

HOME NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF ECH EVERY CHILD'S HOPE [SPRING/SUMMER NEWSLETTER] 2016

FROM CONFLICT TO COLLABORATION

St. Louis County Police Officer Amanda Signorino had responded to calls at ECH before. But when she arrived on campus the evening of January 7, 2016, she didn't know it would represent a major shift in the relationship between the County Police and ECH.

Officer Signorino calmly assessed the scene and investigated the details surrounding the incident. Eventually additional police administrators arrived and afterward, a precinct Lieutenant suggested a meeting to discuss how police handle calls to the agency. On this night, Officer Signorino recognized that both parties needed to open the lines of communication and improve the relationship between staff and police. She knew that both sides had the same goal of helping kids.

Signorino suggested that the Department approach ECH as a partner and work to find a solution, rather than being confrontational. Officer Signorino is one of the newest and youngest officers on the force, and after the original meeting, she was allowed to make this challenge her personal project. She says that collaborating with ECH staff to find a solution has humanized the issues. Now when officers respond to a call at 8240 St. Charles Rock Road, they know the staff and kids and understand the unique population ECH serves.

The result is that the officers have significantly reduced the time they spend on campus responding to calls, and at Officer Signorino's suggestion, have started cruising through campus just to talk with staff and youth to build a positive police presence in the community. Staff not only have encouraged this project, but have also invited the officers to join the youth in the ECH Dining Hall for lunch or dinner. They've even sent them the meal calendar. We hear they like Italian!

Officer Signorino recently won an award at the Police Department for this project. Precinct Commander Captain Mark Cox and Lieutenant Jeff Hoots presented her with the Employee Progress Report, which is a Platoon Commanders award for her outstanding work on this project. "It's not often that a great community partnership can come from an unfortunate incident that could have had the opposite result," says ECH Resident Clinical Director Kim Handlang. "We are very grateful for Officer Signorino's idea and persistence, and we are also grateful that the police department was willing to allow her this opportunity."



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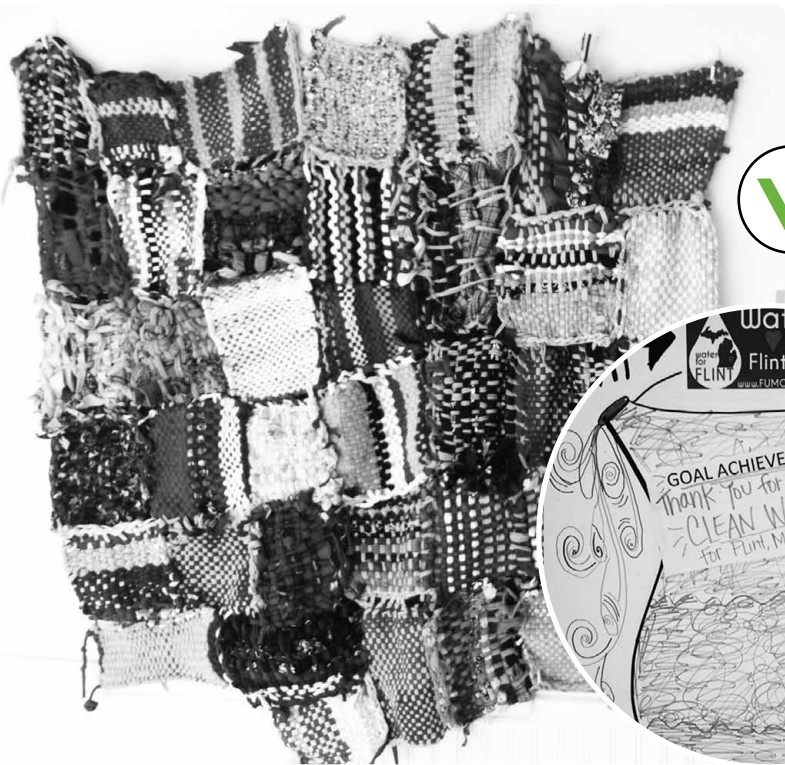
WEAVING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

The students at the ECH School worked hard to complete a special art project, which is proudly displayed on a wall in the main hallway. Each student created their own weaving loom out of cardboard and wove their own section using yarn made from T-shirts and fabric donated by the community. Then each individual square was woven together to create one colorful piece of artistic talent. Here's an excerpt from the plaque that is next to the project, which is titled "Weaving Our Community Together."

