



FALL 2024

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*Carine has always worked hard for family, but still needs help at times.*

## A path to hope and stability

**Carine** is a devoted mother focused on education and a better future for her family. With two daughters in high school and two older children studying online, Carine works nights while planning her next steps.

Despite her hard work, Carine still struggles to make ends meet, especially when it comes to feeding her family of five. DESC's assistance has been crucial, providing groceries that help stretch her budget. "The meats and vegetables we get from the food pantry help so much," Carine said.

Carine's challenges today may pale in comparison to others she's experienced over the years. In fact,

her journey to the United States began when she fled a civil war in Gabon, Central Africa, with her husband and two young children. After a long and complicated process, they arrived in Florida, thankful to be safe and for the warmer climate.

But the language barrier and financial difficulties quickly became obstacles. Carine and her husband both went to school to learn English while training for careers.

As her marriage became strained due to financial pressures, Carine asked for a divorce. Taking on multiple jobs to support her children, she still struggled to provide enough food and clothing. A friend suggested DESC, and Carine found the help she needed.

Now, Carine is rebuilding her life, focused on her family's education and her own future. Her story is one of perseverance, hope and the support she's received from DESC along the way.

"DESC has been a real blessing to me and my kids," Carine said.

## Rebuilding life from the ground up

Today, **Steve** is focused on a fresh start, living sober and determined to rebuild his life. With a roof over his head and support from DESC, he's turned his challenges into a new beginning.

While grateful for the help, Steve carries some fear from his past. "It's been so long since I had something in my name," he said. "It's scary to think I could lose it all again."

Even still, Steve is focused on the future, adjusting to his new life and home.

DESC was there when Steve needed it most, providing toiletries, warm clothes and even a thermal sleeping bag that may have saved his life one winter. Those items offered critical support when Steve had nothing.

Today, DESC continues to help Steve meet his basic needs with clothes and groceries.

*Continued on Page 3*

## DESC Defenders avoids the storm and reaches goal!

*More on pages 4-5*





## From DESC Board Chair Claude Moulton

There never seems to be a dull moment in the basement of the **First Presbyterian Church** where DESC staff and volunteers greet clients and provide services to help families fight poverty. So, when hurricanes threatened the community, DESC pivoted here and there and came shining through.

With Hurricane Helene, we canceled the DESC Defenders: Generations event. It was very disappointing, but thanks to our donors, we surpassed our goal and raised an incredible \$320,000! Thanks to DESC volunteers and staff, who stewarded resources to keep costs low, we generated an impressive \$9.55 for every \$1 spent on expenses to support DESC's mission. This extraordinary return on investment shows our community's commitment to those in need and enables us to maximize the impact of every dollar.

Additionally, we are grateful that our donors continue to give, allowing us to fully draw down

the **Hall-Halliburton Foundation** challenge grant of \$25,000, which directly benefits our Food Pantry and Emergency Financial Assistance programs. The foundation's generosity reinforces the vital role DESC plays in our community.

With our Board retreat this month and the holidays on the horizon, we are excited about the activities ahead.

During the retreat, the Board will focus on DESC's full spectrum of services as we look to grow and help even more families. We are eager about the future, with interesting possibilities on the horizon. We are happy to welcome two new Board members and welcome back a member church. And we welcome a new member of the leadership team on staff.

We are also pleased to announce that DESC has been awarded an 18-month grant of \$195,000 from United Way of Northeast Florida and a 12-month grant of \$150,000 from the City of Jacksonville's Public Service Grants. These competitive grants will ensure we maintain support for families facing overdue rent or utilities.

However, while we celebrate these achievements, demand for our services continues to grow. We still need everyone's support to meet the increasing needs of our clients. Your contributions make a significant difference in their lives.

Thank you for being a vital part of DESC. Together, we can continue to make a difference.



## Welcome new Board members and church

Welcome **Julie Anderson** and **Elizabeth Meux** to the DESC Board of Directors. We are honored to have them join us in meeting the needs of people experiencing poverty and emergencies.

