



Branches
Trish & Dan Bell Family
Empowerment Centers

Annual Report | 2024



Our History



Branches Florida City, circa 2000



The Trish and Dan Bell Family Branches Center - Florida City Campus which opened in the Fall of 2014



The new playground, eagerly awaited by the Florida City students, was constructed in May of 2015. The Shade System was added in early 2018

Branches, formerly Miami Urban Ministries, was established in 1973 as the urban and social justice agency of what is now the South East District of the United Methodist Church. Up until 1999, Branches focused on grassroots organizing, advocacy and working with community members who were disadvantaged and/or experiencing social injustice. During this time, Branches focused resources in the areas of social crisis, immigration, housing, hospice care and hurricane relief, among others.

In 2000 when Mr. Brent McLaughlin moved from being a volunteer to President & CEO, Branches embarked on developing and implementing programs that addressed the root causes of poverty and immediate and critical needs. Headquartered in a small office in Coconut Grove, Branches focused on its economic development programs by launching the ASSETS Small Business Development program and Thanksgiving meal deliveries. Branches was then introduced to a wonderful children's program being run out of the Florida City United Methodist Mission by Mrs. Kim Torres. Mrs. Torres came to Florida City as a missionary after Hurricane Andrew, now 32 years ago, and was providing afterschool and youth development services. Mr. McLaughlin was so impressed with her program that he offered to take it in under Branches and help secure more funding to support it.

In 2004, Branches was awarded its first contract from The Children's Trust to serve 100 students at Branches Florida City. In 2005, Trish and Dan Bell made an initial \$400,000 matching grant commitment which proved to be transformational for Branches.

A couple years later, Branches South Miami also began serving children and youth. In 2009, Branches was selected to house and operate the United Way Center for Financial Stability at its new HQ location in North Miami, also known as Branches Lakeview, to provide high quality financial wellness services. In 2013, Branches Lakeview expanded to also serve children and youth from that surrounding neighborhood.

In 2023, Branches celebrated its 50th Anniversary and today in 2024, Branches serves over 15,000 individuals per year, in particular, providing in-depth services for nearly 500 students and their families at all 3 of its locations. Thanks to the Bell's long term philanthropic support, numerous generous donors, and many partners, Branches is able to provide truly life-changing opportunities to hardworking families and their children to help break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Here's to many more years of changing lives!

To learn more about Branches' History, please visit branchesfl.org/50th-anniversary



At The Heart of Our Mission

Branches is a place where children, youth and families are valued and are given the opportunity to discover their gifts and talents and realize their God-given potential.

We are grateful for another year of service and are excited to report that in 2024 Branches hit numerous milestones, all of which reflect the enduring impact we have on people's lives. Thanks to YOUR support we have been able to achieve the following:

- Branches Florida City celebrated 32 years of continuous service.
- We provided 51 Climb Higher scholarships to Branches students valued at \$ 81,371
- We served 452 students each day at our 3 Branches sites, plus 51 college students.
- We served 9,780 individuals through financial wellness services, providing 473 participants with one-on-one personal financial coaching sessions.
- Our Micro-Business Team provided 47 business trainings and coaching sessions to 811 small businesses.

- With the help of our partners, the VITA Tax Prep coalition, Miami Tax Pros, prepared over 8,262 free filings, securing nearly \$10 million in refunds.
- Branches and 1,000+ volunteers delivered over 5,300 hot Thanksgiving meals and educational resources, and so much more...

We could not begin to have such an incredible impact without the support and partnership of hundreds of donors including individuals, churches, businesses, and private foundations, especially Trish & Dan Bell, United Way Miami, The Children's Trust, and Volunteer Florida. Thanks to each of you for partnering with Branches as together we create life-changing opportunities for children and families. We are grateful for your partnership!



Rodney H. Bell

Board Chair

Brent McLaughlin

President & CEO

2024 Community Impact Report

Grow, Climb & Climb Higher Programs



Build loving, personal relationships with our students and their families. We prepare our children and youth for lifelong success through the enrichment of their minds, bodies and hearts.



