every child's hope

EVERYDAY HOPE Newsletter

SUMMER 2025

Letter from the CEO

Julia Adami

Dear friends, donors, and colleagues,

When a young person begins to age out of foster care, the road to adulthood can feel overwhelming. Without stable housing or consistent support, taking the next steps (such as finishing school) can seem out of reach. That's why our Steppingstone program exists: to offer not only a safe and caring living environment, but a pathway to self-sufficiency through life skills, education support, career planning, and the guidance of caring adults.

And today, I'm thrilled to share that our Steppingstone program had 10 participants in Kansas City and eight in St. Louis graduate from high school this year!

This is a moment worth celebrating. These graduates have worked incredibly hard, overcoming life circumstances that might have derailed others. With the stability and support of ECH, they were able to prioritize their education and believe in what's possible. I couldn't be prouder of their accomplishments or more hopeful about their futures. It's a beautiful testament to the difference and impact we are able to make by creating connections with some of our most vulnerable kids in Missouri.

That same sense of optimism is at the heart of our new recreational therapy space, which I'm thrilled to share is now underway on our St. Louis campus. Once completed, it will give children in our residential program a welcoming place to move, explore, heal, and reach for their bright futures.

To me, the transition to summer always brings a sense of possibility. And at ECH, that sense is everywhere. I'm incredibly proud of our team and deeply grateful for everyone who stands with us. Being part of this mission continues to be one of the great honors of my life.

Sincerely,
Julia Adami

Kansas City Auxiliary: Supporting Youth for over 50 Years

Everyone needs a good friend in their life. Our Kansas City Auxiliary has been a longtime friend to our Steppingstone program in Kansas City.

Sixty members strong, the Auxiliary answers the call whenever something is needed to make life a little easier for older teens as they work to establish their independence.

"The members of the Auxiliary are like fairy godmothers," says Kansas City Steppingstone Director Carol Wehmeyer.

The group provides gifts for the holidays and throughout the year and presents gift cards to our high school graduates every spring. They donated kitchen and baking items for the Life Skills Hub, a newly-renovated space on campus that includes a teaching kitchen, computer access, and common space for mentors and tutors.

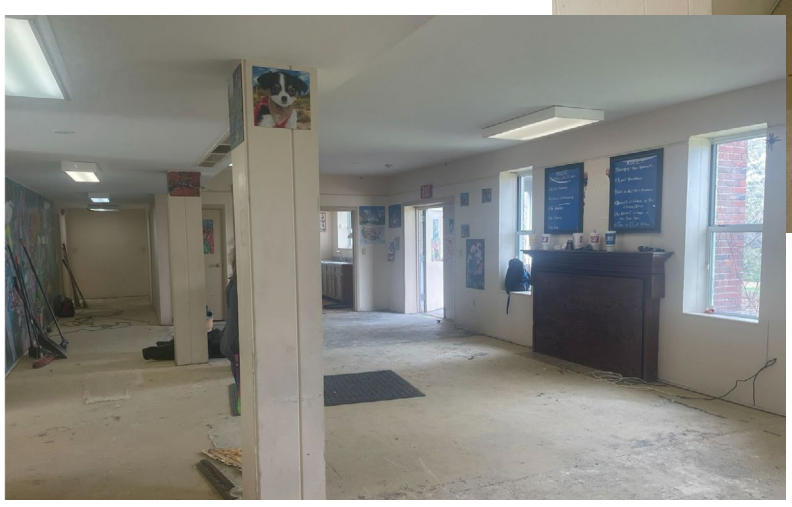
> "Knowing I can call upon the Auxiliary if we need something is a comfort to the staff and a great support to the youth. Working with them is one of the most positive parts of my job," – Carol Wehmeyer, Kansas City Steppingstone Director

A recent household item donation drive is just one example of hundreds of Auxiliary donation drives over the last five decades.

Major Gift Kickstarts New Recreation Center

ECH is thrilled to announce **a gift of $25,000 from the Dana Brown Charitable Trust**. This funding will support a new project on the main campus of ECH to renovate one of the existing houses into a Recreation Center, which will provide space for our intensive therapy program.

