EVERYDAY HOPE Newsletter

FALL 2026

Letter from the CEO



Julia Adami

Fall is a bustling time at ECH as we began our fiscal year in October and plan for the future through 2027. As I reflect on the work we do statewide, and potential initiatives to support more children and families, I am bolstered by this quote by Gandhi: "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

Service is in our DNA at ECH, and we're highlighting it through a concept called **The Power of US.** It truly takes all of us to effect impact. The work we do and the mission we carry forward into the future could not happen without every team member, donor, or partner! Each person and program make ECH special and unique, each day and each interaction ensure we provide exceptional services.

We have made time to celebrate our team during six regional staff appreciation events. They were recognized for their commitment to this work and those we serve. It's both humbling and awe-inspiring.

Along with our people and programs, the community support from you, our volunteers, and those who join or sponsor our events truly make our work possible. Your support changes lives for the better, which trickles out into our communities and beyond.

As you and your loved ones embrace the new season before us, and remember the happy things fall brings like good soup, a cozy sweater, and the tapestry of trees that change colors daily, please know that your support of ECH, no matter the amount, warms the hearts and minds of many in Missouri.

Julia Adami



Growth Beyond Measure Through KC Steppingstone



A few months before high school graduation, Nate* was facing a challenge that felt almost impossible. He was failing every class.

For Nate, school had never been simple. Fetal alcohol syndrome and childhood trauma affect his executive functioning, making it difficult to manage deadlines, organize assignments, and keep track of everything expected of him. He was capable of succeeding, but he needed someone to help him turn an overwhelming situation into manageable steps.

That's where ECH's Kansas City Steppingstone program came in.

Devin, Nate's Steppingstone caseworker, collaborated closely with his mom and school to create a plan built around the way Nate learns best. Together, they set alarms, established deadlines, and created achievable goals. Nate committed to completing at least one missing assignment every day, sending a screenshot when it was finished. He also began spending his free time with a favorite teacher who could give him extra help. One assignment became multiple completions and encouragement became momentum.

Nate responded especially well to something simple but powerful: knowing someone believed in him. His Steppingstone caseworker celebrated his progress and reminded him of what he would be capable of if he kept pushing when things got difficult. Slowly, those failing grades began to change.

That kind of individualized support is at the heart of Steppingstone. ECH works alongside young people as they move toward greater independence, helping them build the practical skills, confidence, and stability they need for adulthood. Our support looks different for every young person because every young person starts from a different place. For Nate, it meant having people willing to break a big challenge into small victories and stay by his side.

His story is a reminder that growth doesn't always happen in giant leaps. Sometimes it happens one assignment, one goal, and one person saying "I'm proud of you" at a time.



**Nate's name and images have been changed to protect privacy.*

"Nate's story reminds us that small steps can lead to big victories. We are grateful to our donors and everyone who supports our mission through golf tournaments, holiday giving, volunteerism, and so much more. Your generosity helps us empower young people and their families to overcome challenges, reach milestones, and build brighter futures."

– Sherry Gerke, Chief Development Officer

The Holiday Helpers at ECH Need YOU!

The countdown to Christmas is on, and our team of holiday helpers at ECH is already busy making lists, checking them twice, and getting ready to make the season special for children across Missouri. **But we can't do it without YOU!**

There's a lot you can fit inside a Christmas present – a new hoodie, headphones, art supplies. Something a child has been hoping for. When you help fill an ECH wish list, you're also giving something that can't be wrapped: the holiday spirit.

While that feeling matters for every child we serve, but this year we're asking our donors to pay special attention to our older youth. Teen wish lists are often the last to be chosen. They may have outgrown toys, but they haven't outgrown the excitement of seeing their name on a package or knowing someone picked something especially for them.

So gather your family, friends, or coworkers and join the ECH Christmas Campaign! The campaign kicked off on November 2, 2026.

Let's fill those wish lists, pile up the presents, and make sure every ECH child gets to experience the joy of the holidays.

EVERY CHILD'S HOPE 2026

CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN

Last year...



1,900 DONORS CONNECTED WITH OUR MISSION



4,800 GIFTS WERE SHARED

395 CHILDREN'S WISHES CAME TRUE



$200K+ WAS RAISED

4 Ways to Help:

GIFT DRIVE

Create your own gift drive with friends, family members, church groups, coworkers, or any other team who'd like to share in some holiday magic. Contact Aubresha at **aubresha.young@everyschildshope.org** to get started.

SHOP LIKE SANTA'S HOLIDAY HELPER

Be one of Santa's Holiday Helpers by adopting a child's Christmas wishes or select an entire family! We'll supply the list, you check it twice, and enjoy getting into the spirit of giving.

SHOP ONLINE

Are you more of a digital shopper? We can share wish lists that allow you to make the holidays bright for a child or family from the comfort of your keyboard. And don't forget...gift cards of any denomination are very appreciated!

YEAR-END MONETARY DONATION

Make your year-end, tax-deductible donation online at everychildshope.org. Your gift will ensure children and families have the support they need year-round.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our donors, we brought joy and hope to so many families last holiday season.

With your continued support, we can make the holidays just as meaningful in 2026. Please consider making a gift today!

SCAN TO MAKE A GIFT!

ECH's 26th Annual Golf Tournament



Team 1 from Fairway Sponsor GVT enjoyed a great day on the course while supporting ECH.



Thank you to GVT Fairway Sponsor Team 2 for joining us on the course and helping make this year's tournament a success!

It was a gorgeous day at Old Hickory Golf Club in St. Peters, where ECH hosted our 26th Anniversary Golf Tournament and raised over $54,000 to support the programs that we provide to children and families across Missouri.