233

Grow (elementary) students learning and thriving.

217

Climb (middle & high school) students realizing their potential.

51

Climb Higher Students currently attending post-secondary school.



405

Summer Shade Camp participants.



114,238

Snacks and Meals provided to our students.



1,310

Toys purchased by parents in our Under the Tree Shops.



\$81,371

Branches Scholarships awarded to our college students.



89%

Student retention rate year over year.

Climb Higher

- 80% of Branches students pursue a post-secondary education.
- 56% of Branches students complete a college education within 6 years.
- 73% of Branches college students graduate debt free. 27% graduate with less than \$3,200.
- The average debt of a Florida college student is approx. \$30,000.

2024 Community Impact Report

Achieve Programs



Target the well-being of the entire community through services fostering financial wellness and long-term success in life.

Branches also houses and operates the United Way Center for Financial Stability of North Dade & South Dade.

9,780

Participants served through financial wellness services.

473

Participants received one-on-one financial coaching sessions.



8,262

VITA FREE TAX PREP

Taxpayers provided with free VITA tax prep services through Branches-led coalition Miami Tax Pros.

\$9,998,729

Tax refunds secured for the community.



260

MICRO-BUSINESS INCUBATOR, E-LAB & BE ONE community

Business owners made over 9,000 connections through the Branches' BE ONE website and app with local entrepreneurs.

811

Business owners attended 47 business training events.



\$17,000

BASIC NEEDS

Disbursed to help families overcome rent, utilities, food, transportation and medical emergencies.

5,337

Thanksgiving meals delivered and served.



450

FINANCIAL EDUCATION

Children and Youth received financial education.

987

Participants that received a Miami-Dade Community ID.

- **Branches' financial coaching participants saved an average of \$4,252 each year.**
- **Participants reduced their debt by an average of \$2,462 in one year.**
- **Participants working with a Financial Coach successfully boosted their credit score by an average of 45 points or 18.85%.**
- **Of the 2,249 families that received tax prep services through Branches VITA sites, 15% saved a portion of their refund to invest in their financial goals.**

Esther: A Journey of Perseverance and Triumph



Esther Saintil's journey is a testament to resilience, ambition, and the power of a strong support system. Born in Haiti, she joined Branches in 2017 and quickly found a community that nurtured both her academic and personal growth. Initially struggling with math, she overcame her challenges with the help of Branches' dedicated support, building the confidence that would propel her to new heights.

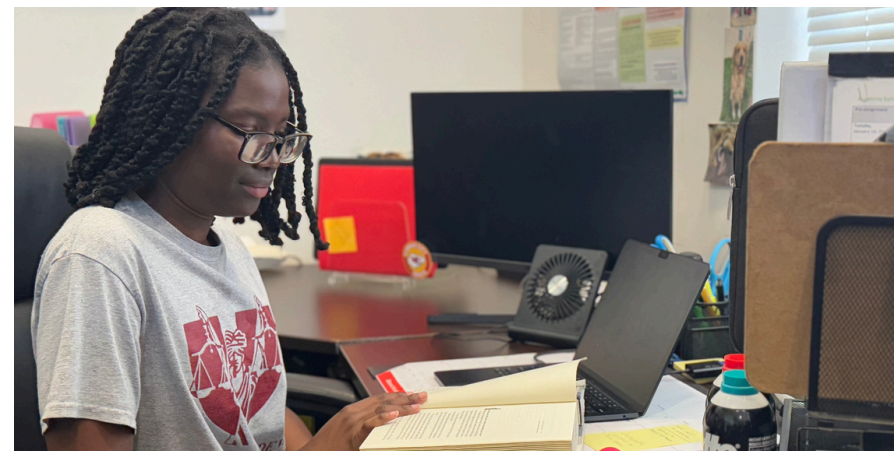
Balancing academics, sports, and leadership opportunities, Esther's hard work paid off with a remarkable 4.81 weighted GPA and her selection for the highly competitive Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America (LEDA) program. Her determination culminated on December 17, 2024, when she received life-changing news—her acceptance to Yale University. She was on a Branches field trip at the time, surrounded by the community that had been with her every step of the way.

