



Birch Community Services, Inc.

DECEMBER 2013



Jesse and Angela Small and their children enjoy a table filled by generous BCS donors.

Thankful  Over 21 years ago Birch Community Services began without an agenda; rather, Barry and I were simply to 'feed My sheep'. Indeed, that reference indicates spiritual food, but God provided us with bread – and lots of it. For many years, our mission was to get the bread, and other goods, into the hands and mouths of those who were struggling. That mission has taken us through adventures, calamity, miracles and joy, accompanied by literally thousands of people along the way.

With solid board leadership, and faithful employees and volunteers, we find BCS

positioned in a spacious building with a generous landlord, along with a growing list of gracious donors providing clothing and healthy options to feed the working poor. Wow.

In 2011, with the help of the Murdock Trust, we began to earnestly evaluate the direction of BCS, and our board developed a strategic plan to move us into the future. Our goal to provide a hope and a future to families living on the edge reflects the job at hand – to design the organization for hope and a future also. It is the desire of the board for BCS to endure – so we are developing a clear plan to equip the next generation of BCS leadership. This gentle shift in focus is exciting. In 2013 we've seen

...Thankful ♥



Founders Barry and Suzanne Birch honored Oct 2013 by Adventist Health as "Heroes of the Heart".

confirmation of this direction as the Murdock Trust provided funding for a Development Manager. Ray Keen is helping us look forward as the BCS structure grows to sustain needed employees, equipment and educational programs. We want BCS to be better next year than it is today – and better each year thereafter. So are Barry and Suzanne on the

"every person has something of value to give..."

way out? Absolutely not! We're not ready to leave the party when things are warming up! We are working diligently to ensure the foundation is firm before we begin to decrease our time at BCS. We want to embed the core principles of responsibility and accountability into every person at BCS, from our leadership to our participants; we want them to succeed, perhaps in a very parental way.

For the last two years we've had the privilege of sharing the BCS story and template through Replication Seminars with numerous other people from across the U.S. Since August 2012 four non-profits, using the BCS model, have

opened their doors, with another scheduled to open in January. These are not franchises, but independently established operations dedicated to helping extend the Dignity of the Exchange. It is our belief that every person has something of value to give to others. Barry and I would love to make ourselves more available to encourage others as they set out on the road we've traveled.

This is where it starts getting mushy, so step back: We love it here. We love the people, the culture, the every-day surprises that take us aback and make us laugh out loud. We love the mutual support and caring, the ability to cry or pray with those deeply hurting. We are privileged to work alongside board members and other staff with abiding integrity. We love the miracles. God is here.

Thank you for accompanying us.

Forever Grateful,

Barry & Suzanne

Mission Statement

"The mission of Birch Community Services, Inc. is to provide a community where people can be responsible and accountable for meeting their basic needs, and to equip them with tools to overcome financial difficulty."

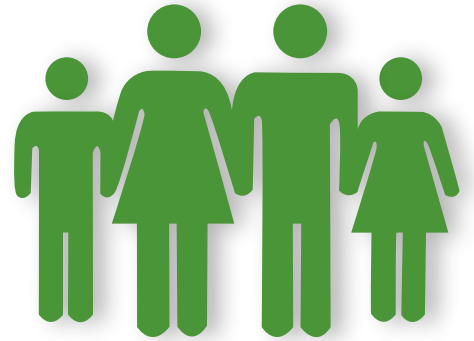
Measurable Results

What we accomplished with your help in Fiscal Year 2013

930

FAMILIES SERVED

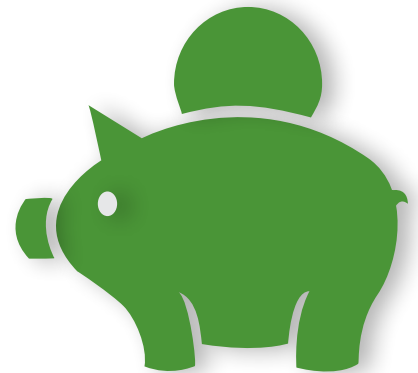
We were able to help **930 families** take significant steps toward fulfilling their goal to overcome financial difficulty. Through practicing responsibility in the context of accountability, each family identifies and regularly reviews progress toward their goals. During their time on the program, the typical family is able to **reduce their monthly debt by at least 26%**.



100% increase

IN FAMILY SAVINGS

Our survey of families who graduated from BCS shows that the average family spends **38 months** on our program and in that time is able to **increase their savings by 100%**. This savings often represents an emergency cushion that allows families to address an unforeseen car repair or leaky roof with their own money rather than credit.



7.1M



POUNDS OF PRODUCT DISTRIBUTED

The average participant family on our program received over **\$7,200 worth of donated goods** last year. This value added to the family's budget is used to help accomplish their stated goals.

