

# BRIDGE BUILDER

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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:

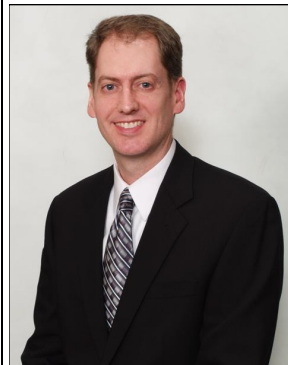
If you would like to know more about how to donate and/or volunteer, please contact us at:  
305-442-8306  
info@branchesfl.org  
www.branchesfl.org



**Branches**  
Grow Deeper, Climb Higher

## From the Desk of the Director

### How to Break the Cycle...



Dear Friends,

You may not know but hundreds of Branches 'kids' are now adults in their 20's, 30's and a few approaching 40 years old! Yes, these were the youth who participated in Branches in the 90's and early 2000's. They have grown up. Some live locally and serve at Branches and some have moved as far away as Arizona, North Carolina, and even Germany. Many of them are married and have children themselves. They have careers, they attend churches, they volunteer in their communities and they are making a positive difference in the world. These young adults are part of the living legacy of Branches to break the cycle of poverty.

To make such a long term impact in someone's life, it takes a long-term, relationship-based focus with the entire family. When a student comes to Branches no matter what their age, we seek to integrate them into the Branches family so that they will be with us for all of their formative years. To date, we have achieved a 92% retention rate year over year.

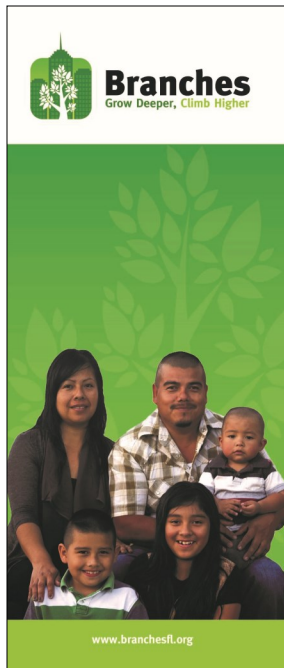
As you can imagine, the 400+ students who are part of Branches today are growing up! One of our younger students is Yaniel Guerrero who is in first grade. His family became part of Branches when Yaniel was just a baby. They are the family on the Branches' brochure. They are immigrants from Mexico and have been very involved in the life of Branches Florida City. Whenever there is an opportunity to volunteer such as when we installed the playground, the Guerrero's are involved from hands on construction to working in the kitchen preparing food.

Yaniel comes to Branches every day. His favorite volunteer is Herb Parlato who helps him with his homework three times a week. With Herb's input and support, Yaniel has become a hard-working and successful student. He is on track for a great future!

Branches exists to serve kids like Yaniel. The extra help, nurture and support they receive at Branches sets them on a stable and hopeful path in life. Together we are making a lasting impact across generations. For Yaniel, all the students and their families, thank YOU for your support of Branches. Together we are breaking the cycle of generational poverty!

With Hope and Gratitude,

Brent McLaughlin  
Executive Director



Far Left: Baby Yaniel in 2013.  
Left: Yaniel today as a proud First Grader!

## Branches Happenings

### Climb to College & Career: Challenging our Youth

Thanks to Branches' Climb to College & Career program, Chandler Leblanc is now a proud University of Florida student, studying mechanical and aerospace engineering. He is the first person in his family to attend college. Chandler grew up in South Dade and began attending Branches Florida City when he was in 7th Grade. He learned about Branches through OASIS Camp, a Spring Break sleep away camp for youth run by Branches in Northern Florida. He became involved in the Climb youth program after camp and started coming to Branches' after school program, receiving help with homework and taking part in life skills classes and enrichment activities.

Chandler has always been a motivated individual yet certainly faced many challenges when he was young.