Despite her achievements, Esther's journey has not been without obstacles. A financial aid complication due to her father's tax return initially created uncertainty about her ability to enroll at Yale. But thanks to the help of Branches' Achieve team, her father was able to get the right guidance with his tax return and make the right corrections.

"Branches is a place where I have found community and hope. I am loved and valued. They have helped me grow personally and supported me academically," Esther shared.

Through every step, Esther has been uplifted by mentors like Danielle, a Branches alumna and Yale graduate, who helped her navigate the application process and prepare for the next chapter of her education. Judith, Senior Climb Coach at Branches, also reminded her of the strength she already possessed. When Esther expressed nervousness about attending Yale, Judith reassured her, saying, "You got into Yale because you are smart too!"

Esther's story is one of perseverance, mentorship, and community. With the support of Branches, she has thrived—and now hopes to uplift others as she begins her journey at Yale. Her success proves that no dream is too big and no challenge too great when met with determination and the right support.



Sergei: Redefining Grooming and Mentorship



In 2018, visionary barber Sergei Grant set out to transform South Florida's grooming industry by launching Exclusive Tonsorial Services, a premium mobile barber business offering convenience and excellence. His passion for grooming and innovation quickly earned him a loyal clientele, and his reputation as a skilled barber spread throughout the region. But Sergei's commitment to the craft didn't stop at entrepreneurship—he also became a full-time instructor at The Barbering Academy in Miami Gardens and Doral, dedicating himself to shaping the next generation of barbers. Through mentorship, he inspired many aspiring professionals to pursue their dreams with creativity and confidence.

As his business grew, Sergei remained committed to strengthening his business acumen. Actively participating in Branches' Micro-Business workshops, he gained crucial skills in financial management, marketing, and balancing the demands of his expanding business. With Branches' support, Sergei was able to successfully manage his dual roles as a business owner and instructor. His dedication paid off, earning him recognition from organizations like Art & Insights, where he shared his journey and vision with a broader audience.

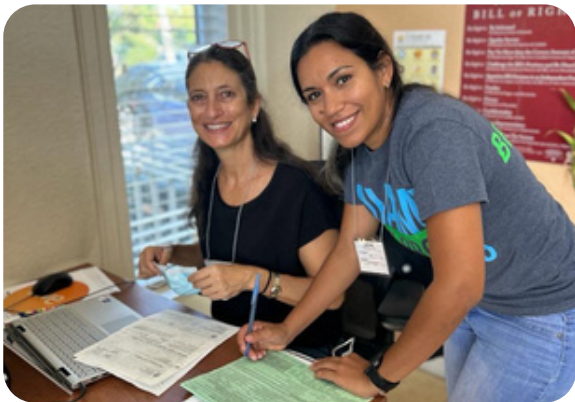
"Being part of Branches has given me the tools and confidence to expand my business while continuing to mentor others," Sergei shared. His relationship with Branches helped him not only refine his entrepreneurial skills but also deepen his commitment to empowering others in the industry.

Sergei's approach to business goes beyond providing exceptional grooming services—he's passionate about building a lasting legacy that influences both his clients and his students.

Today, Exclusive Tonsorial Services stands as a symbol of innovation and excellence in South Florida's grooming scene, known for its client-focused approach and personalized service. Sergei's journey is a testament to the transformative power of passion, hard work, and community support. As he continues to grow his business and mentor the next generation of barbers, Sergei remains a beacon of resilience, inspiring fellow entrepreneurs to dream big and act boldly. Learn more about Sergei's business [here!](#)



Volunteering at Branches



THE POWER OF VOLUNTEERING

At Branches, our volunteers are the heartbeat of our mission. Every year, hundreds of individuals generously give their time—whether it's helping a child with homework, serving a warm meal, or guiding a family through the VITA program to maximize their tax refund.

Their dedication translates into thousands of hours of service, strengthening our community in ways both big and small. Volunteers don't just give back; they gain valuable skills, build meaningful connections, and become champions for change.

