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MISSION STATEMENT:

To serve, educate and inspire people through student, family and financial wellness 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

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Volunteers delivering Thanksgiving meals!



AmeriCorps members serving on MLK Day!

A Message from the CEO

Ramping Up in 2024!

As 2023 came to a close, rather than winding down, Branches was ramping up! In the last 6 weeks of the year, we touched the lives of over 6,000 people across our community in meaningful ways.

You will see the newsletter articles about Thanksgiving meals and Under the Tree Toy Shops that combined served over 5,500 individuals, children and families. We could not have done such large-scale engagement without the caring involvement of over 1,100 volunteers!

We also celebrated the progress made by our entrepreneurs in our Micro-Business Incubator & Be One program with a Holiday Party at the UM Newman Alumni Center in December. Over 60 businesses were represented and a dozen partners who support and serve in the program. Awards were given and motivational testimonies shared – everyone was inspired by the success of our entrepreneurs!

We then hosted our annual Climb Higher Scholarship dinner and celebration which includes nearly 50 post-secondary students who are receiving the scholarship. Among the numerous raffle prizes and Branches' gifts provided to the students, we were all motivated by Branches' alum Geraldo Marcelin's heartfelt message. Thank you to Trish and Dan Bell for helping us launch this life-changing scholarship back in 2014!

We have kept up the momentum in the new year as 150 AmeriCorps, staff and volunteers came together on MLK Day to serve in our communities from our 3 sites.

At the end of January, we kicked off another VITA tax season with a day of awareness highlighting the real value of the Earned Income Tax Credit for working families with children. This tax season we expect to securely prepare over 8,000 tax returns through the Miami Tax Pros coalition.

Clearly Branches could not do all of this and so much more without so many engaged volunteers, funders and partners! We are ever grateful for your very kind and compassionate support and involvement. Looking forward to all that we will do in service and love in 2024!

With Hope & Gratitude,

Brent McLaughlin
President & CEO



Micro-Business participants at the Be One Holiday Party.



Celebrating EITC Awareness Day with the IRS and United Way Miami at the Main Library.

Thanksgiving Recap

Celebrating 23 Years of Branches' Thanksgiving Meal Delivery!

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

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TRIAL ATTORNEYS

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on the Bay for spiritual living

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Thank you to our incredible donors and volunteers! Branches set out to make another significant impact during last year's Thanksgiving Season. Together, we provided more than 5,150 nourishing meals to individuals facing hardship. With an enthusiastic team of over 1,000 volunteers who poured their hearts into cooking, packaging, and delivering these meals on Thanksgiving morning throughout Miami-Dade and Broward Counties from our 7 sites.

"Thanksgiving is full of traditions and my favorite one is volunteering with Branches on Thanksgiving morning to deliver meals to families in need.", shares Brittanie Bassant, President & CEO at Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce. At Branches, we strive to give back to our community, and we are grateful for the generosity of our supporters who allow us to make this event possible every year. We are looking forward to many more to come.

Thank You to Amerant, Amerihealth Caritas Florida, Aramark, BB Americas, Bradesco, Celebrity Cruises, GEICO, The Keyes Company, Mercedes Benz of Coral Gables | Mercedes Benz of Cutler Bay, Molina Healthcare, Port of Miami, South Miami Hospital and The Tonkinson Foundation for serving as *Thanksgiving Site Sponsors*. Thank you also to David Smith, First Horizon, Kathy & Scott Howard, Luxe Properties and Vita Construction who served as *Thanksgiving Sponsors*. Many thanks to our in-kind donors GOYA Foods of Florida, Peace United Methodist Church (UMC), Redland Community UMC, and United Way Miami for their dedicated support. We are so thankful to all our partners for making this truly impactful Meal Delivery a reality!



Volunteers serving up meals at Branches Florida City.



Volunteers slicing pies at Coral Gables Congregational United Church of Christ.



Meals being assembled at Branches Lakeview.



Volunteer drivers get loaded up with meals and are off to deliver!

A special THANK YOU to our incredible Food Drive Partners!

