



Fall 2025

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MISSION STATEMENT:

Branches partners with families to build educational and financial assets, community and hope.

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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Branches Alumna Esther at Yale University.



Branches Climb students at a Financial Education Training: Paystub Showdown at Citi Bank's new Tamiami location.

A Message from the CEO

It's not just my job, it's my joy!

Dear Friends,

Over 20 years ago, we hired a single youth to serve alongside our staff providing summer day camp for children. We added training and support to foster professional growth. It was the beginning of our summer youth employment program and has kept growing for two decades. In 2025, more than 40 Branches high school youth were hired as 'Summer Shade Camp Guides'. Each summer we invest tens of thousands of dollars in our youth and the results have been transformational!

This program is much more than a summer job because our youth learn essential leadership and life skills and realize they have much to contribute and give back.

One of our former Guides, Pedro Bonilla, has followed the path from Guide to AmeriCorps member and now to full-time staff member at Branches. He is the team leader of the Summer Shade Camp Guide program and shared about the impact of serving as a youth at Branches:

"The Summer Shade Guide program transformed my life—it's where I discovered my passion to serve. Now, helping students prepare to lead is not just my job, it's my joy, because I know firsthand how powerful this experience can be in shaping their future."

Your support of Branches is an investment in these types of opportunities for youth and young adults. Together we are creating brighter futures for those we serve!

With Hope & Gratitude,

Brent McLaughlin
President & CEO



Branches' students interviewing for the Summer Shade Camp Guide positions.



Students receiving their brand new backpacks and school supplies at Branches' Back to School Night.

Branches' 9th Back to School Bash

Guests packed 550 backpacks full of supplies for Branches students!



Kathy Howard, Amy Deem and Board Member, Scott Howard



Susan Frishman, Miguel Luna, Brook Elkins, and Melody Velez of UnitedHealthcare



Graydon Campbell, Carlos Lombo and Malik Berry of Amazon

On August 6th, Branches hosted its 9th Annual Back to School Bash at the University of Miami's Newman Alumni Center. This year's event was the most successful Bash yet, raising over \$85,000 to support Branches' students and families. More than 150 guests came together for this "happy hour with a purpose," enjoying food and drinks from local restaurants while packing over 550 backpacks filled with essential school supplies for Branches students.

Guests enjoyed a night of networking, fun music, and delicious bites from restaurant partners including Café La Llave, Ciao Havana, Diced, Half Moon Empanadas, Seasons 52, Sushi Maki, and three of Branches' very own Micro-Business program participants; Big Yard Restaurant, Get Your Roll On Ice Cream & Sir Vin Delights. Thanks to this incredible community effort, all of Branches' children and youth walked into school this year prepared, confident, and ready to learn.

We are deeply grateful to our generous sponsors and school supply drive partners who made this milestone possible. Thank you to Alma Agency, Amazon, Annie & Tom Tannehill, BankUnited, The Dou Family, Miami Vineyard Church, The Templeton Family Foundation and many more.

With their support, Branches' families also received gift cards, new uniforms and special touches like fresh haircuts for students ensuring a truly memorable start to the school year. Thank you for supporting our families!



2025 Herbert C. Parlatto Volunteer Award Honoree, BB Americas Bank!



Manny Garcia, Alexis Basulto, Amanda Connors and Maxine Castro of Juneau Construction Company

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPONSORS!



Please visit branchesfl.org/2025back2schoolbash to learn more and see our photo album!

Branches Happenings

Summer Shade Camp and Branches BE ONE Business Summit & Expo!

Summer Shade Camp

This summer, hundreds of elementary students gathered across our three Branches sites for our annual Summer Shade Camp, and with this year's Safari theme, it was truly an unforgettable adventure! Throughout the weeks, our campers stepped away from screens and routines to explore, learn, and grow. From art projects and STEM challenges to soccer, music, and team-building games, there was no shortage of laughter, discovery, and excitement. But more than the activities, Summer Shade provided a safe, supportive, and enriching space where children stayed engaged, strengthened critical life skills, and built lasting friendships under the bright Florida sun.

A highlight was the incredible Summer Shade Guides, 41 of our Branches youth served as camp counselors across all sites. For many, it was their very first job. With leadership training, financial wellness coaching, and mentorship from our staff, they gained confidence, developed strong work habits, and practiced responsibility that will shape their futures far beyond camp. As one camper shared, "Summer Shade is the best part of my year! I loved learning, laughing, and making memories with my friends. I can't wait for next summer!"



Branches BE ONE Business Summit & Expo

This fall, Branches hosted the inaugural BE ONE Business Summit & Expo in partnership with Barry University's AI Center. This high-energy gathering was designed to future-proof small businesses in the age of AI. Over 100 entrepreneurs, community leaders, and partners came together at the Betty T. Ferguson Recreational Complex in Miami Gardens for a day of strategy, networking, and innovation. With more than 16 expert speakers, the summit tackled urgent topics such as The AI Tsunami: What You Must Know Today, Late Adopters Beware: The Real Risk of Waiting, and Developing an AI Strategy. Attendees gained practical insights, tools, and resources to help them streamline operations, scale their impact, and remain competitive in a rapidly evolving digital economy. One participant shared, "I finally understand how to apply AI at my pace"—a reflection of the event's focus on accessibility and real-world impact.

Through Branches' Micro-Business Program, solopreneurs and microenterprises are being equipped not only with technology but also with the skills, connections, and confidence to thrive. This summit marked a powerful extension of that mission, offering clarity, community, and momentum for Miami's entrepreneurs. The day closed with a shared sense of purpose: that every small business deserves a place in the future of innovation.



Scan the QR code to watch the Branches' BE ONE Business Summit & Expo Recap Video!

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

All other donors from the current Fiscal Year (6/21/25 - 9/21/25) are listed at branchesfl.org/our-stories under Newsletters

Trish & Dan Bell • Citi Foundation • The Children's Trust • United Way Miami • Volunteer Florida • Bob W. Kelly • JPMorgan Chase Bank • Peacock Foundation, Inc. • Internal Revenue Service • The Miami Foundation • Aetna/CVS Health • Bradesco Bank • Denise & Miguel Ferniza • Jacarlene Foundation • Junior League of Miami • Miami-Dade County - OMB Grants Coordination • Santander Bank US • The Ortega Family Foundation • United Healthcare

Thank You, Branches Donors & Stakeholders!

List includes contributions received by Branches from June 21, 2025 to September 21, 2025. 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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- Didi Cadieux from John Finley



THANK YOU!

Branches celebrated our Annual Back to School Night with our families and students and it was an absolute blast! Across all three Branches sites, our Grow and Climb students and their families came together to celebrate the start of the school year and pick out their brand-new backpacks filled with everything they need to succeed!

[Click Here to watch the recap video!](#)



Branches

Trish & Dan Bell Family
Empowerment Centers

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25th
ANNUAL
THANKSGIVING
MEAL DELIVERY

***This Thanksgiving (Thursday, November 27, 2025),
we're going bigger than ever!***

***In celebration of our 25th Anniversary, we
will prepare and deliver over 6,000 meals
to individuals and families in need across
Miami-Dade and Broward Counties.***



Give Here!