Julie recently retired after selling her business, OnPay Solutions, and has been involved with DESC for years, including serving on the fundraiser's host committee with her husband, Neal. She is also active in local and regional board work.

Elizabeth, a realtor and member of Riverside Presbyterian Church, has helped with DESC events for nearly 10 years. Her leadership has been crucial in shaping successful fundraisers, and she has served on the Board of Trustees for Riverside Presbyterian Day School.

Additionally, DESC is thrilled to welcome The Church of Oakland back as a member church. Known as "The Oak," the church was an original founder of DESC.

"It's wonderful to add new members with fresh perspectives and talents," said **Claude Moulton**, Board Chair. "Equally, it's wonderful to bring The Church of Oakland back, representing the Eastside and an important part of Jacksonville's history and future."



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 **Baptist Health, City of Jacksonville Public Service Grant, Cavan Family Foundation, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, MaryEllen Willis Charitable Trust, Edna Sproull Williams Foundation, Florida Blue Foundation, The Thomas M & Irene B Kirbo Charitable Foundation, The Lord's Foundation, The Olive Tree Foundation** and **United Way of Northeast Florida**.

♥ There are many who help keep our pantry full. Thank you to the **Riverside High School, JEA, Riverside Presbyterian Church VBS** and **Enterprise Learning Academy Elementary School** for donating canned and boxed goods.

♥ The children visiting DESC received extra help thanks to the **Mitch22 Foundation** and **Larry Roziers** who donated 72 new backpacks full of school supplies.



*Larry Roziers with the backpacks and school supplies.*

♥ Thank you **No More Homeless Pets** for donating a van full of dog and cat food.

♥ **Feeding Northeast Florida** gifted a full pallet of peanut butter.

♥ **St. John's Cathedral** donated Hunger Fight Kits of Cheesy Mac and Oatmeal, organized by **Lynn** and **Dennis Dorion**.

♥ We are grateful for partners like **BEAM** and **UCOM** who, together, donated 17 total boxes of frozen meat.

♥ DESC received adult and children's clothing from the **Trinity Lutheran Church** garage sale and **The Deerwood Baptist Church** Annual KidShop Event.

♥ **Family Promise** donated a van full of clothing, Bombas socks, T-shirts, books and household items.

♥ A big thank you to **1st Place Sports** who donated three full vans of race shirts and shoes.

♥ Thank you to **CrossRoad Church** who donated clothing, purchased socks and underwear, toiletries, bedding and clothing. Organized by DESC volunteer, **Becky Roberts**.

♥ We are so thankful for new socks, underwear, shoes and toiletries from "Undie Sundie" at **South Jacksonville Presbyterian Church** and **Mandarin United Methodist Church**.

♥ A few groups gathered toiletries, including the **Jacksonville Bar Association** and **UF Health**, plus adult diapers and pads donated by **Riverside Presbyterian House**.



*Toiletry donation from UF Health.*

♥ **Hueman People Solutions**, organized by **Richard Reid**, provided volunteers to cover 10 shift vacancies at DESC in May.

♥ **River City Chorus** hosted the "Sing Out, My Soul" concert series benefitting DESC. What an incredible opportunity!



*Robert Barzler and Barbara London helped set up and talked to audience members at the River City Chorus concert.*

## Rebuilding (cont.)



*Steve came to DESC in a time of need and is on a path to improvement.*

Originally from Charlotte, N.C., Steve spent 30 years in Jacksonville as a painter, raising a family and enjoying coastal living. But after injuring his back, everything changed. Unable to work, he moved to Baltimore to live with his children. When an attempt to return to painting failed, Steve moved back to Jacksonville, searching for stability.

Years of homelessness and struggles with alcohol led Steve to the streets. Seven years passed as he moved between beaches, woods and

overpasses. The mounting challenges finally pushed him to seek help at Sulzbacher, where he began his journey to sobriety. DESC provided crucial support with clothing, toiletries, and more as Steve started to rebuild.

Now, Steve shares DESC's resources with others in need, always mindful of where he's been. He keeps a picture on his phone of the place he once called home – a spot under a bridge. It serves as a stark reminder of how far he's come and motivates him to keep moving forward.