2024

1,240 Volunteers

8,015 Hours Served

\$268,447 Volunteers' Value

Branches celebrates “todas las culturas” at the Black Tie & Blue Jeans Gala



On Saturday, April 20th, Branches hosted the 2024 Black Tie & Blue Jeans Gala and Online Auction at the J.W. Marriott Marquis Miami. This year’s gala embraced a vibrant Latin theme, celebrating “todas las culturas” that make Miami our Magic City! Guests enjoyed delicious Latin cuisine, danced the night away to lively Latin music, and even got a taste of Miami’s famous cafecito.

The evening was made possible thanks to Philanthropic Chairs Trish and Dan Bell, Gala Chairs Karla and Scott Richey, and Mistress of Ceremonies Lissette Gonzalez of CBS 4. Trish and Dan Bell also committed to a generous dollar-for-dollar Matching Grant for all gifts made to the evening’s appeal. The event honored Heide & Jose Dans with the 2024 Trish and Dan Bell Community Empowerment Award, recognizing their incredible contributions to the Miami community.

Over 500 guests, including local philanthropists and corporate partners, attended the Gala and raised a record-breaking \$715,000 to support Branches’ life-changing programs, which empower families to break the cycle of generational poverty.

Thank you to our top sponsors: Trish & Dan Bell, Himan Brown Charitable Trust, Heide & Jose Dans, Alan & Brigitt Potamkin with Amanda Altman & David Lynn, Kathy & Scott Howard, Kate Inman & Daniel Haines, and JP Morgan Chase & Co. Gold Sponsors included Aetna, Rodney H. Bell, Banesco, Victoria & Jason Randolph, City National Bank, The Huizenga Family Foundation, and many more. We are grateful for all our supporters who helped make this event another incredible success!

Clockwise: Honorees Jose & Heide Dans with Philanthropic Chairs, Trish & Dan Bell, and Branches' President & CEO Brent McLaughlin - Trish & Dan Bell, Karla & Scott Richey, and Brent McLaughlin - A Branches Family - Alec Alfonso, Marielena Villamil, Board Member TJ & Christina Villamil, Diana & Hunter Carrier

Please visit branchesfl.org/2024gala and watch our fun Gala Recap Video [here!](#)

Our Events

MLK Serve Day



On January 15, 2024, Branches, in partnership with AmeriCorps, honored Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy with a special day of service.

At Branches Florida City, our team of volunteers contributed to the community's vibrancy by helping with projects like painting, minor repairs, and the beautification of Branches Florida City, Homestead Middle School, and Fasulo Park. In South Miami, our team rolled up their sleeves to assist with a park cleanup at Elks Lodge Park. At Branches Lakeview, volunteers gave back by beautifying and painting a local family's home and improving the grounds of Branches Lakeview. This could have not been possible without the help of our amazing volunteers and Branches staff.

A special thank you to the City of Florida City, Volunteer Florida, Mandarin United Methodist Church, First UMC Church Miami, and Repair the World for their unwavering support on such a memorable day.

Branches' Back to School Bash



[Click here to learn more!](#)

On the evening of August 7th, the University of Miami's Newman Alumni Center buzzed with excitement as over 150 guests gathered for Branches' 8th Annual Back to School Bash. This happy hour for a cause featured refreshing drinks, delicious bites from local restaurants, and mouth-watering desserts—all generously donated by our amazing partners. Guests packed 500 backpacks with essential school supplies while enjoying the energetic beats of DJ Mayner. Adding a heartfelt touch, attendees wrote encouraging notes to inspire Branches students as they head back to school.

Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava delivered special remarks, highlighting the importance of community support for education. The evening also celebrated Aramark as the recipient of the 2024 Herbert C. Parlato Volunteer Award, recognizing their outstanding dedication to Branches' children and families.

Thank you to our Gold Star Sponsors, Aetna, Banesco, Bradesco Bank, Bean Automotive Group, Boeing and The Templeton Family Foundation and in-kind donors for making this event another success!

