In October, BCS held a Staying Afloat fundraiser at the Tyee Yacht Club to help educate our community about our mission: 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.

Growing up in a family of five children, we kids often felt the stress as our parents experienced a continuous struggle to feed, clothe and house their rowdy bunch. In fact, I only remember a few select times when constant worry wasn’t present in the thread of life. As we grew, the tension increased. My parents were drowning – emotionally and financially – and eventually divorced, sending family fragments in all directions as my older brothers escaped the resulting conflicts. It was a revelation when Barry and I married to find that couples could actually communicate well with each other regarding the crucial decisions needed to keep a family afloat. Although quite broke at times, we were able to love each other well as we navigated unpredictable life. And because of a commitment we made before getting married, were able to stay out of debt.

At BCS we meet families like mine every day. People who are drowning, weighed down by the destructive force of debt as they fight to keep their heads above water. Many are on the edge in their relationships because of the stress. It’s a privilege and joy to offer a proverbial life preserver through the four pillars of the Sustainable Families Program. As our families shop weekly, receiving food and household items, the reduction affords these families freedom many have never experienced and gives them a legacy of wisdom and promise to pass on. If you don’t live in a family like mine, you know someone who does; someone who would flourish in the environment of caring, learning and accountability. The staff at BCS is delighted to offer them the tools to buoy themselves up through these challenging times. It’s been a good year for BCS. We’ve reached some big goals and set others that sometimes feel unreachable. We continue to seek out ways to serve better and are so very blessed and thankful for each one who walks with us.

Gratefully,

Suzanne Birch
It's not easy sitting across from someone, especially someone you just met a few minutes ago, to unpack your very personal, and perhaps unpleasant, financial situation. I might argue it's one of the most difficult things we can do, especially if our significant other is sitting three feet away.

Yet, this is the norm at BCS. I have the privilege to enter that sacred space with hundreds of families each year. As you can imagine, there are numerous layers to talking through our financial dynamics. Often the math works, but there's no agreement on financial priorities or next steps. This contributes to increasing pressure and stress within the home.

I ask families to enter into a dialogue about how to sort through the emotional, financial, historical and relational components that make up their financial decision-making. Many adults know what to do, but are still figuring out why they're not doing what they know they ought to do. Emotion and perspective play a powerful role in how we make decisions around money, and often it is about the “tyranny of the urgent.”

We'd love to think about buying a home in the future, helping with kids' college, and saving for a family vacation, but the medical bills, back utilities, house repairs, or car accidents begin to chew away at the ability to look beyond the next payment. I grew up on the California beaches and I really like this analogy, which pairs nicely with a recent event we held titled “Staying Afloat.” When you're at the beach and look at the ocean, what always comes? Waves. Never-ending waves. When you're in the water, what typically do you focus on? The wave coming at you. Many of us find ourselves focusing on surviving that wave. If the focus stays on the next wave coming at you, you never have a chance to fully appreciate the ocean, and you never have a chance to choose and anticipate a special wave you want to really enjoy.

If you've ever watched a seasoned surfer, they're never focused on the first wave. They're looking at the second, third and fourth. Since waves come in sets, they're often keeping the next set in view and thinking through their timing, approach and positioning to be able to take the right wave for a great ride.

BCS loves helping families consider the bigger picture so they can fully enjoy their opportunities in the moment, and still help raise their gaze to the future so they can enjoy the ride.
2019 Fiscal Year Report Card

HOW WE OPERATE

Program Expenses: 94.4%
Operational Expenses: 5.6%

PARTICIPANTS

818 families served annually
580 families served weekly
15,000 individuals served annually

PRODUCT

240 Product Donors
10,400,000 lbs. In-Kind Donations including:
- 2,820,953 lbs of produce
- 610,258 lbs of meat
- 1,963,139 lbs of dairy

TEAMWORK

1,597 Individual Volunteers
39,996 Volunteer Hours Served

RECOGNITION

The Better Business Bureau recognized us as an accredited charity!
We were deemed a 2019 Top-Rated 4-Star Nonprofit at Charity Navigator

SUSTAINABLE FAMILIES PROGRAM

9 class offerings
6 classes on financial literacy
193 participants attended!

COMMUNITY

68+ agencies and other nonprofits served as they serve thousands of people each month!

Past Year Financials
Fiscal Year Ended Oct. 31, 2019

Revenues, Gains and Other Support:
Contributions: $313,720
Membership Service Fees: $522,818
Donated Food and Clothing: $15,307,568
Recycling Income: $45,767
Other Income: $26,579
Total Revenue: $16,216,452

Expenses:
Program Expenses: $16,028,985
Operational Expenses: $186,148
Total Expenses: $16,215,133
Ending Net Assets: $1,289,237
Did You Know?