The house has been empty and ready for a new purpose since the opening of the Dill Center in April 2024. Thanks to this wonderful gift, we can create a space that will serve our Residential Treatment youth for many years to come. Along with an office for our Rec Therapist, the space will house all rec therapy equipment. Different rooms will be designated for individual elements of rec therapy, including a creative room for arts and crafts, a cognitive skills room with puzzles and board games, a video game room, and a calming/sensory room. The Rec Center will also be a wonderful addition when outdoor rec therapy has to be moved indoors due to inclement weather.



The Dana Brown Charitable Trust honors the legacy of St. Louis entrepreneur, philanthropist, and adventurer Dana Brown, who passed away in 1994. Brown was focused on the health, education, and welfare of children, and he sought to alleviate the suffering of disadvantaged youngsters and enhance all children's opportunities for productive, wholesome, and creative lives.

Spend a Tee-Riffic Day With Us at the Golf Classic!

JOIN US SEPT. 15, 2025

Join us for a great day on the course for the 25th Anniversary of the ECH Golf Classic on **September 15, 2025 at Old Hickory Golf Club** in St. Peters, MO. Besides fun and fellowship, the tournament raises funds that support our services for children and families throughout Missouri.

Honorary chair and sports talk legend Randy Karraker of Matrix Midwest will host the tournament for the 18th time. Player fee includes lunch, dinner, snacks, and beverages.

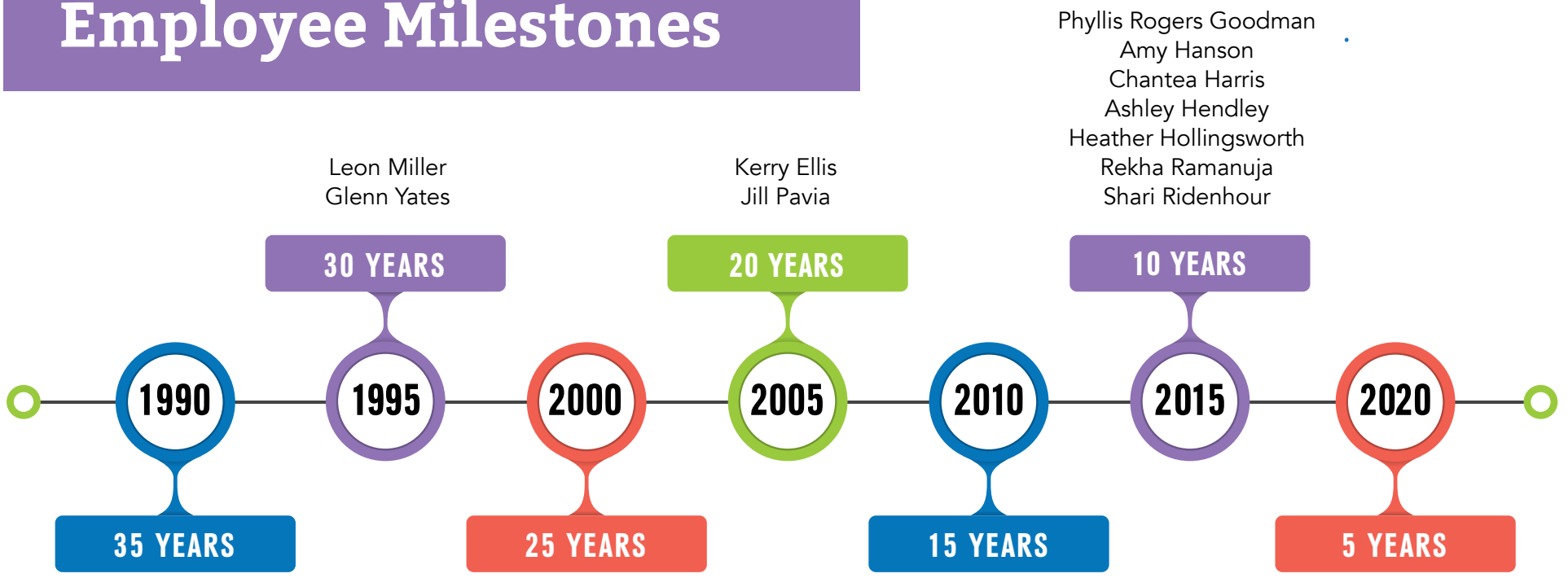
There are many ways to participate in the tournament or support the event, including raffle packages with one-of-a-kind gifts. Scan the QR code on the back cover to register, or visit our website everychildshope.org for more information.