Our Events

Branches' Thanksgiving Meal Delivery



[Click here to learn more!](#)

On Thanksgiving Day, Branches prepared and delivered 5,337 meals to individuals in need from seven sites across Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, with the help of over 1,000 dedicated volunteers. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, donors, and volunteers, we were able to provide delicious, high-quality meals to those facing hardship. We also have the opportunity to educate individuals on financial wellness, providing them with valuable resources and guiding them to the nearest center where they can receive further support.

We are especially grateful to our Top Turkey Thanksgiving Sponsors, Alan Goldfarb, P.A. and Unity on the Bay! Thank you to our Harvest Sponsors, Annie & Tom Tannehill, The Batchelor Foundation, Bradesco Bank, Catalyst Pharmaceuticals, City National Bank, The Green Family Foundation, The Kirk Foundation, Miami Vineyard, Publix Charities and the Templeton Family Foundation.

We look forward to celebrating the 25th anniversary of our Thanksgiving meal program in 2025 and making an even greater impact!

Branches' Under the Tree Toy Shops



[Click here to learn more!](#)

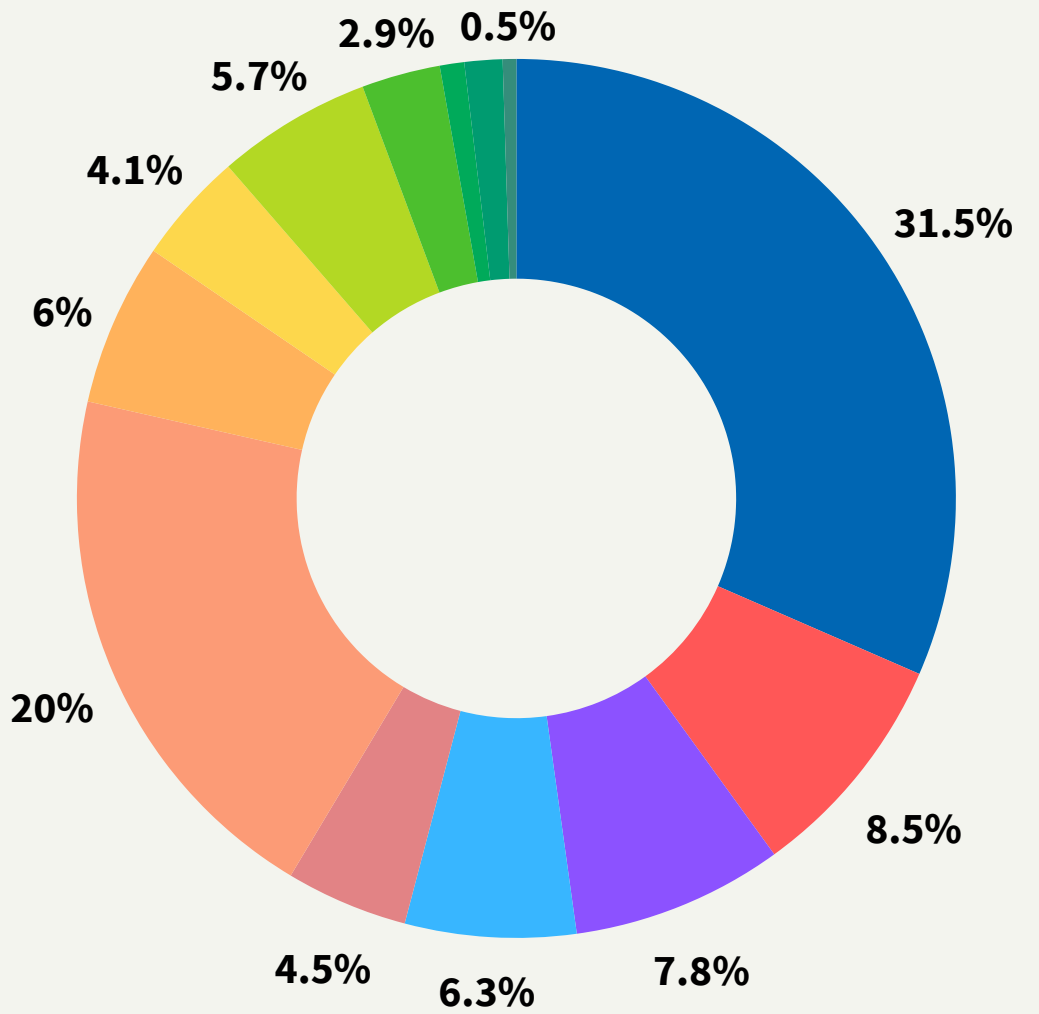
One of our favorite traditions is hosting our annual Under the Tree Toy Shops! Nearly a decade ago, we launched these on-site Toy Shops to give parents of our students the opportunity to purchase brand-new toys for their children at deeply discounted prices—up to 90% off. Filled with holiday music and treats, these festive events allow parents to shop with pride, knowing they are making their child's Christmas extra special. Each chosen gift is then beautifully wrapped by our dedicated volunteers, adding an extra touch of holiday magic.