Over 68 other nonprofit agencies benefit from donations to Birch!

"Birch saves us thousands of dollars every month in disposing of food that we can't sell anymore. We tried partnerships with other organizations, but nobody else was reliable. With Birch, I knew that I could count on them to pick up our donated food every week to distribute to participant families, as well as the other nonprofit organizations that don't have consistent pick-up schedules." - Rick Teeny, Teeny Foods

Thank You To Our In-Kind Donors:

Birch Community Services

Honored to Distribute Weekly to:

- Compassion 360
- Portland in the Park
- Lifeline Connections
- Children's Club, Inc.
- Harbor (Portland Rescue Mission)
- St. Mary Magdalene Parish
- St. Vincent DePaul
- Open Door Youth Ministries
- St. John The Baptist St. Vincent DePaul
- Freedom House Ministries
- Mother & Child Education Center
- Salvation Army Corps (Gresham)
- Won By One Church Mission Teens, Inc. (Northwest Bible Training Center)
- House of Myths Ministries
- Emerald Community Services
- Zarapheth's Pantry
- Shepherd's Gate Church
- Sanctuary Church Food Pantry
- Portland Lents Foursquare (Revolution Foursquare Church)
- No One Left Behind
- Set Free Christian Fellowship
- WonGen Central Community Services
- Mother & Child Education Center
- Salvation Army Corps (Gresham)
- Won By One Church Mission Teens, Inc. (Northwest Bible Training Center)
- House of Myths Ministries
- Emerald Community Services
- Zarapheth's Pantry
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- Shepherd's Gate Church
- Sanctuary Church Food Pantry
- Portland Lents Foursquare (Revolution Foursquare Church)
- No One Left Behind
- Set Free Christian Fellowship
- WonGen Central Community Services

- Geffkemane Ministries
- Global Messengers of Hope
- Crossroads Food Bank
- Generous Ventures
- Hope Station Community Services, Inc.
- Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives Inc.
- Teen Challenge
- Do Good Multnomah
- Tremont Church Food Pantry
- On The Move Ministries
- Life Christian Center
- Woodland Action Center
- Live Love Center (NW)
- Immaculate Heart (St. Vincent)
- Need 2 Feed (As Is Church)
- Almost 600 Individual Families
Since the class we’ve come together as a family in budgeting. We have a family meeting about needs, wants, and groceries...Since joining BIRCH I have someone to be more accountable to and my financial decisions have improved and I now have a family goal/vision for a secure financial future. Again, thank you. - Esther

Communication and Tracking Spending has gone hand in hand as a new change. Instead of budgeting just being "my job" as it’s seemed in the past (he makes the money, I make it work kind of thing), my husband has now been included in the budgeting so we can have a full picture of our finances and how to balance spending. - Demiesa

BCS created a safety net for our family. I learned how to be the money manager by using the principles I learned at BCS. They provided the strength for me to do that, despite years of financial difficulty. - Jennifer

I understand more about money in these two days than I ever did in my 34 years of life. This helped my marriage too. Thank you! – Kimberly

I am so grateful for the help you give to our family each week. I just took inventory of our fridge and freezer and came up with FOURTEEN dinners I can make over the next 2 weeks. Incredible! This is so wonderful and amazing to me, that I just have to share with you all we can make at home because of all you guys do each week for us. I don’t know that $70 has every stretched so far. - Annie

There is no way to calculate the ripple effects, but I can say that the impact has been long-lasting and I continue to hold the Birch Community in high regard. - Connie
Suzanne Birch
Executive Director
At BCS Since 1992
Suzanne is always looking for her next cooking class.

Dino Biaggi
Financial Literacy Manager
At BCS Since 2015
If Dino could have dinner with anyone, it would be C.S. Lewis.

Amber Smart
Administrative Assistant
At BCS Since 2008
One word that describes Amber is family.

Sara Johnson
Account Coordinator and Dispatch
At BCS Since 2019
On a Saturday she's sleeping in, and then going to the PSU or the Hollywood Farmer's Market.

Lynn Holstine
Warehouse Assistant in charge of Coolers and Freezers
At BCS Since 2008
If Lynn were an animal, she would be a bunny...the energizer bunny!

Danny Landis
Driver
At BCS Since 2016
One thing you may not know about Danny is that he grew up in Japan.

Zee Smart
Warehouse Assistant
At BCS Since: 2019
On a Saturday, he's doing videography.

Andrew Rowlett
Operations Manager
At BCS Since 2008
On a Saturday, you can find Andrew gleefully changing his son's diaper, usually while climbing a mountain.

Valerie Rippey
Community Development Manager
At BCS Since 2019
On a Saturday she's finding a new coffee shop with friends.