Mark your calendar now and have a great time helping the children and families who depend on ECH!

EVERY CHILD'S HOPE
GOLF CLASSIC
2001 - 2025
25th

Old Hickory Golf Club

Employee Milestones



Terri Buckner

Leon Miller
Glenn Yates

Justin Book
Johnie Winston

Kerry Ellis
Jill Pavia

Jane Kayser
Angela Noud
Jethro Wilson

Phyllis Rogers Goodman
Amy Hanson
Chantea Harris
Ashley Hendley
Heather Hollingsworth
Rekha Ramanuja
Shari Ridenhour

Tori Cordia
Niasia Hatch
Markesha Howlett
Kathleen Miller
Gretchen Nieters
Megan Sjostrand
Shaunta Brown Smith
Melanie Urbaniak
Chrystal Williams

Congratulations to our ECH staff on these employment milestones!
We feel fortunate to retain the experience and knowledge that these dedicated professionals share with the children and families we serve.

Congratulations on Your Retirement!

Celebrating the Retirement of Mr. Willie Nobles

Mr. Willie Nobles recently retired from ECH after more than 37 years of service. He began his career as a Residential Social Worker and spent the majority of his time as a Care Manager in the Steppingstone program. A true pillar of the agency, Mr. Nobles was often the first to arrive and the last to leave, always stepping up with a humble spirit. His unwavering commitment to youth and staff has been a tremendous blessing to ECH. Thank you, Mr. Nobles, for a remarkable legacy!

Lights, Camera, Action!

The teens in our Residential Treatment program recently enjoyed an **ECH Cinema Day.** Our school conference room was transformed for a classic theater experience, including a ticket booth, concession stand, and even a trailer asking everyone to keep quiet during the movie. The teens earned play money every month for good deeds and behavior that they used at the event. Our team's creativity made sure everyone had a memorable day!

Remembering Gail Saxton

ECH was saddened to learn of the passing of former board member Gail Saxton, who served our organization for 19 years. Gail made a lasting and positive impact through her intelligence and generous spirit. From her obituary: "Gail's final days, while marred by the late-stage discovery of aggressive cancer, were typically characterized by optimism, genuine appreciation for her care-givers, and a determination to remain in touch with friends. Her commitment to others was reciprocated, and she often said she felt as if she was 'floating on a cloud of love.'"

Move-in day at the old residential building, which will now be renovated into a new rec center.

"All my life all I have known is a duffel bag. Having this apartment not only stabilized my living condition but was able to free my mind from survival mode. Mentally I'm a lot more stable than ever before in my life. It's truly given me some relief having a place to go consistently without worrying endlessly if today will be the day I'll have to figure something else out or find a place to keep my belongings. God blessed me with ECH, and I'll be forever grateful for people like you all, that have a heart for this work because you all truly leave lasting impacts on lives that many of us can't articulate the gratitude for." **–Steppingstone Client**

You Can Give Hope Throughout the Year

Please consider a monthly donation to ECH. It's a quick and simple way to give our youth and families the care they need throughout the year. Visit our website, everychildshope.org, to get started.

SAVE THE DATE

25TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC
September 15th

LEARN ABOUT SPONSORSHIPS OR REGISTER at everychildshope.org or by scanning this code.

In This Issue...

Kansas City Auxiliary: Supporting Youth for over 50 Years

Major Gift Kickstarts New Recreation Center

Spend a Tee-Riffic Day With Us at the Golf Classic!

Employee Milestones

Celebrating the Retirement of Mr. Willie Nobles

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8240 St. Charles Rock Road
St. Louis, MO 63114