Last year we also shared extra product donations with over **60 agencies** who serve those in need through the expression of their own unique mission.



HOUSEHOLD
533,977

BOOTS
62,772

CLOTHING
302,436

FOOD
6,246,536

Forward Thinking

Just as we ask our families for written goals as they come onto the BCS program, it's been crucial for the leadership here to envision how the efforts we make today affect our future. That's why our Board of Directors has written a strategic plan that cultivates both our extraordinary staff and the physical resources essential to our work.

We anticipate that future additions to the BCS team will include a Volunteer Coordinator to help manage our 1,000+ volunteers, a Warehouse Worker to help manage product donations, a Chief Financial Officer who has an eye for efficiency, and Financial Consultants to help our participants improve their practice of wise saving and spending.

STAFF

Warehouse Worker

Participant
Financial Consultants

Chief Financial Officer

Volunteer Coordinator

PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Classroom Computers

Multi-Purpose Room

Forklift (2013)

Forklift (2016)

The Board has approved expansion of our multi-purpose room where we will provide adult education classes and sort donated product in a heated environment throughout the winter months. Vital capital acquisitions like office and classroom computers, as well as forklifts, will enable us to further train and serve nearly 1,000 families a year. Finally, our patient optimism grows as we watch for a permanent home for BCS. If you know of someone who would resonate with our values and could help with any of these needs, we'd love to meet them. Please see the inside of the back cover for ways to connect with us.

Memorable 2013



Gardens

146 adults and 90 children helped to plant and harvest **4,186 pounds** of fresh produce grown in the BCS Gardens last year. As they served, each learned the skills of permaculture or raised bed gardening, enabling them to continue on to grow their own healthy food.



Classes

Thanks to the coordination efforts of Jane Woods, **1,821 hours** of educational classes such as **money management, Microsoft Excel, couponing and cooking** helped participants save money and learn skills to earn a better income.



Mildren Design Group, P.C.

has warmly and willingly given hours of architectural design **free of charge** to help BCS build our current tenant improvements and recently redesigned our multi-purpose room, saving BCS **thousands of dollars**.



Monthly Drawings

provided incentive and awarded a variety of high value items, donated by **Costco, Home Depot and others**, to our fortunate participants.



Gresham Rotary

The Gresham Rotary sent 30 of our BCS kids to Camp Collins for an outstanding week at camp. The Rotary also sponsored a golf tournament and **raised \$10,689** to benefit our work here at BCS. For **over 10 years** the Rotary has graciously adopted some of our neediest families, providing an extra special Christmas celebration for them.

Peanut Butter Provision



Linda Fraught tells her story.

There was a day, back in October, 2005, that I stood in Walgreens far too long trying to make a simple decision. I had two children ages 5 and 7 at home, and a husband who was trying to make the best of our financial challenges. I stood in that food aisle at Walgreens, holding a coupon that would allow me

to buy a sixteen-ounce jar of peanut butter for one dollar, and agonized over whether or not we could actually spare that dollar. We had committed at the beginning of our marriage to not go into debt. We have never chosen to pay for “extras” – such as cable TV, expensive cellphones, or going out to the movies – so there was not much to trim from our budget. I finally placed the coupon on the shelf beside the peanut butter, hoping someone else would be able to use it, and I walked out of the store empty-handed... and in tears. I cried all the way home, wondering what was going to happen to us.



Soon after that, I visited my old college roommate, who happened to be a Birch participant. She knows me well enough to be able to read between the lines and she sent me home with a box of food, shampoo, and toothpaste. The next day she called and asked if she could refer us to Birch. At first I was reluctant – I imagined Birch to be a place where the people on the street went for help. I talked to Brian, and we prayed about it. I called Hannah back and thanked her, and asked her to refer us.

“trading a little despair for a little dignity...”

The stress level in our home and in our marriage almost immediately diminished. The knowledge that we could come here each week and go home with a box of healthy food and household items gave us room to breathe.

I will never forget the first time I came here to shop. Certain items from that first shopping trip always remain in my mind – a new toothbrush, to replace my daughter’s way-too-worn one – squash, to steam with rice and serve with our beans – apples, fresh crisp apples straight from the orchard – beef jerky, a luxury item that my husband LOVES but had not had for a very long time – and, yes, a LARGE JAR OF PEANUT BUTTER. It was even creamy and natural, my family’s favorite variety.

I still smile every time I see peanut butter on the shelf here, remembering the flood of encouragement and hope that came from such a small thing. I’ve seen ladies melt into a puddle of tears when they spy something on the shelf that they really needed... anything from fresh produce that would be too costly to consider buying in the store, to jeans that will fit a rapidly-growing teen, to powdered sugar to make a birthday treat for a child.

