

**Our 24th Year!**  
**Serving The Working Poor Since 1992**

## Joyful Endings

**Merry Christmas from the BCS Staff Family!**




# Birch

## Community Services, Inc.

**DECEMBER 2015**

## New Beginnings

Last December we looked forward to 2015 with anticipation and eagerness. There was a sense of expectation, yet there is one proverb that has repeated in my thoughts over and over:

*"A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps and makes them sure."*  
Proverbs 16:9.

February brought the culmination of many efforts as we were able to hire Dino Biaggi, a perfect fit as our Sustainable Families Program Manager. You'll read more about Dino, but this step has accentuated and elevated the BCS program to a higher level of accountability, and has enabled us to provide greater help to our families through one-on-one counseling and a new mentoring program. Hiring Dino has been monumental in the growth of our organization, and has greatly increased our ability to truly serve the working poor.

However, by mid-month we began an intense battle, and a redirection of my plans, as my wonderful husband and co-founder, Barry, became unexpectedly ill. When Bear passed away at the end of March, everyone at BCS was heartbroken. His warmth filled the room, and we still miss his loving kindness and encouragement. His presence

***"BCS is 10%  
about the food,  
and 90% about  
the people."***

**Barry Birch**



will always be felt through the lasting impression he made on the lives of all those he encountered.

Bear would be delighted to know that although he's gone, the mission continues! Many heard him say from his heart, "BCS is 10% about the food, and 90% about the people." We have been abundantly blessed by over 9 million pounds of food and household goods that came into our warehouse in the 2015 fiscal year. This is a record for us! Our generous donors provided staggering quantities of goods that kept not only almost 1000 BCS families well-fed and clothed this year, but provided food for thousands of other people through multiple other nonprofits that received about 30% of that 9 million pounds.

Thankful · Thankful · Thankful · Thankful · Thankful

If that's only 10% of meeting our mission, it's understandable why the other 90% is so crucial: once our bellies are full, we can concentrate on the other stressors of life. We want to accept people where they are, yet encourage them to succeed. This involves love – sometimes tough love – and providing opportunities for them to make the changes they need to become sustainable, and to move forward to graduate. Those who receive also give of themselves – ‘the dignity of the exchange’– becoming the answer to their peers around them. The true community that develops between the participants, staff, and volunteers is upholding many who lack personal connections in their busy lives. The volunteer hours at BCS totaled 36,521 by 1333 people this fiscal year, more than ever before, and the service fee the families and agencies pay allow us to be about 70% self-sustaining as an organization. Together, we make BCS happen. We truly need each other.



With Elizabeth Peters

Even in the midst of unexpected challenges and the tensions of growth this year, I'm **absolutely delighted to report that the goals we set last December have all been reached.**

- We hired our Sustainable Families Program Manger
- The mentoring program has been commissioned and staffed
- We migrated to a new database (SalesForce), and we replaced our phone system and some computers
- Job-and-life-skills training have been expanded
- We replaced our old shopping carts with newer old shopping carts. 😊

2016 brings new goals and challenges.

- We need to hire a new Development and Communications Manager to replace Ray Keen, who left us in September
- We hope to add another few board members who have a passion for the work of BCS
- Our refrigeration and freezer need some extensive upgrades
- Our hard-working trucks will need maintenance and tires to remain safe on the road
- We could really use a new truck with a liftgate
- Replacement of a worn forklift and three pallet jacks
- Revamping and upgrading the Children's Waiting Area

Truly, each day is a new beginning. I still love coming to work every day, even after 24 years. I love that my work, this place, is always changing and progressing. I make my plans. MY plans included my beloved Bear. But the Lord directs my steps and makes them sure. It will be a good year.

And, as ever, I am so thankful.

With blessing,

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.*

Thankful  
for our Generous Providers

\* Donors over 10 years

- 7-11 Food Stores  
Al's Garden Centers  
\*Albertsons  
\*Alpenrose Dairy  
Alpine Food  
Alsco  
Amazing Pet Products  
Anawim Christian Community  
Angels of God  
Auntie Anne's Pretzels  
Baskets of Blessings  
Bake Mark  
Bay Valley Foods  
Bed Bath & Beyond Stores  
Boyd Coffee Company  
Bridgetown Ministries Inc.  
Bridgetown Natural Foods  
Cascade Athletic Club  
Central Refrigerated Service, Inc.  
Charlie's Produce  
Chef George, Inc.  
Chipotle Grill  
Church of Latter Day Saints  
City Of Gresham  
Clackamas County Gleaners  
\*Classic Foods  
Colton Helping Hands, Inc.  
Columbia Gorge Helping Hands Program  
Community of Faith  
Connor Manufacturing  
Costco Stores  
Crossroads Cupboard  
\*Danner Shoe Manufacturing  
\*Darigold  
Dave's Killer Bread  
Déjà Vu Consignment  
DePaul Industries  
Diamond Line  
Direct Avenue  
Dirt and Aggregate  
Direct Transport, Inc.  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
Legacy Emanuel Hospital  
Everyday Deals  
\*Excel Brokerage  
Farmers Brothers Coffee  
Feed the Children  
Feed the Hungry  
First, Inc.  
Food4Less  
Food Front  
Food Services of America  
\*Franz Bakery  
Fred Meyer  
Kroger Swan Island Dairy  
Frito-Lay  
Fulton Meats  
Gartner's Country Meat Market, Inc.  
Generous Ventures