This year, we were thrilled to serve over 200 families across our three sites and stock the Toy Shops with over 2,000 toys! In addition, we gifted our youth Branches-branded merchandise and gift cards to their favorite shops.

A heartfelt thank you to our Angel Sponsors, The Alvarez Family, The Batchelor Foundation, The Lopez Family, The Templeton Family Foundation, and many others for making this season so special!

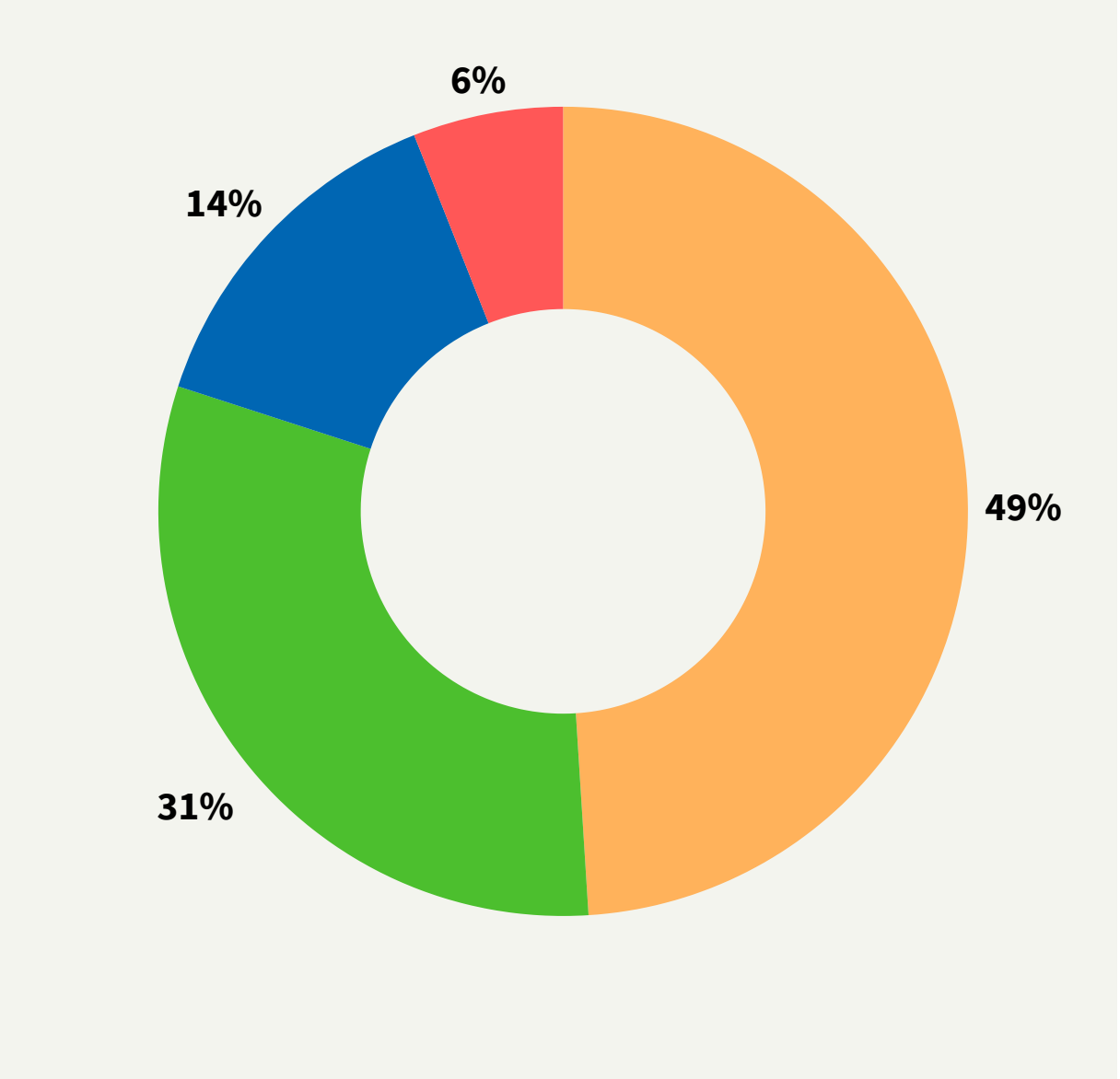
Revenue Breakdown

Revenue Category	FYE 2024	% OF TOTAL
Foundations	\$3,131,220	31.6%
The Children's Trust	\$845,992	8.5%
Government Agency Grants	\$774,736	7.8%
United Way of Miami	\$622,047	6.3%
Special Events	\$448,289	4.5%
Corporate	\$1,979,286	20.0%
Individual Donations	\$592,357	6.0%
Faith-Based Contributions	\$405,799	4.1%
Volunteer Florida	\$566,458	5.7%
In-Kind Contributions	\$287,285	2.9%
Program Revenue	\$84,902	0.9%
Interest Income	\$136,806	1.4%
Rental Income	\$45,000	0.5%
TOTAL REVENUE:	\$9,920,185	100%



Expenses Breakdown

Revenue Category	FYE 2024	% OF TOTAL
Student & Family Services	\$3,132,274	49%
Financial Wellness Services	\$1,957,115	31%
Fundraising	\$894,777	14%
Management & General	\$414,219	6%
TOTAL REVENUE:	\$6,398,385	100%



Branches' Board of Directors | 2024



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President & CEO

Branches, Inc



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VP/Community Development
Manager

Marian M. Smith
Member

Career Source South
Florida
Retired Assistant Director,
Administration

Jeanette Stone
Member

Baptist Health – South Miami
Hospital
VP of Operations

Rev. Dr. Audrey
Warren
Member

First United