Ameena Farrouge
Account Coordinator and Marketing Assistant
At BCS Since 2016
On a Saturday she's planning her next trip to Disneyland.

Jeanelle Holstine
Warehouse Assistant
At BCS Since 2017
One thing you may not know about Jeanelle is that she and her husband are raising her 12 and 13 year old brothers.

Lauren Prusso
Clean Room Supervisor
At BCS Since 2013
If Lauren could have dinner with anyone, it would be Barack and Michelle Obama.

Dave Toedtemeier
Driver
At BCS Since 2007
Dave is still mourning the loss of our Saturday morning staff meetings at HomeTown Buffet.
Thankful for Our Board

Suzanne Birch
*Executive Director*
At BCS Since 1992

Mark Childs
*Board Member*
Capacity Commercial Group
At BCS Since 2007

Greg Cervetto
*Board Member*
Grayrose Marketing Group Inc.
At BCS Since 2011

Leann Rowlett
*Secretary of the Board*
Maryhill/Kiyokawa
At BCS Since 1994

Rick Teeny
*Board Member*
Teeny Foods
At BCS Since 2006

Alexander Spalding
*Board Member*
Daniel House
At BCS Since 2019

Alex Krider
*President of the Board*
Avier Wealth Advisors
At BCS Since 2015

Aaron Aigner
*Treasurer of the Board*
Aigner & Company
At BCS Since 1994

Egbert Kunrath
*Board Member*
Kunrath & Willard Insurance (Retired)
At BCS Since 1994

Dave Riewald
*Board Member*
Bullard Law
At BCS Since 2007

Kenechi Onyeagusi
*Board Member*
Heritage Bank
At BCS Since 2018

Angela Small
*Board Member*
Past Participant
At BCS Since 2018
Thankful for Our Donors

Notes from Andrew Rowlett, Operations Manager

Harry's: The End of an Era

Forty-one years after opening its doors, Harry's Fresh Foods is closing its Portland operations and moving to Everett, Washington. The Harry's name has been synonymous with generosity in the Pacific Northwest and it is no surprise why. For nearly two decades, Harry's has blessed thousands of BCS families with heartwarming, wholesome soups, meals, side-dishes, and desserts. In the last five years alone, BCS has been the fortunate recipient of over 2.6 million pounds of Harry's provisions. Harry's giving policy has only been surpassed by the care and encouragement its staff has bestowed on BCS drivers and volunteers over the years. Harry's will be deeply missed in Portland but their benevolence has left a lasting impression that will never fade. Thank you, Harry's, for filling the cupboards and hearts of so many.

Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?

When Wayne Farms LLC, now one of the largest poultry producers in the U.S., first started in 1895, its founders knew quality poultry had to "come from a place of integrity and transparency". This belief, exemplified through Wayne Farms' passion for sustainability and community stewardship, continues to be evident today. For over a decade, Wayne Farms has generously provided Birch Community Services' families with wholesome, fresh chicken cuts, ready-to-cook, and ready-to-eat poultry products. In the last five years alone, BCS families have been blessed with nearly half a million pounds of donated chicken from Wayne Farms' warehouses in Alabama. The age-old question has finally been answered; the chicken crossed the road (in this case, the nation!) to serve working struggling families. This remarkable gift, in large part because of the generosity and compassion of Vice President of Prepared Foods and Sales, Thomas R. Bell, and his dedicated team, has consistently brought stability, hope, and freedom for thousands of families in need. Thank you, Wayne Farms, for your immense generosity and dedication to serving your communities near and far.
The Withrows: A Heart for Giving

At Birch, every time we receive a gift, we are filled with gratitude. We feel blessed from the encouragement and support from all our donors and volunteers, and this month we would like to give an extra thanks to Chad and Karen Withrow, the owners of Northwest Enforcement. When asked why they love Birch, Chad replied, “Birch empowers people with knowledge and education to bring true change -- long-lasting change. BCS will meet their need for today, but help them plan to meet their needs forever.” This mission is so close to their hearts, the Withrows started their own nonprofit last year, called REACH, where they converted their old house into three apartments for people who need help finding affordable housing. Participants pay a small fee to live in the building, and must be consistently putting money into a savings account. We thank Chad and Karen for their consistent donations, but more importantly for their belief and support in our mission to care for people by meeting their basic needs, and to equip them with tools to overcome financial difficulty.