\*Georgia Pacific  
Gibson Truck Lines  
Gordon Trucking  
Grand + Benedicts, Inc.  
\*Grand Central Bakery  
Grayrose Marketing Group Inc.  
Graziano Produce  
Gresham Insurance Co.  
\*Gresham Rotary  
Grocery Outlet  
Gulick Trucking  
H & F Enterprises, Inc.  
Halcyon  
Harry's Fresh Foods  
\*Helen Bernhard Bakery  
\*Henningsen's Cold Storage  
Heritage Specialty Foods  
Hope Station Community Services, Inc.  
Impact Northwest  
\*Inmar Supply Chain Services  
Interstate Express Trucking, Inc.  
Jazzy Bagels  
Jeva's Trucking  
KeHe  
Kinco Gloves  
Krujex Freight Transport Corp.  
Lollicup USA, Inc.  
Love Joy Bakers  
Lowe's  
Macy Farm  
Market Transport LTD  
Marsee Foods Inc.  
MBank  
\*McTavish Shortbread  
\*Medical Teams International  
Metro  
\*Mildren Design Group  
Montavilla Farmers Market  
Microchip  
Mission Foods  
Morasch Meats  
Morrow Brothers Inc.  
National Relief Charity  
New Cascadia Bakery  
New Seasons Market  
New System Services  
Northwest Children's Outreach  
NW Paper Box  
Odwalla  
Olive Garden Restaurants  
Oregon Children's Ministries  
Organically Grown Company  
\*Oroweat Baking Co.  
\*Pacific NW Outreach  
Pacific Seafood  
Penzey's Spices  
PCB Trucking LLC  
\*Pepsi Beverages Company  
Petco

Pilgrim's Pride  
Pizza Hut Restaurants  
PJ Food Services  
Popcorn Indiana  
Portland Adventist Community Services  
Portland Food Project  
Portland Fruit  
\*Portland Rescue Mission  
Potluck in the Park  
Pride of the West  
\*Provvista Specialty Foods  
Reddaway  
Red Lobster Restaurant  
Rescuing Leftover Cuisine  
\*Resers Fine Foods, Inc.  
Restaurant Depot  
Right Price Market  
Rinella Produce  
Rivermark Community Credit Union  
Performance Foodservice  
S.A. Piazza Pizza  
\*Safeway  
Salvation Army Corps  
Sanctuary Church Food Pantry  
Schwartz Brothers Bakery  
Shepherd's Door  
\*Shriners Hospital  
Silk Espresso  
Skagit County Gleaners  
Snow Cap  
Spectra Contract Flooring  
Starbucks  
Sun Gro  
\*Sunshine Dairy  
\*Sunshine Division  
Sygma  
\*Teeny Foods  
\*The Barn  
The Cheesecake Factory  
The Commerce Bank  
The Pumpkin Patch  
The Salvation Army A.R.C.  
Three J's Distribution  
\*Trailblazer Foods  
\*Union Gospel Mission  
\*Unisource  
\*United Salad Co.  
Ventura Foods LLC  
Vitality Farms  
WCP Solutions  
Wheat Montana Bakery  
Winco Foods  
XPO Logistics  
YoCream International  
Youth Guidance Association  
Zarephath's Pantry  
\*Zupan's

"Blessed are those that can give without remembering and receive without forgetting." - Elizabeth Bibesco

# Thankful for KeHE's Unwavering Support

2015 has been a year of extraordinary community support and KeHE's bountiful giving has helped lead the way. In 2015 KeHE donated 84,271 lbs. of wholesome, natural foods to Birch Community Services, profoundly helping families in need. Providing specialty foods such as multigrain cereals, artisan cheeses and ingredients for gluten-free recipes, KeHE's donations help us bridge the gap between nutritious food and struggling families.

Using just the basement of his home as a warehouse, Art Kehe founded KeHE Foods in 1968. Forty-two years later the organization had grown to serve customers all across North America from twelve different food distribution warehouses, including one in Clackamas Oregon. In 2010 KeHE finalized the purchase of Tree of Life, an organization that locally has supported Birch families for several years, further diversifying the variety of wholesome foods donated. Soon after, due to the recession, business slowed dramatically.

**84,271**  
**Pounds**  
**Donated**

Yet, the overwhelming support of the KeHE staff is responsible for continuing donations flowing through our doors. Today KeHE is rapidly expanding and with it their continued generosity. KeHE's Care Program illustrates their motivation best, "KeHE cares... and [our] goal is to help the people we serve in moving them from dependence to dignity."

KeHE is a national leader in the distribution of natural and specialty foods, but most importantly a leader in changing lives. The families Birch serves are truly grateful for the tremendous support of KeHE and their staff.