"In its simplest definition, weaving is an art form that involves interlacing two sets of threads or yarn at right angles to one another. The method is ancient, dating back to the Paleolithic Era, and is found across every culture on the globe.

This weaving, however, represents so much more than two threads coming together. Each square was crafted by individual students and staff of the ECH School, expressing personal interests, memories, and values. These individual expressions were then woven together to represent one of the most valuable resources we have: our community. Our community is dynamic, expressive, and diverse. And each square is made stronger by the others surrounding it!"

The students later took this message to heart by providing bottled drinking water to Flint, Michigan. Students asked the staff to sponsor them if they earned a 95% or better on their daily point sheets by donating \$1.00 per day. The enthusiastic support translated into 1,632 bottles and six gallons of water sent to Flint. We love to see the kids learning the value of generosity!



LADIES AID WELCOMES REVEREND DR. BROWN DANIEL

The Ladies Aid was honored to celebrate Ash Wednesday with the Missouri Mid-South Conference Minister Reverend Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel. Rev. Brown Daniel led a wonderful Lenten Quiet Hour service with a time for worship, prayer, communion, and receiving the ashes. Rev. Brown Daniel shared a message that reminded us to share the love that unites us all. She encouraged the ladies to do this by introducing a new song titled "You Are Welcome Here." The chorus is, "No matter who you are, no matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here! We are THE United Church of Christ!"



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St. Louis (314) 427-3755
www.everychildshope.org
Kansas City (816) 356-0187

ECH Every Child's Hope is a private not-for-profit childcare agency, voluntarily affiliated with the Council for Health and Human Services Ministries related to the United Church of Christ. ECH Every Child's Hope adheres to Federal and State laws which prohibit discrimination in the delivery of services on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap/disability or religious belief.

Member of: Missouri Coalition of Children's Agencies (MCCA), Alliance for Strong Families & Communities
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ECH Every Child's Hope is not a United Way Agency.

Follow us on:



THE FUTURE OF ECH: UNDERSTANDING AND TREATING TRAUMA



When I was a boy, my father was diagnosed with cancer. He went through surgery and radiation, the standard treatment in the 1950's. He spent weeks in the hospital, months away from work, and endured a long rehab at home. Although it was very scary, the result was good and he lived for many more years. Today, diagnosing and treating cancer is much more sophisticated. Through imaging, a more specific diagnosis can be found and through genetic testing, a targeted treatment is prescribed, sometimes even as an out-patient procedure.

Just as the practice of medicine has come a long way, so too has the practice of caring for children. Through research, we know so much more about how to best care and treat children who have experienced abuse and neglect. At the end of the 19th century, the Evangelical Children's Home, as we were called then, was caring for young boys and girls in a large dormitory style building. Over the next 100 years, ECH not only adapted its facilities to a better suited living environment, but we also learned the value of treatment by hiring professional staff who understand mental and behavioral health challenges.

A lot has been learned about the effect that trauma has on people. Research shows that physical changes actually take place in the brain when a child has experienced a traumatic incident such as abuse or neglect. Just like with cancer, we have learned how to specifically diagnose trauma and the best course for treating it. ECH is training our staff to become trauma-sensitive in our work, and our therapists are becoming certified in the treatment of trauma.

The latest studies show that children do better when they can live with their families in a safe and healthy environment. Helping and treating the entire family, rather than just the child, will continue to prove the best practice. Helping parents with parenting skills, assisting them in providing a safe and nurturing home, and connecting them to services within their communities will continue to be our primary focus at ECH.