The event would not be the same without the support of host **Randy Karraker** of Matrix Midwest, who has served as the honorary chair for 19 years! We are so grateful for our major event sponsors: Global Vision Technologies (GVT), One Digital, Cory Lewis and the Lewis Family, Vehicle Assurance, GFI Digital, Potbelly, Keurig Dr. Pepper, and Grey Eagle. We also thank all sponsors, golfers, volunteers, and donors for making this a year to remember.



A special thank you to our wonderful emcee, Randy Karraker, for 19 years of dedication, enthusiasm, and support!

Community Generosity Gives Students a Special Start to the School Year





This year, ECH held its first-ever Back to School drive, and our community showed up. Donors gave more than 500 items through our Amazon wish list, local drop-offs, and 140 stuffed backpacks from Community Impact Network through its Beyond the Backpack program.

When students walk in on the first day with what they need, they can focus on learning instead of what they're missing. For young people in our Steppingstone and Foster Care programs who have already faced a lot of change, having these items builds confidence and helps them feel they belong in the classroom.

Thank you to everyone who supported this initiative. You made our first Back to School drive a success, and we're grateful!

A Hole Lot of Fun in Kansas City

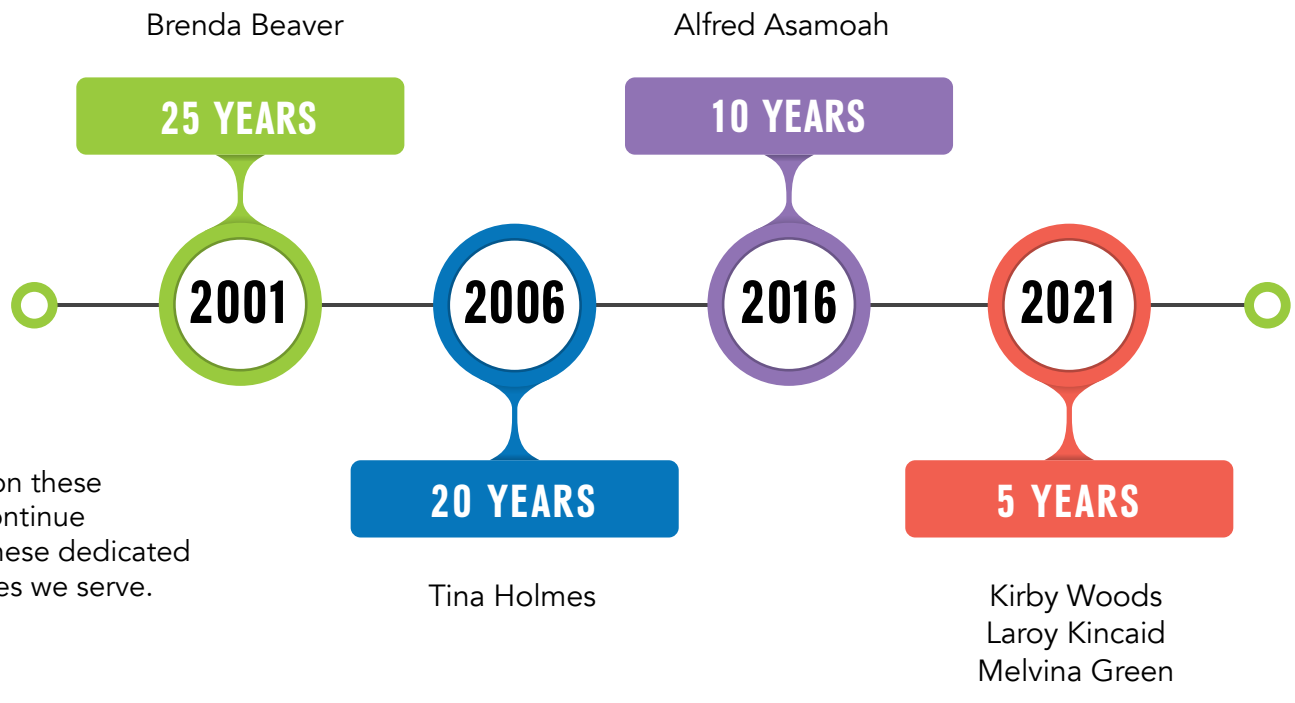
On October 17, supporters came together for our **first annual Kansas City Mini Golf Tournament** in support of the Kansas City Steppingstone Program!

We sold out with 72 players participating. A special thank you to our presenting sponsor Atec Construction, as well as our hole sponsors, players, volunteers, and everyone who helped make our inaugural tournament such a fun and memorable day. We're grateful for your support and look forward to building on the success of this first year! Check out our Facebook page for event highlights and photos.

Employee Milestones



Congratulations to our ECH team members on these employment milestones! We're grateful to continue benefiting from the experience and insight these dedicated professionals bring to the children and families we serve.



A Look Back



The skills our students learn today at ECH School may have shifted a bit, but the knowledge is just as important for success.

Girls learn to finish seams, add buttons, and place pockets using treadle sewing machines during their home ec class, likely between 1920-40.

ech
every child's hope

A lot has changed over our history but one thing has always remained the same—creating hope for children across Missouri!

Look inside to learn more about our upcoming 2026 Campaign. It's sure to be our biggest ever!

EVERY CHILD'S HOPE
2026
CHRISTMAS
CAMPAIGN

In This Issue...

Letter from CEO

Growth Beyond Measure Through KC Steppingstone

2026 Christmas Campaign: The Holiday Helpers at ECH Need YOU!

ECH's 26th Annual Golf Tournament

Community Generosity Gives Students a Special Start to the School Year

A Hole Lot of Fun in Kansas City

Employee Milestones