## HOW TO GIVE PRODUCT

1. Contact us 24/7 at 503.251.8860 or email us: [donate@BirchCommunityServices.org](mailto:donate@BirchCommunityServices.org)
2. We will schedule a pickup at your convenience.
3. We show up at the scheduled time.

### BCS accepts:

- Near and past expiration date food fit for human consumption
- New or like-new clothing and footwear
- New or like-new household items

(Contributions are tax deductible.)



# Thankful 2015



### Celebrating a Life Well Lived!

Barry Birch's life was a testimony of impossible kindness, laughter, and commitment. We are thankful for his ability to connect with people on every level, and the legacy he leaves for those who come behind him.



### Internships

Each year BCS receives interns from a variety of organizations including SE Works. The experience they gain, and their hard work, makes a huge difference in getting the job done. Shaun, Miguel, and Hunter are delightful additions to our staff!



### Mentoring Program

What a gift to have so many capable and caring individuals work with our families to make healthier financial decisions. We are so thankful for the 20+ people who have decided to give of their time and talents to serve our families.



### Christmas Family Adoptions

The holidays have been made brighter for many of our BCS families through the generosity of CU Business Group, Henningsen Cold Storage, the Gresham Rotary, and various individuals. We're grateful for the thoughtful and meaningful gifts provided to these struggling families.



### Bountiful Gardens and Diligent Volunteers

Ed Zimmerman displays a beautiful selection of organically grown vegetables from our two community gardens. Ed's cheery disposition and presence twice a week is an encouragement and incredible help to the BCS staff.

"No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks." — James Allen

# Thankful 2015

What we accomplished  
with your help  
in Fiscal Year 2015

What we will accomplish  
with your help  
by Fiscal Year 2020



**36 months**  
average on program

**200 families**  
graduating annually



**7,904,175 lbs.**  
food

**453,199 lbs.**  
household goods

**31,410 lbs.**  
boots

**623,263 lbs.**  
clothing



**98% increase**  
in family  
emergency savings

**28% reduction**  
in monthly debt  
payments



**3**  
Replication Seminar  
attendees trained

**1 new**  
additional site  
launched



**260**  
product donors



**24 months**  
average on program

**500 families**  
graduating annually



**10,600,000 lbs.**  
food

**530,000 lbs.**  
household goods

**50,000 lbs.**  
boots

**890,000 lbs.**  
clothing



**150%+ increase**  
in family  
emergency savings

**50% reduction**  
in monthly debt  
payments



**50+**  
Replication Seminar  
attendees to be trained

**5 new**  
additional sites  
launched annually



**260**  
product donors  
annually

**900**  
Families  
Served  
Annually

**9.1 M**  
Pounds  
Distributed

**1,200+**  
Families  
Served  
Annually

**12. M+**  
Pounds  
Distributed  
Annually

2016

2018

2020

**Warehouse  
Equipment**



**New Product  
Donors**



**Building Acquisition**



**Replication**

# Thankful for Dino Biaggi

## Sustainable Families Program Manager



"Hey Dino, do you have a moment? I want to run something past you." That's how it started, my window of opportunity and journey with BCS as both a former participant, and now an employee. When Suzanne approached me about the SFP position and described it in detail I could hardly wait for the interview. It just seemed to fit me. Then on New Year's Eve it became official; I was now in the service of Birch Community Services.

With the New Year and a new position I was thankful. Now almost a year later, I am increasing in my gratefulness to BCS for reaching out. When I meet with families on our program, the question Suzanne asked me is the exact same one I use when I want to propose a recommendation to a family. I know it takes immense effort and patience in creating financial margin. However, our families are working at it each week as they shop and participate in the process, and we are seeing families make tremendous forward movement in their financial plans.

I am extremely grateful to be a part of this great work. We have trained 21 mentors (with more interested) to work one-on-one with our families, and seven new classes were created: Going to College Debt-Free, Dental Hygiene for Kids, Optimal Health, Hula, and several new gardening classes. We also presented five finance classes and started a partnership with the Mt. Hood Community College Business Development Center, which offers coaching for small business owners.



I was walking through the warehouse one afternoon and noticed someone who was in a finance class the night before, speaking on the phone. As I walked past and nodded to him, he proceeded to say with a big smile on his face, and in a not-so-quiet voice, "Hey Dino, I'm saving money as I speak!" I responded, in also a not-so-quiet voice, "Right on!" What I loved about that was twofold. One, he was taking action with what he had just learned the night before, and two, at least ten other families just heard one of their own succeed.



Jane Woods, Education Assistant

As I look to the next year I see more classes on family finances, career development, and healthy living. I see more families receiving small business coaching, 100 of our families being mentored, continued decreasing of debts, and increase of savings. Ultimately, I see each and every family growing and living in fiscal and relational health.

I was meeting recently with a new family and it was apparent they were in a very tough space, yet they showed me they were extremely teachable. It struck me that these people, who have a great attitude and an immense need, will have success. After some time together describing what they had access to through the SFP, they leaned forward in their seats and said with expectant and hope-filled smiles, "That's exactly what we need."