewis • Sharon McArthur
David and Monique Miller • Michael Ward and Jennifer Glock • Dennis Whittle and Mari Kuraishi

Silver

Fran and Ken Baker • Black Knight • Capital Analysts of Jacksonville • Husein and LeAnna Cumber
Florida Blue • The Forst Foundation • Ruth Ann and Carey Hepler • Julie and Michael McKenny
Debbie and Dave Pierson • Tom and Amy Slater

Bronze

Advantis Wealth Partners • All About You Staffing • Steve and Laurie Austin • John Baker • Alex Benavides
Matt Carlucci State Farm • Marilyn Carpenter • Trista and Daniel Carraher • Nancy and Minor Chamblin
A DESC Angel • Kevin DeSue • Driscoll Family Foundation • Tom and Bonnie Dudley • Eisman & Russo Inc.
Thad Eshelman/Eastern Quality Food • Judy Fackler • Marty and Mary Fiorentino • Bob and Bobbie Gittings
Julie Handley • Haskell • Joan Haskell • Tim and Jessie Hedrick • Historic Mt. Zion AME Church • JEA
Mary and Ron Littlepage • Clay and Elizabeth Meux • Miller and Company Real Estate
Claude Moulton and Christine Whitney • Curry and Annie Pajcic • Bud and Kathy Para • Pamela Y. Paul
Rip and Marian Poitevent • Jack and Mary Ann Richardson • Lesley Roberts • Rogers Towers Foundation Inc.
Bill and Peggy Scheu • Slifer Family Foundation • SouthState Bank • Sally Surface • VyStar Credit Union
Warner and Sherrie Webb • Larry Zenke

Copper

Philipp and Carmina Aldana • Theresa Bennett and Shay Hill • Arden Brugger • Frank and Emmy Cerveny
David Clark • Ashley and Keith Daw • Randy and Allison DeFoor • The Episcopal Diocese of Florida • Von and Calvin Fuller
Mattox Hair • Alfred and Katherine Harding • Lighthouse Electrical Contractors, Inc. • Wilford Lyon, Jr. • Sherry Magill
Bill and Becky Mentz • Will and Karla Newton • Dottie Nutant • Jim and Connie Overton • Ned and Gretchen Peverley
Phil and Kitty Phillips • Pam and LeMorris Prier • Bill and Carol Proctor • Drew and Kellie Prusiecki • Sheila Pursley
Mal and Lani Redington • Steve and Paula Rosenbloom • Larry and Pearl Roziers • Virginia Shields • Bob Taylor
Katy Towers • Michael and Paula Weatherby

In-Kind

Bold City Brewery • David Mosby Residential Designs • Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits

Soles4Souls provides shoes and more



Soles4Souls (S4S) has been partnering with DESC for six years and has provided thousands of shoes and articles of clothing to help families in need.

At S4S, they turn unwanted shoes and clothing into opportunity, by keeping them from going to waste and putting them to good use – providing relief, creating jobs and empowering people to break the cycle of poverty.

One of DESC's clients who recently received some shoes from S4S is **Errol**, a hardworking single father providing for his two children.

Errol says his main priority is providing the best life he can for his children so he stays committed to his job. These new shoes, he says, will help him stay comfortable while working.

In his free time, Errol prioritizes time with his kids and cooking.

Ready to give up

Nearly 9,000 cases of domestic violence are reported to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office each year inflicting physical, emotional and financial distress.

The situation is even more overwhelming when separating from a violent home life with children. Such was the case with **Falicia**, a victim of domestic violence looking to create a better life for her son and herself. But where to begin?

After getting a referral for emergency financial assistance through United Way 2-1-1, Falicia was connected to DESC's Emergency Financial Assistance Specialist, **Thalinda Williams**. It was clear early on that Falicia was out of resources, unemployed and in dire need of help.

What started as a standard request for rental assistance, ballooned into much more. During intake, Thalinda learned that Falicia's utilities were also about to be disconnected.

Falicia told Thalinda that she was going to keep her 13-year-old son out of school because she couldn't afford school supplies or food. In a tough spot, Falicia felt holding him back from classes would be best at least until she



Falicia is grateful to have DESC as a partner.

got back to work. While not ideal, she felt she had no other choice.

Through DESC, Falicia received financial assistance for overdue rent, as well as help to catch up on her utilities. Falicia was also connected to other resources that provided school supplies so her son wouldn't miss any school. She also received groceries and information about working towards better financial literacy and home buying. And she started her new job.

Falicia continues to express gratitude to DESC for the opportunity to get back on track and is pitching in to help others on difficult journeys by donating to the DESC Clothing Center.

Falicia said she was ready to give up hope and live in her car when she got connected to DESC. She's grateful that she was partnered with such a caring organization and could start to turn her life around.

Planned giving

Thank you for showing your commitment and compassion to help families fight poverty and create brighter futures. Your generous and faithful support keeps the programs going day in and day out.