Methodist Church of Miami
Pastor

Rev. Dr. Cynthia D.
Weems
Member

The United Methodist Church
of Sun City Center
Senior Pastor





Congratulations!

To Trish & Dan Bell
2024 Sand in My Shoes
Award Honorees

At Branches we are so grateful for the Bells unwavering and faithful support and the transformational impact they have made on the children, youth and families we serve everyday. It was a privilege to be part of such an uplifting evening in which the Bells were recognized for their philanthropic and visionary leadership throughout our community.

Donors & Stakeholders | July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

\$100,000 and above

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Citi Foundation
Florida Annual Conference UMC
Himan Brown Charitable Trust
Internal Revenue Service
Lever for Change
Miami-Dade County - OMB
Grants Coordination
The Batchelor Foundation, Inc.
The Children's Trust
The Frederick A. DeLuca
Foundation
The Miami Foundation
The Templeton Family
Foundation
United Way Miami
Volunteer Florida

Between \$30,000 and \$99,999

Aetna/CVS Health
Alabanza Evangelical Baptist Church
Anonymous
Comcast NBCUniversal
Danielle & Anthony Caravetta
Emergency Food & Shelter Program (EFSF)
FIU Board of Trustees
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Kathy & Scott Howard
Miami-Dade County PHCD
National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB)
Ocean Reef Community Foundation
Peacock Foundation, Inc.
Shepard Broad Foundation
Simply Healthcare Plans, Inc.
The Green Family Foundation
The Jorge M. Pérez Family Foundation
The Kirk Foundation
The Protestant Congregation of Ocean Reef, Inc.