Chandler's parents worked several jobs to provide for their family and were barely home, yet Chandler's grandmother was always there; she was their rock. However, when Chandler was in 8th Grade, his grandmother passed away. Her death was a tragic time for his family, leaving Chandler to take care of his little brother as well as all school assignments, transportation needs (with no car), meal prep and housecleaning. However, despite these challenges, Chandler was determined to succeed and attend college so he could one day help his parents. Chandler was

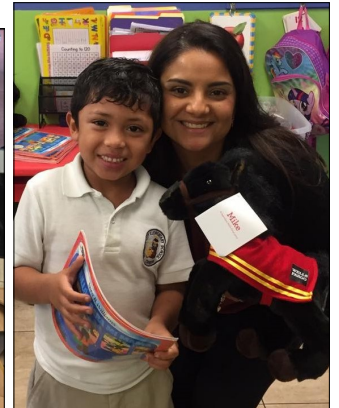


Far Left: Chandler doing the Gator chomp at Branches after receiving the good news from UF. Middle and Right: Branches' Climb to College & Career Scholarship Dinner in late December 2017.

assigned a Branches volunteer mentor, Ben, who worked very hard to help him study for the SAT, write college essays and more. Chandler ultimately qualified for Bright Futures and along with the Branches Climb thru College Scholarship and a new laptop, is succeeding in college! We are certain Chandler will go far in life and we are so proud of him.

### Financial Education = Child's Play

At Branches, we take a multi-generational approach to everything we do. We provide a wide array of economic development programs to adults, yet we also focus on the children and youth we serve every day at all three of our sites. Recently, our financial coaches provided 4 financial education classes to our Grow program students. In each workshop, our elementary kids developed an understanding of money management topics like savings, banking, good spending habits, etc. The students also read children's books that highlight basic savings and spending concepts. Branches' "Tiny Titans" class just graduated from this educational series and they were very proud and excited! Graduation featured a mini graduation ceremony where each student received a copy of "A Chair for my Mother" book in English and Spanish, and an adorable Wells Fargo Pony. Thank you to Wells Fargo for donating these sweet ponies to Branches. Together, we can make sure our kids are ready to succeed financially and make the right choices for their futures.



Branches' staff rewards all Grow program students with a book and a Wells Fargo pony.

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

All donors from September 19, 2017 - March 25, 2018 are listed at [www.branchesfl.org/news/newsletters](http://www.branchesfl.org/news/newsletters)

Trish & Dan Bell \* United Way of Miami-Dade \* Volunteer Florida \* The Children's Trust of Miami-Dade \* Peacock Foundation, Inc. \* Miami-Dade County Building Better Communities \* The Miami Foundation \* Miami-Dade County PHCD \* North Dade Medical Foundation \* BB&T \* Agape \* Capital One Services, LLC \* Alliance for Strong Families and Communities \* St. Luke's UMC at Windermere \* Florida Conference UMC \* Publix Super Markets, Inc. \* The UPS Foundation

# Thank You, Branches Sponsors & Stakeholders!

List includes contributions received by Branches from September 18, 2017 to March 25, 2018. 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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Continued on Page 4

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### **Donors Through YourCause**

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## **TRIBUTES**

### Gift In Memory of:

- ◆ Chuck Burton from Linda Burton
- ◆ Kathryn Becker from Carrie Bodin and Sara Zamikoff
- ◆ Mildred Klem from Deborah S. Klem
- ◆ Sharon Miller from Bronwyn Miller
- ◆ Thomas W. Hegler from Winona Cowie

### Gifts In Honor of:

- ◆ Peter Pinney on his birthday from Audrey Pinney
- ◆ Alison Van Gundy from Kim & Stan Van Gundy
- ◆ Alpha Delta Kappa Lambda from Jill & William McCauley
- ◆ Trish & Dan Bell from Jana Loring & Steven Sonberg
- ◆ Ed Deppman from James Robinson
- ◆ Herb Parlato from Julienne Melchior
- ◆ Integrity from Alan Alvarez & William R. Burdette
- ◆ Kim & Raymundo Torres from Kelly King Horne
- ◆ Kim Torres from Betty Batey, Kipp Nelson, Robin Norell and Providence UMC Newton Circle
- ◆ Megan Beddow from Johanna Ralsten-Cox
- ◆ Reed Olszack from Margaret McAlister
- ◆ Regina Gyamfi from Kristine Gyamfi
- ◆ Stacy Eldridge from Donald Kipnis
- ◆ Virginia Randall & Mary Ann Walton from Margaret & Daniel Everette, Jr.