I look forward to the day that I can work more hours, and we can get back firmly on our feet and “graduate” from Birch. Until then, you can find me at the reception desk on Mondays exchanging tears of worry for tears of joy, trading a little despair for a little dignity, and passing out smiles (which are free, contagious, and sometimes nearly as cherished as a jar of peanut butter).

See Linda’s video at:

<http://birchcommunityservices.org/participant.asp>



Get Involvolated

in·VOL·vu·lated (verb): to be excessively involved or committed to a person, place, thing, or process.- Urban Dictionary

"It's 10% about the food and 90% about the people." Barry Birch

We'd be deeply grateful for your product donations, financial support or volunteerism in further growing BCS to be a blessing to others.

For more information, please call Ray at 971.235.2868.



Thankful For Our Generous Providers

(* Donors over 10 years)

- * Alpenrose Dairy
- Angels of God
- Auntie Anne's Pretzels
- Bake Mark
- Baskets of Blessings
- Bed, Bath and Beyond
- BookBgone
- Boyd Coffee Company
- Bridgewell Resources LLC
- Central Refrigerated Services, Inc.
- Charlie's Produce
- Chef George, Inc.
- Chipotle Grill
- Clackamas County Gleaners
- * Classic Foods
- Coastal Produce
- Columbia Gorge Helping Hands Program
- Container Express
- Conway Trucking
- Costco
- Daisy Brand
- * Danner Shoe Manufacturing
- * Darigold, Inc.
- * Excel Brokerage
- Feed The Children
- Food Front Co-op
- Food4Less
- * Franz Bakery Outlet
- Fred Meyer Dairy
- Fred Meyer
- Frito Lay Products
- Gartner's Country Meat Market, Inc.
- Generous Ventures
- * Georgia Pacific
- Gibson Truck Lines
- * Grand Central Baking Co.
- Grayrose Marketing Group, Inc.
- * Gresham Rotary
- Harry's Fresh Foods
- * Helen Bernhard Bakery
- * Henningsen Cold Storage
- Heritage Specialty Foods
- Holman Distribution
- Home Depot
- Hope Station Community Services, Inc.
- Impact Northwest
- * Inmar Inc.
- * Jazzy Bagels
- * Jim Fuchs Trucking
- Kaye's Blueberries
- Keen Inc.
- Lieb Foods
- * LiteHouse Dressings
- Lovejoy Bakers
- LSI Logic
- Mary's Harvest Fresh Foods, Inc.
- Market Transport LTD
- * McTavish Shortbread (Cookies)
- * Medical Teams International
- * Mildren Design Group
- * Mission Foods
- Montavilla Farmers Market
- Morrow Brothers Inc.
- Mountainview Christian Church
- Multi Family Floor Solutions
- National Food Corporation
- National Frozen Foods
- National Relief Charities
- New Cascadia Bakery
- Northwest Children's Outreach
- Northwest Natural Products
- * Olive Garden
- Organically Grown Company
- * Oroweat Baking Co.
- * Pacific NW Outreach (Formerly Frontier Missions)
- Pressure Safe, LLC.
- Pepsi Co.
- Pilgrim's Pride
- Pizza Hut
- Portland Adventist Community Services
- Portland Fruit
- * Portland Rescue Mission
- Potluck in the Park
- Pottery Barn
- * Provvista Specialty Foods
- Q.C. Foods
- Quality Custom Distribution (HFS America)
- Red Lobster Restaurant
- * Reser's Fine Foods, Inc.
- Restaurant Depot
- Rewind Clothing
- ROMA, Performance Food Service
- * Safeway
- Schwartz Brothers Bakery
- Shepherd's Door
- * Shriners Hospital
- Spectra Contract Flooring
- Starbucks Coffee
- * Sunshine Dairy
- * Sunshine Division
- * Super Value
- * Systems Services of America
- * Teeny Foods
- * The Barn
- * Trailblazer Foods
- Tree of Life
- * Union Gospel Mission
- * Unisource
- * United Salad Co.
- WCP Solutions
- Winco Foods
- Yo Cream International
- * Zupan's

Product Donations: 503.251.8860

www.birchcommunityservices.org





Birch

Community Services, Inc.

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Our 22nd Year!
Serving The Working Poor Since 1992

A Legacy of Life Change

At Birch we love and serve people. We hope you'll join us in leaving a legacy by including Birch in your will or living trust. This type of gift offers several benefits:

Simplicity. Just a few sentences in your will or trust are all that are needed.

Flexibility. Because you are not actually making a gift until after your lifetime, you can change your mind at any time.

Versatility. You can structure the bequest to leave a specific item or amount of money, make the gift contingent on certain events, or leave a percentage of your estate to BCS.

Tax Relief. If your estate is subject to estate tax, your gift is entitled to an estate tax charitable deduction for the gift's full value.



For more information about Birch Community Services planned giving options, Please contact:
Ray Keen at 971.235.2868 or
ray@birchcommunityservices.org

