

BRIDGE BUILDER

Spring 2017

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Mission Statement:

To serve, educate and inspire people through student, family and financial stability services in partnership with our communities.

Get Involved:

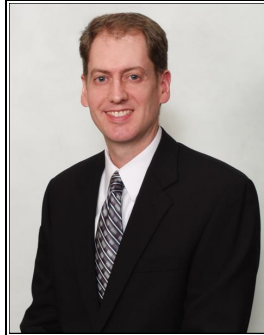
If you would like to know more about how to donate and/or volunteer, please contact us at:
305-442-8306
info@branchesfl.org
www.branchesfl.org



Branches
Grow Deeper, Climb Higher

From the Desk of the Director

Opportunity = From YET to YES!



Dear Friends,

At Branches we create opportunities for students and families to succeed in school and in life. But what exactly do we mean? Here is an example from our work with youth; over the years we have observed that far too many Branches students have become stuck at an early age in their general outlook. They aspire less, settle for being average, avoid significant challenge and ignore useful feedback among other things.

As we form long-term relationships with the children, we have often learned the root causes of this mindset. For example, did you ever struggle with an academic subject when you were a student? Did someone step in and help you learn?

For myself, I struggled with writing in elementary school. Soon however my Mom would proofread my writing homework. With her support, I would revise and improve every assignment before I turned it in. Who knew I would major in English Literature in college?! In contrast, so many of our Branches students also struggled early in a particular academic area but never got the support they needed to overcome the challenges. For many of their families, education has never been a priority or something within their reach. The sad result is that the student begins to believe they are unable to learn and are limited in what they can achieve.

To confront this obstacle, we developed Climb program workshops to engage the youth on what it takes to cultivate a growth mindset – passion and perseverance. One of the exercises asked the students to identify a subject that they have not ‘YET’ learned. One student identified math. As a result, we began intensive 3x per week tutoring with her to learn math. From the first session, the volunteer tutor realized that she needed to learn the most fundamental math subjects such as addition, subtraction and multiplication. She was very eager to learn and advanced quickly. After six weeks and a particularly difficult ‘pop quiz’, she burst out of the tutoring room exclaiming that she had just scored a 100% on the quiz. She saw Kim Torres, Director of Student Services, and said ‘YET!’ proudly displaying the 100% result. Kim responded with ‘YES you can!’ and gave her a hug.

As we create learning and growth opportunities for students and families, we fulfill what it means to be part of the Branches family. It takes so many of us – staff, volunteers, donors, partners, churches – to make Branches what it is today. It is a place of opportunity where students and families are both challenged and supported to grow in their outlook from YET to YES! Thank YOU for being part of the Branches family!

Brent McLaughlin
Executive Director



Kim and her kids; love and support go a long way.

Branches Happenings

Growing Young Minds



Valentin is all smiles with his "buddy", AmeriCorps member Ray.

In partnership with families and schools, the Branches Grow program serves over 200 elementary students by cultivating a love of learning and a spirit of compassion. When Valentin joined Branches Florida City during the 2014-2015 school year as a Kindergartener, he had extreme difficulties remembering letters, basic sounds, and sight words. We provided Valentin with one-on-one tutoring and helped him to enroll in a special remediation program for struggling students in his school. Despite these interventions, Valentin needed to be held back in 1st grade.

After two more years of working with and nurturing Valentin through loving, personal support, he is exhibiting an accelerated rate of academic and personal growth this school year. In addition to reading much better, he enjoys being a leader and helping younger students in his group. Reinforcing Valentin's enthusiasm to lead, AmeriCorps members Michael and Ray offer him responsibilities that he relishes and finds relevant. As a result, his confidence has soared and his ability to focus, recall knowledge, and exhibit self-control has greatly

improved. After being told that a parent conference was requested, Valentin's mom was apprehensive. Imagine her surprise to hear about her son's ability to read, learn, grow, and lead! The transformative power of care, concern, and love defines the uplifting atmosphere found at Branches. By providing meaningful opportunities, Branches enables children like Valentin to expand their horizons and experience success.

ASSETS: Making Entrepreneurs' Dreams a Reality

German Mejia is now the owner of Gemeve's Appliance Repair, LLC thanks to the training and technical assistance from ASSETS Small Business Solutions. A former truck driver, he sadly lost his home in the economic downturn of 2009 and was faced with severe financial hardship. Looking for a new career path, he completed the Appliance Repair Technician Certification and developed his skills working for Mr. Appliance. The franchise from Mr. Appliance closed and German found himself without a job once again.

German next came to ASSETS with the dream of launching his appliance repair business as the first step to one day owning an appliance store and eventually conducting business in his homeland of Colombia.

ASSETS is now helping make his dream a reality. Yasnay Montalvo, ASSETS Program Coordinator, provided one-on-one coaching to help German incorporate his business, open a bank account and accept credit card payments on the go. German also received guidance to implement key marketing strategies including the design of new flyers and business cards, social media, and the development of his networking and sales skills. Yasnay also helped German implement Quickbooks and keep his business finances organized. With the appropriate financial records showing his business growth and the improvement of his credit score, German is hoping to finance a company truck. His monthly sales have officially grown over the last 6 months and he is simply thrilled! The ASSETS team and everyone at Branches is incredibly proud of German and his success, proving that hard work with guidance, inspiration, and support really does pay off. Contact us at ASSETS@branchesfl.org to learn more!