## **In-Kind Donations**

### JLL's Back to School Drive for Branches:

- ◆ Andersen, Sandra - 100 spiral college and wide ruled notebooks
- ◆ Barton, Charles - Several school supplies such as wide ruled paper, notecards, scissors, glue, glue sticks, and 14 JETPAL everyday laptop backpacks
- ◆ Black, Barbara - Several school supplies such as pens, glue sticks, pencils, dividers, and 13 staples brand backpacks
- ◆ Bosch, Audley - 11 Staples brand backpacks
- ◆ Brown, Stewart - 6 Staples brand backpacks
- ◆ Carballo, Randy - 3 JETPAL everyday laptop backpacks
- ◆ Chan, Wendy - 6 JETPAL everyday laptop backpacks
- ◆ Dickey, Andrew - 3 JETPAL everyday laptop backpacks
- ◆ Gallart, Lauren - 6 JETPAL everyday laptop backpack
- ◆ Glascock, Miles B - 6 JETPAL everyday laptop backpacks
- ◆ Goodman, Matthew - Several school supplies such as wide and college ruled paper, wide and college ruled spiral bound notebooks, dividers, pens, and pencils

Continued on Page 6

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## In-Kind Donations

### JLL's Back to School Drive for Branches, contd from Page 5:

- ◆ Green, David - 80 spiral college and wide ruled notebooks
- ◆ Groden, Sky - Several school supplies such as highlighters, erasers, sharpeners, markers, crayons, colored pencils, index cards, liquid glue, and stick glue
- ◆ Hamde, Samer - 7 JETPAL everyday laptop backpack
- ◆ Hassam, Shehnaz - 6 JETPAL everyday laptop backpacks
- ◆ Hernandez, Ramon - 3 staples brand backpacks
- ◆ Lacerda, Carolina - 6 JETPAL everyday laptop backpacks
- ◆ Macphail, Gavin - 3 staples brand backpacks
- ◆ Meli, Nick - 6 JETPAL everyday laptop backpacks
- ◆ Miller, Marc - 3 staples brand backpacks
- ◆ Posluszny, Lisa - 6 JETPAL everyday laptop backpacks
- ◆ Postel, Luciana - 6 JETPAL everyday laptop backpacks
- ◆ Preve, David - Several school supplies such as composition notebooks, scissors, glue, and glue sticks
- ◆ Quinon, Eddie - 3 JETPAL everyday laptop backpacks
- ◆ Smith, Brian - Several school supplies such as highlighters, erasers, sharpeners, markers, crayons, colored pencils, index cards, liquid glue, stick glue, duo tang folders, pencil boxes and rulers

### Back to School:

- ◆ Alma Ad - Hosted a Back to School Party at Branches Florida City with Face Painting, Temporary Tattoos, Inflatable Slide, Magic Show, Lunch and Snacks and Donated over 120 Backpacks filled with School Supplies Including Jump Drives and Headphones plus 20 Cases of Copy Paper and Several Boxes of Extra School Supplies.
- ◆ AT&T - 12 Bags of Assorted School Supplies and 4 Backpacks
- ◆ Baker, Elizabeth & Edward - 6 Backpacks and 2 Large Boxes of Assorted School Supplies
- ◆ Biz Nest - 1 Large Box of Assorted School Supplies
- ◆ Canero Immigration Law Firm - 1 Large Box of Assorted School Supplies
- ◆ Devon Seafood and Steak - Sushi for over 100 Guests at Branches' Back to School Bash
- ◆ EPIC Hotel - 80 Jansport Backpacks, 50 Boxes of Crayons, 50 Spiral Notebooks, 30 Boxes of Colored Pencils and 30 Glue Sticks
- ◆ FirstBank Florida - 4 Large Boxes and 3 Bags of Assorted School Supplies
- ◆ Florida International University - One Large Box of Assorted School Supplies
- ◆ Hurtado, Elyse - 12 Pencil Boxes, 36 Ticonderoga Pencils, 12 Erasers, 12 Eight-Pack Jumbo Crayons,