Palmer Trinity Private School, Palmetto Bay Academy, Shops at Merrick Park, Cornerstone United Methodist Church, Kendall UMC Day School, BNY Mellon, Ole Broadcasting, Bristol Towers, Coral Gables Congregational UCC, The Keyes Company, JP Morgan Chase Bank, United Wesley Foundation, and Coastal Construction.

Under the Tree Toy Shops

Empowering Parents, Spreading Joy!



Branches takes pride in organizing its annual Under the Tree Toy Shops! Nearly a decade ago, we made the decision to establish on-site Toy Shops, providing an opportunity for parents of our students to choose brand-new toys for their children at remarkably discounted prices—up to 90% off! Amidst the festive atmosphere filled with holiday music and treats, parents can joyfully shop for their little ones. To add to the experience, each selected present is expertly wrapped by the dedicated volunteers at Branches. These Toy Shops play a vital role in empowering parents, fostering a sense of pride and joy as they personally select and gift these treasures to their kids on Christmas morning.

A mother of three, shared, "I have three kids, and this has been such a blessing to me. The fact that the volunteers and Branches staff took the time to do this—it has been a blessing not just for me but for all the kids. Times are tough, and we still want to give our kids a good Christmas. Thank you so much, Branches!" These words echo the true essence of the Under the Tree Toy Shops, and we share them with you as a testament to the impact our supporters and volunteers have on the lives of families in our community.

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

All other donors from the current Fiscal Year (7/1/23-1/17/24) are listed at branchesfl.org/our-stories under Newsletters



A special THANK YOU to our Toy Drive Partners!

Palmer Trinity School, Victoria & Jason Randolph, Jeannette Coto-Dou & Remy Dou, JP Morgan Chase, The Little Lighthouse Foundation, Crowe, LLP, Voices for Children, Uri Segev, Chris & David Lane, Kendall United Methodist Women, BayVillage1, One More Child, Annie & Tom Tannehill, Bristol Towers, Miami Kids Magazine, First UMC of Coral Gables & The Growing Place Early Childhood Center, Pacific National Bank, LUXE Properties, UM School of Nursing and many more!

Trish & Dan Bell • Florida Annual Conference UMC • The Children's Trust • United Way Miami • The Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation • The Miami Foundation • Volunteer Florida • The Templeton Family Foundation • FIU Board of Trustees • Helen's Hope Foundation • Comcast NBCUniversal • EFSP • The Kirk Foundation • Aetna CVS Health • Bob Kelly • Danielle & Anthony Caravetta • NALCAB • Simply Healthcare Plans, Inc. • The NASCAR Foundation • Kelly Foundation • Jocelyn Watkins

Thank You, Branches Donors & Stakeholders!

List includes contributions received by Branches from July 1, 2023 to January 17, 2024. 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.

\$100,000 and up

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- Ed Deppman from James Robinson
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- Isabelle Pike from Mark Trowbridge
- Jon Pruitt and Michelle Chapman from Larry and Jonene Pruitt
- Kelley and Gregg Morrison from Larry and Jonene Pruitt
- Kim King Torres from Leslie & Mikey Atelus
- Melissa & Maya Rappaport from Marsha Soffer
- Nidia Ruiz from Kadince
- Reality Church Miami from Reality Church Miami
- Sidley Austin LLP from Sidley Austin LLP
- Trish & Dan Bell from The Wilder Foundation

Gifts on Behalf

- Martha Rogers Haas from MARH Foundation

Visa Small Business Fair!



Thank you to Visa for the invaluable opportunity extended to some of our Micro-Business participants, where they showcased their services and products to over 1,000 of Visa's Miami employees on Tuesday, February 13th, 2024. This commitment to supporting and believing in local small businesses is truly commendable and this exposure is pivotal for our micro-businesses' growth and sustainability.

To learn more about the Branches Micro-Business Incubator & E-Lab, visit www.branchesfl.org/micro-business-program/



Branches

Trish & Dan Bell Family
Empowerment Centers

11500 NW 12th Ave, Miami, FL 33168 | branchesfl.org

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4.20.2024
6:30 P.M.

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