German Mejia, proud ASSETS client!

THANK YOU to all our generous donors for supporting Branches' programs!

All donors from September 1, 2016 — March 12, 2017 are listed at www.branchesfl.org/news/newsletters

A special thank you goes out to our premiere supporters:

Trish & Dan Bell * Bank of America Charitable Foundation * Capital One Services, LLC *
 The Children's Trust of Miami-Dade * Emergency Food & Shelter Program * Florida Blue *
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Thank You, Branches Sponsors & Stakeholders!

List includes contributions received by Branches from September 1, 2016 to March 12, 2017. If you sent a contribution during this period and do not see your name on the list, please contact us at (305) 442-8306 x1005.

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- ◆ Clarke & Sally Campbell-Evans from Susan Krehbiel.
- ◆ David and Betty Lou Shoaf; Eric, Lucy and Connor Ashby; and Glenn and Linda Ashby from Amanda Ashby Huggins..
- ◆ Donny Sutton from Anonymous.
- ◆ Holly Damman from Linda Rymond.
- ◆ J.J. Moose from Anonymous.
- ◆ Karen & Jon Hegler from Winona Cowie.
- ◆ Kim & Raymundo Torres from Kelly King Horne and Anonymous.
- ◆ Megan Beddow from Johanna Ralsten-Cox.
- ◆ Monica Faison-Finch from Christina Grzybek-Jacobs.

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- ◆ Harold and Betty Maxwell from Leslie Maxwell
 - ◆ Kathryn Becker from Benevity Causes
- ◆ Marion Felton from Beverly McReynolds.
 - ◆ Mary Peet from Donna Potolsky.

2016 Thanksgiving Recap

16th Annual Thanksgiving Meal Delivery Another Success!

A HUGE Thank You to our premiere *Thanksgiving Day Sponsors* for their generous support and making this special day possible:



Thanks to the efforts of our amazing donors and volunteers, Branches provided 5,185 meals to individuals in need on Thanksgiving Day 2016! Over 1,000 volunteers helped cook, package and deliver these meals at 8 sites throughout Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

Due to the generosity of hundreds of caring individuals, we were able to make a lasting impact in the lives of thousands of people in need. Along with a hot, delicious Thanksgiving meal, clients also received a very important resource pamphlet containing information about Branches programs, and emergency and public benefit services.

A Big Thank You to The Batchelor Foundation, Goya Foods of Florida and Publix Super Markets Charities for serving as *Thanksgiving Site Sponsors*. Thank you also to Florida Community Bank, Killian Pines United Methodist Church, Stephanie Karl, Tripp Scott Attorneys at Law and United Way of Miami-Dade for their generous support as *Thanksgiving Sponsors*!

Thank you as well to Moore Stephens Lovelace and Robert Ladner for being *Thanksgiving Supporters* and much appreciation to Aquarius Press, Vanessa Hernandez Dolan, Galleria Farms, the Miami HEAT, the Miami Marlins Community Foundation and República for their generous in-kind contributions and support.



Grateful to all our volunteers for their incredible service to our community!



A special THANK YOU to our incredible Food Drive Partners!

Goya Foods of Florida, Palmer Trinity Private School, Unity on the Bay, AAA Auto Club South, Aquarius Press, BE Aerospace, Breakthrough Miami at the University of Miami, Coconut Grove Montessori School, Cornerstone United Methodist Church (UMC), First UMC Coral Gables, Gulliver School, Harris Chapel UMC, JP Morgan Chase Bank, Kendall UMC Day School, Lennar Corporation, Miramar UMC, Plaza Construction, Poinciana UMC, Publix Super Markets Inc., Regions Bank, Sky Zone, Target Cutler Ridge and The Growing Place of FUMCCG.



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Grow Deeper, Climb Higher

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PLEASE JOIN US AT OUR 14TH ANNUAL

Black Tie & Blue Jeans

BENEFIT DINNER AND AUCTION

“Shine A Light”

—  —

SATURDAY, APRIL 22ND, 2017

JW MARRIOTT MARQUIS MIAMI
255 BISCAYNE BLVD WAY, MIAMI, FL
7 PM - 12 AM

—  —

Featuring

THE TRISH & DAN BELL COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AWARD
HONORING DAVID LAWRENCE JR.

Philanthropic Chairs
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Gala Co-Chairs
DUSTIN SYMES
LAURIE ZAPLETAL

Share in an uplifting evening
as we celebrate together!

Reception, Silent & Live
Auctions, Dinner and Dancing.

For details about this event,
please visit

[www.branchesfl.org/
benefitdinner](http://www.branchesfl.org/benefitdinner)

For questions and to RSVP,
please contact Isabelle Pike at
305-442-8306 x1002 or
ipike@branchesfl.org

See you there!



Branches
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