# DESC Defenders Raise \$320,000

Despite canceling the DESC Defenders: Generations event due to Hurricane Helene, we're thrilled to announce that the fundraiser exceeded its goal!

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our donors, we raised \$320,000 to support DESC's mission to fight poverty. We're especially grateful to **Mary and Hank Coxe** who served as Honorary Chairs, to **Tenikka Hughes** from Action News Jax for her video work and to **Lanette Hart** who was event chair.

While we couldn't gather in person, the food didn't go to waste. It was donated to **Sulzbacher** to help others in need, continuing the spirit of our mission. Special thanks to our awesome partners, **Chef's Garden** and **J.R. Events**, who helped make this donation possible.

We couldn't have pulled this off without each of you. We are so grateful for our sponsors, donors, volunteers and staff who worked so hard.

Your support will provide essential resources like emergency financial assistance, groceries, clothing and case management to families in need. We look forward to continuing this work together as DESC Defenders.



*Honorary Chair, Hank Coxe, Event Chair, Lanette Hart, and Hank's grandson representing all DESC Defenders.*



*David Clark and representatives from Chef's Garden, Sulzbacher and J.R. Events delivered the gourmet catering.*

## Host Committee

### Honorary Chairs

Mary and Hank Coxe

Matt Carlucci

Gardner and Elizabeth Davis

Randy and Allison DeFoor

Michael and Pamela Korn

Melissa and Dick Lewis

Sherry Magill

Anne and Marc Mayo

Clay and Elizabeth Meux

Paul Perez

Lisa and Mark Rinaman

Percy and Susan Rosenbloom

Al and Carolyne Rutland

Tom and Amy Slater

Jeff and Darlene Spence

Vance and Allison Walker

## Fundraising Teams

*(ranked by funds raised)*



The Dawn Patrol



DESC Frontliners



IntergALactics

Hedrick's Heroes

Pamtastic

BraveHart

Guy with the Truck

The Jesse League

Team Turbo

**THANK YOU  
SPONSORS!**

# Presenting Sponsors



HALL-HALLIBURTON  
FOUNDATION

Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Fund  
established 2012

## Platinum

*Vince and Linda  
Ferrigno*

*John and Jean  
Grant Dooley*

*Melissa and Dick  
Lewis*

*Ed and Jo  
Pratt-Dannals*

**BANK OF AMERICA** 

## Gold

AME Senior Housing Board • Julie and Neal Anderson • Arden Brugger  
Closets By Design • Hank and Mary Coxe • A DESC Angel • Gardner and Elizabeth Davis  
Florida Blue Foundation • John and Susan Humes • Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation, Inc.  
Debbie and Dave Pierson • THE PLAYERS Championship

## Silver

Advantis Wealth Partners • Fran and Ken Baker • Rolly and Hud Berrey • A DESC Angel  
Marilyn Carpenter • FNF • Foxharbor Family Foundation Corporation • Sherry Magill  
Marc and Anne Mayo • Julie and Michael McKenny • Tom and Amy Slater

## Bronze

Alex Benavides • Jack and Claudia Calhoun • Trista and Daniel Carraher • A DESC Angel  
Tom and Bonnie Dudley • Thad Eshelman/Eastern Quality Food • Judy Fackler  
Michael and Katie Fackler • Bob and Bobbie Gittings • Julie Handley • Haskell • Tim and Jessie Hedrick  
Ruth Ann and Carey Hepler • Historic Mt. Zion AME Church • Jamie and Joscel Hoener • JEA  
Michael and Pam Korn • Mary and Ron Littlepage • The Lord's Foundation • Clay and Elizabeth Meux  
Greg and Karen Montana • Claude Moulton and Christine Whitney • Bud and Kathy Para • Paul Perez  
Jack and Mary Ann Richardson • Lesley Roberts • Rogers Towers Foundation  
Steve and Paula Rosenbloom • Larry and Pearl Roziers • SouthState Bank • VyStar Credit Union  
Glenn and Linda Walker • Michael and Paula Weatherby