- 800 Sheets of College Ruled Notebook Paper, 18 Pads of Post-it Notes, 25 Two-Pocket Folders, 30 Elmer's School Glue Sticks, 500 Sheets of Construction Paper
- ◆ JLL- Property Management Office - 2 Boxes of School Supplies
- ◆ Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) - 121 backpacks filled with school supplies such as folders, packs of paper, composition notebooks, pencil boxes, crayons, colored pencils, glue sticks, scissors and pencils
- ◆ JP Morgan Chase Bank - Over 5 Large Boxes of Assorted School Supplies
- ◆ Miami Herald Media Company - 3 Large Boxes of School Supplies
- ◆ Pallavicini, Mayner - Provided DJ Service for 3 Hours for Branches' Back to School Bash
- ◆ Parra, Alexandra - 4 Uniform Skirts
- ◆ Pisco y Nazca - Provided Short Rib Samples for over 100 Guests at Branches' Back to School Bash
- ◆ Pizza Rev - Provided Pizza for over 100 Guests at Branches' Back to School Bash
- ◆ Regions Financial Corporation - 7 Boxes of Assorted School Supplies and One Backpack
- ◆ Rodriguez, Jessica - 48 Backpacks and 48 School Supply Kits Including Notebooks, Folders, Rulers, Pencils, Pens, Crayons, Glue Sticks and More
- ◆ Seasons 52 Coral Gables - Provided Dessert for over 100 Guests at Branches' Back to School Bash
- ◆ South Miami Associates Group of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. - 2 Large Boxes of School Supplies
- ◆ Sushi Maki - Provided Sushi for over 100 Guests at Branches' Back to School Bash
- ◆ TD Bank Bird Road - Two Boxes and 1 Large Bag of Assorted School Supplies
- ◆ Titanic Brewing Company - One Keg of Beer for Branches' Back to School Bash
- ◆ Transwestern - 5 Backpacks and 3 Bags Filled with School Supplies
- ◆ UHealth Lennar Foundation Medical Center - Rental of Rooftop Terrace for Branches' Back to School Bash
- ◆ University of Miami SONHS - Several Large Boxes filled with Backpacks and Assorted School Supplies
- ◆ USI Insurance - 55 Backpacks with School Supplies
- ◆ Walton, Carol - Event Photos for Back to School Bash
- ◆ Yahoo, Inc. - 1 Box of School Supplies

Continued on Page 7

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### Other In-Kind Donations

- ◆ First UMC Coral Gables - Rented Pool at A.D. Barnes Park and Hosted Pool Party for Branches Florida City and Branches South Miami Youth With Lunch From Pollo Tropical
- ◆ Law Offices of Dagmar Llaudy - 2 Large Bags of Halloween Costumes
- ◆ Zambrano, Amy - Over 200 Books, One Large Bag of Legos and a Wii Gaming System
- ◆ Zambrano, Amy - One PlayStation and Several Games
- ◆ Zambrano, Amy - Two Large Bags of Barbies and Accessories, 1 Bag of New Books and Two Gym Mats
- ◆ The Miami FC - 400 Tickets to May 27 Game
- ◆ The Miami FC - 200 Tickets to August 2nd Game
- ◆ The Miami FC - 50 Tickets to Home Opener on Saturday, April 8th
- ◆ The Miami FC - 100 Tickets to the September 2, 2017 Game and 100 Tickets to the September 6, 2017 Game
- ◆ The Miami FC - 200 Tickets for the June 17, 2017 Game and 200 Tickets for the June 24, 2017 Game
- ◆ The Miami FC - 400 Tickets to Game on June 28th
- ◆ WPLG Local 10 - Over 300 brand new books for our children and youth
- ◆ Balkin, Lisa - 2 Large Bags of Baby Clothing and Accessories, Baby Carrier, Infant Car Seat and Base
- ◆ City Furniture - Twin Bunk Bed with Mattress and a Twin Bed Frame with Mattress
- ◆ Pike, Isabelle - One Blue Men's Jacket and a Men's Navy Suit
- ◆ The Miami FC - 300 Tickets
- ◆ Zeta Tau Alpha Fraternity Housing Corporation - 2 Sofas, 4 Armchairs, 1 Ottoman, 2 Decorative End Chairs, 1 Dining Table, 2 Large Tower Cabinets, 1 Butcher Block Counter, 3 Dining Room Straight Back Chairs, 3 Commercial Area Rugs, Wood TV Trays and 2 Leatherette upholstered Straight Back Chairs
- ◆ Prindle, Hunter - 20 Bags of School Uniforms Including Polo Shirts, Pants or Skirts, Socks and Shoes
- ◆ Aungst, Emily & Kristopher - Baby Einstein Activity Jumper and a Reclining Baby Chair
- ◆ Zambrano, Amy - Wii Fit System and Scrapbook Materials
- ◆ FPD Painting Corp. - Provided all of the Paint, Brushes and Prime Materials for Outdoor Classroom Project
- ◆ Total Safety Consulting - Wood Needed to Build Outdoor Classroom and 5 Additional Benches
- ◆ Lush Life - Mulch for Branches Lakeview Outdoor Classroom
- ◆ Arazoza Brothers Corp. - Mulch for Branches Lakeview Outdoor Classroom
- ◆ Howard, Kathy & Scott - 4 New Pairs of Water Shoes and Water Bottles for Branches South Miami 's Sailing Camp Students
- ◆ Shulas Grill 347 - Hosted a cooking demonstration for 6 kids and 2 adults and provided lunch
- ◆ Zaniac - One Minecraft Workshop and One Robotics Workshop Held at Branches South Miami on July 6, 2017
- ◆ Zaniac - One week of Summer Camp Registration for 2 Students from Branches South Miami
- ◆ First UMC Boca Raton - Hosted Branches Climb to College & Career Bootcamp on August 11th and 12th.
- ◆ Galleria Farms - Flowers for 20 Centerpieces for the Climb to College & Career Summer Celebration Dinner
- ◆ Castle Harbor Boat Club & School - 2017 Summer Sailing Camp Scholarships for 9 Branches Students