If you were diagnosed with cancer today, as my dad was in the 1950's, you would certainly choose a doctor with the most advanced knowledge and tool. So it is at ECH; we strive to provide our children and their families with the best and most advanced treatment possible. We anticipate and look forward to the many changes this will bring to ECH in the future. We encourage you to take advantage of the various ways in which you can now learn about what's going on at ECH. We continue to communicate our news via mail, email, posts on Facebook, and a whole host of information on our new website.

Duane Lewis, Chief Operations Officer, Every Child's Hope



YOP CREDITS NOW AVAILABLE

ECH is thrilled to once again offer Youth Opportunities Project (YOP) tax credits for donations of \$500 or more received by December 31, 2016. This is an amazing benefit for donors, amounting to a 50% Missouri state income tax credit that can be used anytime within the next five tax years. The credit is available to any individual, business, or corporation paying taxes in Missouri. This credit is in addition to the standard federal and state income tax deductions. There is a limited amount of credits available, so you are welcome to donate now or make a pledge to hold credits if you prefer year-end giving. Our goal is to raise \$140,000 by the end of the year to provide HOPE to the 1400 children and families whom we serve each year. For more information or to make a donation, please contact Sharon Fenoglio at 314-427-3755 or sfenoglio@echmail.org.



ECH UNVEILS NEW WEBSITE DESIGN

If you've been to everychildshope.org recently, you noticed a big change! A team of ECH employees worked throughout last year to assess how the site should function and what the design should look like. The new site is much more user-friendly and easier to navigate for donors, potential clients, and community professionals. We hope you take a few minutes to explore the website and tell us what you think of our new tagline, Hope Begins Here!





EARLY ED CENTER WELCOMES BABIES

The wonderful staff in the Early Education Center welcomed new children last Fall when we started accepting infants and toddlers through a partnership with Early Head Start. Now low-income children from six weeks through two years old can receive quality early education services, in addition to the older children we still serve. The staff worked incredibly hard to adjust to a room full of babies, and we love seeing their adorable little faces when they go for a walk in the 4-baby stroller!



HELP ECH RESIDENTIAL KIDS WITH CARE BAGS

IS YOUR FAMILY, YOUTH GROUP, OR SCOUT TROOP LOOKING FOR A SERVICE PROJECT THIS SUMMER? HELP THE YOUTH IN OUR RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM WHO COME TO ECH IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT WITH NOTHING. SOME OF THE YOUTH ARE COMING FROM SITUATIONS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT, AND DON'T HAVE ANY BELONGINGS WITH THEM WHEN THEY ARRIVE. YOU CAN HELP MAKE THEIR TRANSITION TO ECH A LITTLE SMOOTHER WITH A CARE PACKAGE TO WELCOME THEM THEIR FIRST NIGHT ON CAMPUS. COLLECT THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN A CLOTH BAG OR NEW PILLOWCASE (PLEASE PURCHASE ALL OF THE ITEMS NEW, DUE TO HEALTH REGULATIONS): SET OF TOWELS, YOUTH/TEEN SIZE LARGE OR EXTRA-LARGE PAJAMAS, SOCKS, PUZZLE OR AGE-APPROPRIATE BOOK, AND A TWIN SET OF SHEETS.

TOP: Steven and Kim Mumm
 MIDDLE: Shirley and Glen Cordes
 BOTTOM: Rev. Ginny Brown Daniel



TOP: Janet & Richard Viehmann
 MIDDLE: John & Debbie Weber
 BOTTOM: Dr. Ashley Viehmann
 Milam and James Milam



TOP: Julie VanEtten, Pat Mercurio,
 Natalea Simmons-Beauden
 MIDDLE: Jan Fettig, Shirley Cordes,
 Susan Deuser, Carol Pohl
 BOTTOM: Tammy Michell, Harry
 Harrell, Chris Stahlman



29TH ANNUAL "EXTEND A CARING HAND" DINNER & AUCTION

FRIENDS OF ECH EVERY CHILD'S HOPE DUSTED OFF THEIR BOOTS AND DRESSED IN THEIR FINEST WESTERN APPAREL FOR AN EVENING OF BOOTS & HOOTS ON APRIL 9, 2016. FOLK BAND THE MUDSLINGERS PROVIDED MUSIC DURING THE COCKTAIL HOUR, AND COUNTRY BAND BORDERLINE PLAYED AFTER DINNER WHILE GUESTS ENJOYED LINE DANCING AND TWO-STEPPING.