## Copper

Ed and Helen Albright • Philipp and Carmina Aldana • John and Patti Anderson • Robert Barzler  
Matt F. Carlucci Insurance Agency, Inc. • Bob and Jan Carpenter • June Chambers • Nancy and Minor Chamblin  
David Clark • Donald Cole • Mary Coleman • Covenant Company • Kevin DeSue • Von and Calvin Fuller  
Mattox Hair • Hart & Associates • Michael and Beth Kirwan • Wilford and Eleanor Lyon  
Mitch22 Foundation, Inc. • Will and Karla Newton • Dottie Nutant • Jim and Connie Overton  
Phil and Kitty Phillips • Pam and LeMorris Prier • Bill and Carol Proctor • Terry and Geary Quarterman  
Al Rutland CPA PLLC • Pat and Liz Williams • Larry Zenke

## In-Kind

All About You Staffing • Bold City Brewery • Creative Veins  
Michael Erdelyi Photography • Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits

# Lacing up for success



Praise and Ryan from Operation New Hope.

This summer, DESC partnered with Operation New Hope to distribute work boots and non-slip shoes to more than 100 individuals reentering the workforce after incarceration.

The work boots program offers more than just footwear; it provides a crucial tool for those starting new jobs. Many clients can't even begin work without proper shoes. Without generous donors, DESC would not be able to offer these shoes, which can make all the difference in employment.

**Ryan**, a sheet metal mechanic, was one of the recipients. "Without these boots, I can't work or even be on the job site," Ryan said. "They've made it possible for me to go back to work, and I'm so grateful."

Operation New Hope helps individuals after incarceration. "DESC's team has

# Gleaning: A tradition of sharing

In May, DESC volunteers joined the Society of St. Andrew – Florida Gleaners in Hastings to collect fresh produce for families in our community.

Gleaning, the act of gathering leftover crops after a harvest, helps reduce food waste. Farmers often have produce that isn't viable for sale but is perfectly edible. By allowing volunteers to glean, farmers reduce waste and support food distribution to families facing hunger.

This practice has deep, biblical roots. In the Old Testament, God commanded landowners to leave part of their harvest for the poor, widows and foreigners. Leviticus 19:9-10 states, "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave

them for the poor and the foreigner residing among you." The story of Ruth also highlights the importance of gleaning, as she collected food to support herself and her mother-in-law Naomi.

The Society of St. Andrew, which began gleaning in Florida in 1995, partners with farmers and volunteers to rescue surplus crops. Last year, they saved over 10 million pounds of produce for those in need, making a huge impact on food insecurity.



"The food was just beautiful, and our clients loved it," said **Beth Wilson**, DESC's Program Director. "We're so grateful for the Society of St. Andrew and the incredible generosity of the farmers. I also thank our DESC volunteers, who worked so hard to bring this food back to our pantry."

been incredible to work with," said **Praise Mmworia**, Case Manager at Operation New Hope. "Together, we've made a real difference."

DESC is thrilled to have **Jan Carpenter** helping to distribute the footwear. Jan is a former staff member who

has continued her connection to DESC as a volunteer.

Every pair of boots is more than just a piece of equipment – it's a step toward a brighter future.

# Welcome to DESC, Kate!



We are pleased to announce that **Kate Wirz** has joined DESC as our first-ever Managing Director, Programs & Partnerships!

Kate will work closely with our staff to enhance the organization's capacity to help those in need.

"I am so excited to be part of the amazing team at DESC!" Kate said. "I feel incredibly blessed to serve our community in such an impactful way."

"We are confident Kate will be a fantastic addition to the team," said **David Clark**,

Executive Director. "Her skills and experience will be a tremendous asset as we prepare for DESC's future."

Kate is a Jacksonville native and comes to us after a long career at Dreams Come True, where she was Director of Operations. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Central Florida. She has also worked at Vistakon, Facility Contract Services, and Young Life. In her free time, Kate enjoys spending time with her friends, family, and her 15-year-old German Shepherd mix, Lulu.

**What are your interests?**  
I love to travel. I've been lucky enough to see many beautiful places, but there's so much more to see!

**What is your favorite place you've traveled?**  
Internationally, I'd say Scotland or Greece. Within the U.S., I love New England, especially Maine.