Between \$10,000 and \$29,999

Aetna Better Health of Florida
Amerant Bank
Angel Alvarez
Annie & Tom Tannehill
Aramark
Awilda & Jorge Lopez
Banesco USA
Bank of America Charitable Foundation
BankUnited
BB Americas Bank

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City National Bank of Florida
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Crowe Foundation
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TD Charitable Foundation
TeamFootWorks
The Darrell R. Windle Charitable Fund
The José Milton Foundation
The Tonkinson Foundation
The Tonkinson Foundation
Tina & Pablo Rodriguez
Truist Financial Corporation
US Century Bank
Villa Family Foundation
Visa Inc.
Wells Fargo Bank

Between \$5,000 and \$9,999

Agape
AmeriHealth Caritas Florida
Ashcroft Capital
Banyan Health Systems
Barbara & Edward D. Deppman
Bilzin Sumberg
Celebrity Cruises
Cumming Group
Dade County Federal Credit Union
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PDC Technologies
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Publix Super Markets, Inc.
SouthState Bank
St. Luke's United Methodist Church
The Northern Trust Company
The Villamil Family Endowment Fund
The Wilder Foundation
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UnitedHealthcare

Between \$1,000 and \$4,999

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Ana Mari Ortega & Marc Schwarzberg
Barry University
Bilzin Sumberg
Bonnie Graham
Branches UMC
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Memorial United Methodist Church
Mercedes-Benz of Cutler Bay
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Office of Commissioner Raquel Regalado
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Pamela Poulos
Pasadena Community Church
PEO Chapter A
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Port of Miami
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Rebecca & Carleton Prothro
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Rotary Foundation of South Miami
Roxanna & Dr. Stanley Lynch
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TD Bank
The Carrie Meek Foundation
The Keyes Company
The Redland Company, Inc.
Touching Miami With Love
Travel by Design, Inc.
Unity on the Bay
VITAS Healthcare
Viventa LLC

Between \$500 and \$999

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Alice Bravo & Asoc.
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AT&T
Audrey Otero
Barbara Reese
Brian & Camila Schriener
Burger King Foundation
Chris & David Lane
Christina & TJ Villamil
Claudia Puig
Coral Gables Congregational United Church of Christ
Dave Lawrence
Deborah Koch
Diane & Terry Lee
Doris Richards
Ebenezer UMC
Elena V. Carpenter-Smith
Elizabeth Resnick
Fidelity Charitable
First UMC Homestead Women
George Joseph
Girl Scout Troop 220
Glicer & Greg Umbaugh
Heidi Wigand
Hola Ink
Ila Jimenez
Intermedia Touch
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Melody Young
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National Christian Foundation South Florida
Ned Ferrarone
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Paolo Saieh
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Rachele Huelsman
Rajni Agarwal
RAN Tracking
Rebecca Grimsley Miller
Rosa Lopez
Sandra C. Amezcua
Sharyn & Robert Ladner
Sushi Maki
Thomas Chan
Vanessa Vasquez
Wynn & Michael Byrne

Between \$200 and \$499

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Adriana Oliva
Aislynn McDonald
Alina & Ed Hudak
Amaka Amalu-Anderson
Amy Zambrano
Anelith Ortega
Anisha Patel
Barbara Romani
Barbara Soliday
Belen Jesuit Preparatory School
Benevity Causes - American Online Giving Foundation
Bill Hansen
BNI Business Leaders
Carolina Poubel & Mario Lacerda
Carrie & Amory Bodin
Chelsea & Nathan Mandler
Chris Dacek
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Connie Migeot
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Branches Florida City

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Branches provides life-changing opportunities to hardworking families and their children to help them break the cycle of generational poverty.

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