There's one more way you can make a difference and benefit you and your loved ones at the same time. It's called planned giving.

This is a simple and flexible way to help families through your will, trust, retirement plan, life insurance policy or other estate planning vehicle.

Planned giving allows you to leave a legacy of hope and opportunity, while also providing tax benefits,



income security and peace of mind for you and your heirs.

By including DESC in your estate plans, you can help continue vital programs that empower families to overcome poverty and achieve self-reliance.

We're on Instagram



DESC is now on Instagram! You can find us at **@descjax**, where we will be posting updates, stories, photos and videos of our work and impact. We hope this will be another way to connect with you and share how your generous donations make a difference in the lives of families fighting poverty.

Please share our page with your friends, family and followers, and help us raise awareness. You can still find us on Facebook at **facebook.com/descjax**.

We look forward to seeing you on Instagram!



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United Way
of Northeast Florida

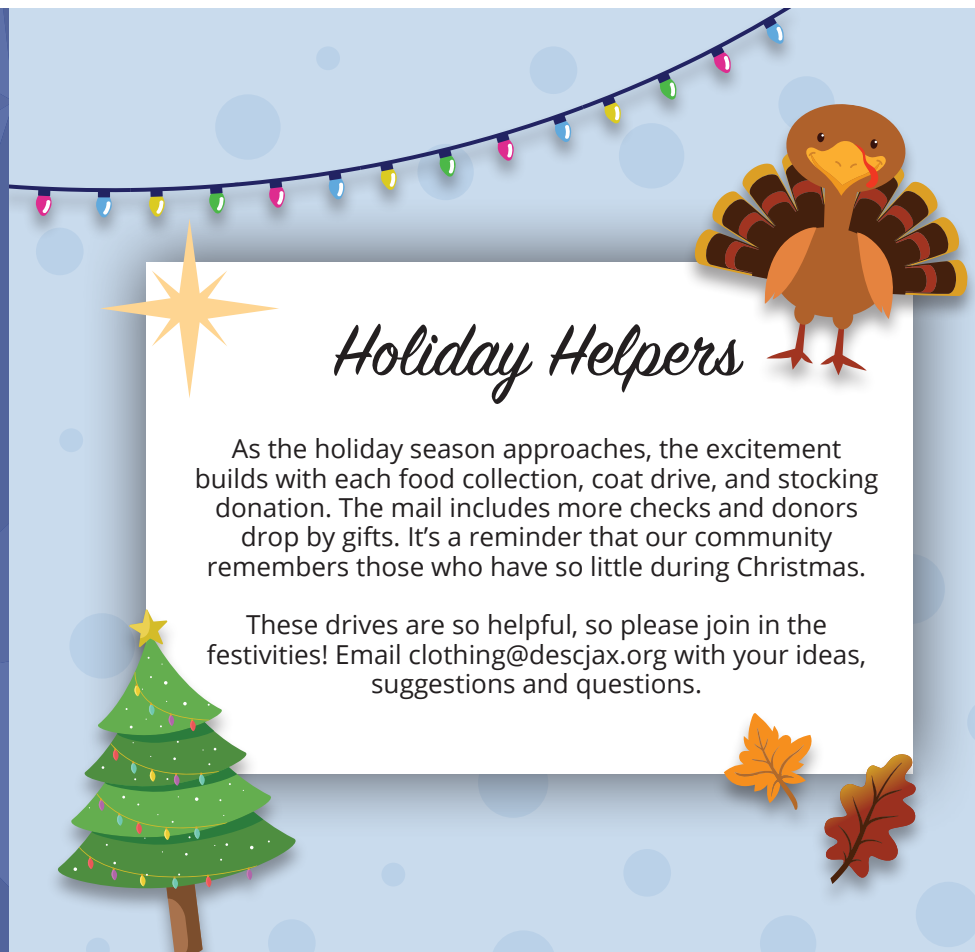


NEEDS LIST

Families always need
the items below.

- ♥ New socks and underwear (all sizes)
- ♥ Backpacks, totes and suitcases
- ♥ Men's pants (sizes 30-36), T-shirts and jeans (all sizes)
- ♥ Women's shirts (size large and up) and pants (size 18 and up)
- ♥ Men's shoes
- ♥ Work gloves
- ♥ Children's clothing for all elementary school age sizes
- ♥ Coats for men, women and children (all sizes)
- ♥ Toiletries like deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, razors, bar soap, shampoos and conditioners

You can see the updated
Current Needs List online
at descjax.org/current_needs/



Holiday Helpers

As the holiday season approaches, the excitement builds with each food collection, coat drive, and stocking donation. The mail includes more checks and donors drop by gifts. It's a reminder that our community remembers those who have so little during Christmas.

These drives are so helpful, so please join in the festivities! Email clothing@descjax.org with your ideas, suggestions and questions.