**What three words best describe you?**  
Patient, organized, peacekeeper.

**What are you most excited about working at DESC?**  
Everything! I can't wait to get started!

# Overcoming hardship with hope

**Artavia**, a medical assistant at Baptist Health, spends her days caring for patients while raising her two children, **A'Mari** and **Anastasia**. As a single mother, she balances a busy life – until everything changed.

In June, Lila received the difficult news that she would need a hysterectomy, meaning she'd be out of work for six weeks. This was followed by another blow – her rent was increasing by \$500 a month, a jump she couldn't afford, even with her full paycheck. To make matters worse, A'Mari began suffering from medical issues that soon required surgery of his own.

Suddenly, everything Artavia had worked so hard for felt like it was slipping away. The financial strain was overwhelming. She needed to find a more affordable place to live, but with no savings for a security deposit or the first month's rent, her options seemed limited.



"I was trying to stay strong for my kids, but it felt like the weight of the world was crashing down on me," she shared. No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't find a way out.

That's when United Way's 211 helpline referred her to DESC, and she found hope. Lila applied for emergency rental assistance, and thanks to the kindness of donors, DESC stepped in to help her secure a new, affordable home. She and her family moved into their new place just after Labor Day, giving her a renewed sense of security and relief.

"I couldn't believe it," Artavia recalled, tears filling her eyes. "DESC, United Way and everyone who supports them – you saved us. You gave us a home when we needed it most."

Back at work and picking up extra shifts, Artavia is on the path to rebuilding her life. She's also pursuing a nursing career, determined to give her children a better future. Anastasia remains focused on her dream of becoming a doctor, and A'Mari, now recovering, is thriving in school once again.



*Artavia and her family seek hope after medical and financial hardships.*

"My kids have shown such incredible strength through all of this. I'm so proud of them," Artavia shared, reflecting on their journey. "We're building something better together, and I know we'll make it."

Today, Artavia is filled with hope. She sees a future where she is a nurse, her daughter is a doctor and her son is pursuing his own passions. None of this would have been possible without the generosity of those who stepped in when life was at its hardest.

## Ways to give this Christmas

As Christmas approaches, your generosity can transform lives by helping families in crisis meet their basic needs.

A general donation is the simplest way to support DESC. It allows for a quick response to urgent needs like hunger, homelessness and financial emergencies. If your employer offers matching gifts, please let us know so we can make the most of your generosity.

For donors aged 70½ or older, a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from your IRA can be a smart way to give. By donating directly to DESC, you can meet your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) while potentially lowering your taxable income.

You can also donate appreciated stocks or securities. By giving long-term appreciated stocks, you avoid capital gains taxes and may deduct the full market value of the stock on your taxes, maximizing your impact.

Another flexible option is using a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF), which lets you recommend gifts while benefiting from tax advantages. It's a convenient way to make a lasting difference at DESC.

Other options include grants from private foundations, gifts of life insurance policies or even planned giving through your estate. These strategies can align your financial goals with your charitable giving, leaving a lasting legacy.

"Our donors are truly amazing! Thanks to your generosity, families in need are receiving life-changing help," said **David Clark**, Executive Director. "Those we serve are so grateful for all you do to support them through challenging times."

No matter how you choose to give this Christmas, your support ensures that DESC can continue to provide critical assistance to those who need it most. Thank you for making a difference!





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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 14 and up)
- ♥ Men's shoes (all sizes)
- ♥ Work gloves
- ♥ Children's clothing for all elementary school age sizes
- ♥ Coats for men, women and children (all sizes)
- ♥ Toiletries like deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, razor, bar soap, lotion, shampoo and conditioner

You can see the updated  
Current Needs List online  
at [descjax.org/current\\_needs/](http://descjax.org/current_needs/)

## *Holiday Helpers*

As the holiday season approaches, the excitement builds with each food collection, coat drive and stocking donation. Donors and friends drop by for visits and sometimes bring contributions. The mail includes more checks. 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](mailto:clothing@descjax.org) with your ideas, suggestions and questions.