Dale Rohman designed the cactus and bandana-inspired décor that welcomed guests to a room full of cowboy hats and belt buckles! Randy Karraker from 101 ESPN Radio, served as the MC and auctioneer. This year's Boots & Hoots gala raised nearly \$75,000 for the children, youth, and families who come to ECH looking for hope. Thanks to the generosity of ECH friends and supporters, they will continue to find it!



NEXT YEAR ECH WILL CELEBRATE THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE "EXTEND A CARING HAND" DINNER & AUCTION. BUT WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOUR HELP!

Join the Dinner Committee and help make the 2017 event an amazing celebration of 30 years of helping children and families! Join other dedicated volunteers and make new friends when the Committee starts meeting in October, on the first Tuesday of the month at 6 pm at ECH. Call or email Sharon Fenoglio at 314-427-3755 or sfenoglio@echmail.org to join the fun!



TOP: The Mudslingers
MIDDLE: Dale Rohman and Sarah Grus
BOTTOM: Dancing to the country band Borderline

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 Upper Limits Rock Gym
 Urban Chestnut Brewing Company
 Valvoline Instant Oil Change
 Vom Fass St. Louis
 Walter Knoll Florist
 Waterway Gas & Wash
 Winkelmann Sons Drug Company
 Xtreme Paintball Park
 Zamzow Manufacturing Co., Inc.



CHELSEA'S JOURNEY

FROM ECH TO A PH.D.

“Life is filled with setbacks, but there can be opportunity as well,” explains Chelsea. “It is not easy. You have to keep pushing. It’s easy to get a ‘poor me’ attitude but you must make the most of things. Everyone is dealt a deck of cards and it never goes away. It’s how you deal with it.”

And deal with the deck she was dealt is exactly what Chelsea did. She was admitted to ECH in 2005 into the Safe Intensive Girls Unit, eventually finishing in the Midland Group Home. While at ECH, Chelsea was interested in horticulture and landscaping design. So with the help of staff, Chelsea built a garden. She sold what she grew to staff, as well as made baked goods from what she grew and then donated the proceeds to a food pantry.

Chelsea didn't want the kids in her high school to know where she lived or what she was going through. She remembers slipping one day at school, saying she was going to give some flowers to her receptionist. Her friends were shocked and said they had no idea.

“To me that meant I was raising myself well!” said Chelsea.



Chelsea knew she wanted to go to college. She knew she wanted to do better for herself than where she was. But erasing the uncertainty of her past was hard. Chelsea had goals: graduating from college with little debt and doing a semester abroad. To achieve these, Chelsea joined City Year, a program through Americorp. She spent two years in the program, working in both San Antonio and Milwaukee, setting up service programs in each city. She was given a living stipend and almost \$10,000 for school, money she saved for her semester abroad.

Following City Year, Chelsea returned to St. Louis and enrolled at Harris Stowe State University, majoring in secondary education. “The hardest part about coming back to St. Louis was not wanting to be a burden to anyone,” said Chelsea, “I wanted to be able to make it and make my mentors proud and feel like they were right to believe in me.”

And her mentors were right to believe in her. Chelsea graduated from Harris Stowe State University with a degree in Biology, spent part of her sophomore year in Semester at Sea, visiting countries around the world, and graduated with little debt. Now Chelsea is getting her Ph.D at the University of Colorado in Boulder, with a fellowship to help pay for school.

“Giving up was a luxury I didn't have,” explains Chelsea. “I knew I had to do well, but it was never easy.”





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GOLF CLASSIC

Join us for the 16th Annual Vehicle Assurance ECH Golf Classic on Monday, September 19 at the breathtaking Old Hickory Golf Club. Register as a foursome (\$1100 or \$1000 before August 1) or a single golfer (\$275) by going to our website: everychildshope.org.