# 2017 Thanksgiving Recap

## 17th 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:



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.  
The people of The United Methodist Church™



Thanks to the efforts of our amazing donors and volunteers, Branches provided over 4,800 meals to individuals in need this 2017 Thanksgiving Season! Over 700 volunteers helped cook, package and deliver meals on Thanksgiving morning at 6 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, Mercantil Bank, Molina Healthcare and Publix Super Markets Charities for serving as *Thanksgiving Site Sponsors*. Thank you also to Kathy & Scott Howard, Killian Pines United Methodist Church, Tripp Scott Attorneys at Law for their generous support as *Thanksgiving Sponsors*! Appreciation also goes to our *Thanksgiving Supporters*: Aetna Better Health of Florida, William J. Fogarthy, Moore Stephens Lovelace, Shelley & Larry Rutherford, R.P. Sprague and Zojak World Wide and many thanks to our in-kind donors Aquarius Press, Johnson & Wales University, Molina Healthcare of Florida, República, Sedano's Supermarkets, United Way of Miami-Dade and the University of Miami SONHS for their generous in-kind contributions and support.**



Volunteers from Alan Goldfarb, P.A. are all smiles cutting pumpkins pies.



Volunteers are hard at work during meal assembly as they portion out turkey for each hot meal.



A Boy Scouts troop gets ready to deliver meals to needy clients.

### A special THANK YOU to our incredible Food Drive Partners!

**Goya Foods of Florida, Palmer Trinity Private School, Aramark—Office Coffee & Water Services, BD Medical Technology, Breakthrough Miami at the University of Miami, Coconut Grove Montessori School, First United Methodist Church (UMC) of Coral Gables, Gulliver School, Kendall UMC Day School, Lennar Corporation, Miramar UMC, Norland UMC, Plaza Construction, Poinciana UMC, Regions Bank—Coral Gables, Regions Bank—Ft. Lauderdale, TD Bank—Bird Road, The Growing Place of First UMC of Coral Gables, United Way Miami-Dade, Unity on the Bay and USI Insurance.**





**Branches**  
Grow Deeper, Climb Higher

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*Black Tie & Blue Jeans*

**BENEFIT DINNER  
AND AUCTION**

*Rooted to Grow...*

**SATURDAY, APRIL 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2018  
JW MARRIOTT MARQUIS MIAMI  
255 BISCAYNE BLVD WAY, MIAMI, FL  
6 PM**

*Featuring*  
**THE TRISH & DAN BELL COMMUNITY  
EMPOWERMENT AWARD**

*Philanthropic Chairs*  
**TRISH & DAN BELL**

*Gala Co-Chairs*  
**RICK & MARGARITA TONKINSON**

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](mailto:ipike@branchesfl.org)

See you there!



**Branches**  
Grow Deeper, Climb Higher