The Bolings: Volunteering Through the Generations

Everyone knows that to receive all the benefits of being a Birch family, you must give as well. All families are required to volunteer two hours a month, but we have many families who volunteer above and beyond their required hours. This year, we are especially thankful for the Boling family! We are lucky to have 17 members of the Boling family spanning three generations who are always around BCS. Charles and Michele started on the program nine years ago. It wasn’t long before Michele encouraged her father, Wayne, to donate his experience as a truck driver picking up food, and his wife, Bev, followed suit in volunteering her time. Nine years later, we know the whole family will come to faithfully help us every week. The four children over 14 are volunteering stars, with Miriana and Shana putting in 12 hour days around their college courses, and the two oldest boys, Alexander and Matthew, serving about four hours a week. Thank you to the Boling family, and all the volunteers who help keep BCS running smoothly!
CULTURAL VALUES & PRINCIPLES

An organization’s culture has a direct impact on the long-term value the organization and its employees create so we want to be deliberate about the culture. In application, this generally means:

- The core values establish expectations for all employees (at Birch this includes volunteers and participants).
- There is shared understanding among all employees of what the stated core principles mean and why they are important.
- All employees are accountable for putting them into practice.

**VALUE CREATION**
Everything we do should optimize the experience and impact the organization has on our participants. Through innovation, strive to create an atmosphere of efficiency and effectiveness, eliminating waste and bolstering productive decision-making, resulting in creating an environment where people feel valuable. This includes fully developing your capabilities to produce fulfillment and meaning in your work.

**RELATIONSHIP-FOCUSED**
Embrace and encourage a community of dignity and empathy. Foster an environment of purpose and meaning for all. People first. (“BCS is 10% about the program and 90% about the people.” Barry Birch)

**RESPECT**
“Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you respond to it.” Treat others with kindness, honesty, dignity, grace and sensitivity.

**COMPLIANCE**
Safety of our culture and people is paramount, requiring 100% compliance. Stop, think and ask before making decisions.

**GRATITUDE**
BCS is thankful for the opportunity to serve all our stakeholders. It is a privilege to work alongside donors, participants and volunteers. Donations are an immense blessing, never routine. Gratitude is a powerful catalyst for hope, directs our efforts and inspires others.

**INTEGRITY**
Being above reproach in everything we do, honoring the freedom BCS’ mission creates for our participants. We are an open book. We courageously embody our principles, never compromising one for another.

**KNOWLEDGE/HUMILITY**
“Wise men seek wise counsel.” Seek and use best knowledge from all sources. Proactively share knowledge, equipping each other. Embrace challenge and the change process that drives creative destruction and fosters discovery. Develop measures that lead to more effective action. Encourage and practice teamwork. Be transparent and intellectually honest with others regarding our own strengths and weaknesses.
May 24:
Breakfast with Birch

We love the opportunity to share the Sustainable Families Program with like-minded supporters. While breakfasters eat a delicious hot meal with plenty of coffee at 7:00am, this annual event allows us to efficiently explain how BCS serves struggling working families. An hour later they are on their way to their busy days! Do you know someone who would love to help these families? Join us next May!

July 20:
Daniel House Croquet Classic

For the third year the DH Croquet Classic allowed BCS donors and staff to challenge each other with unusual handicaps and unlimited laughs. We’re thankful for their support and creative FUNdraising; make sure to join us at Cannon Beach in July 2020!

Our 2020 Needs

We are grateful to have had so much support over the last 27 years, but with an aging organization, we find ourselves overdue for some updates. In 2020, we need support in accomplishing the following:

- New Ford Transit Refrigerated Van: $68,000
- Bathroom Updates (They’re 20 years old!): $8,000 each
- Paint and Flooring in the Main Office: $4,500
- Increase Electrical Capacity of Fridge/Freezers
- Freight for Donations (especially chicken): $4,950
- Soil for our garden (1 pallet of Black Gold): $700
- Grow Lights (for garden plant starts - really!): $500
- Industrial Floor Scrubber (20,000 sq ft to clean): $9,300

BHAGs (Big Hairy Audacious Goals)

- New 25’ Refrigerated Truck: $150,000
- New, expanded warehouse space (2024?)

WANT: Espresso Machine for hard-working staff: $6,500

October 10:
Tyee Yacht Club Event

Our first silent auction was a blast, and not at all silent! In a healthy spirit of competition, attendees played a game while eating, drinking and bidding on interesting auction items. It’s definitely an event to repeat!
Did You Know?

Double Your Donation to BCS via CrowdRise

For the rest of 2019*, any donation given to Birch through the CrowdRise website will be matched by Stand Together, dollar for dollar! We are grateful this opportunity of being featured on their website, and to have every donation up to $1,000 doubled.

Go to our website, birchcommunityservices.org, and click "Give."

*This may potentially extend into 2020.

We are thrilled to be one of Amazon's charities. If you shop on Amazon, next time go to smile.amazon.com, select Birch Community Services, and a portion of your regular purchase will be donated to BCS. It's that easy!

Charity Navigator ranked Birch as a top non-profit with 4/4 stars!