



A Letter From Our Executive Director and Founder



Suzanne Birch *Executive Director and Founder*

It's not about the numbers, it's about the people.

At the beginning of the last fiscal year BCS was fortunate to receive a 3-year Catalyst Impact grant from the Stand Together Foundation (STF) to focus on customer-first research. Throughout this year we have dug deeper into the how and why we communicate with our participant families with the goal of learning more about them and their needs. Traditionally a survey will often measure the numbers – are we serving more participants? What is the size of their family? How much money do they make, or do they want to make? How much debt do they have? With the help of the STF, not only have we deconstructed our surveys, but our applications, participant forms, and numerous other documents, and rebuilt them to ask questions that delve into the hearts and minds of why families come to BCS. From this information we are learning more about the barriers and motivations behind the status of these struggling families. This key information aligns perfectly as, with guidance from their financial counselor, they build their Family Vision which drives budgeting and creating a plan for their future success.

It's often assumed that a financial literacy program will land heavily on the numbers, and yes, statistics can be very useful. However, numbers cannot describe the delight of a couple who has learned to talk about money together in a productive way. Or the joy parents have in being able to start a 529 account for their children, when they themselves could not afford to go to college. Numbers will count how many volunteers we have, but not encompass the dignity those volunteers feel when they serve their peers.

2024 has been a profound learning experience for our team at BCS. The leadership team continues to ask, "How can we serve our families better?" The numbers only tell us a part of the story. The people we serve give us the bigger picture as they share their hearts and change their lives for the better. We're proud of our numbers that show the growth of BCS, but we're even prouder of what those numbers mean.

We are truly grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve.

Birch Cultural Values Our Guiding Principles

Relationship Focused

We create value for others in a supportive community that fosters inclusiveness, true belonging, and acceptance.

Respectful

We model a culture of honesty, grace, and humility.

Trustworthy

We are unwavering in our dedication to serve reliably, and dependably.

Teachable

We promote combining self-awareness, ambition, curiosity, and guidance in striving toward growth through success and challenges.

Grateful

We express appreciation for the opportunities provided and the benefit of our community.

Safe

We empower responsibility to take a knowledgeable, deliberate, and mindful approach to a holistically safe environment.

Solution Oriented

We encourage a community that works humbly and collaboratively to provide creative strategies to problem solving.

Celebratory

We pause to reflect on successes and setbacks, and rejoice in our collective growth.



Leadership: Who We Are

Our mission is to build a financially stable community by providing education, food, and nurturing accountability.



Dino Biaggi (Director of Financial Services), Cloie Cohen (Director of Development), Suzanne Birch (Executive Director and Founder), Valerie Rowlett (Advancement Manager), Andrew Rowlett (Director of Operations)

Board of Directors

Suzanne Birch (Non Voting Member) **Birch Community Services**

Alex Krider (President) Avier Wealth Advisors

Egbert Kunrath (Vice President)

Kunrath & Willard Insurance Services (Retired)

Aaron Aigner (Treasurer) Aigner & Co., Accountant

Mark Childs (Past President) Capacity Commercial Group

Greg Cervetto Grayrose Marketing Group, Inc Ameena Farrouge Nike

Chris McKillop Rogers Machinery

Angela Small

Past BCS Participant

Alexander Spalding Daniel House

Rick Teeny Teeny Foods (Retired)

Sabrina Villemenay Multnomah County Health Dept.

10 -Year Goal

Be the household name for financial stability in the Pacific Northwest.

Our Diversity Equity & Inclusion Commitment

We seek to:

- Celebrate diversity
- Be a safe and welcoming place
- Value varying perspectives
- Meet the needs of our whole community
- Continue to learn and grow



2024 **Awards**



Platinum Transparency 2024

Candid.







2024 Summary: November 2023 – October 2024























Participant Family Accomplishments

279



Families caught up on bills 18



Families bought a house

fund

255



Families taught kids about money 293



Financially Sustainable Operations

53% Expenses covered by internal revenue streams

52% Labor from volunteers (35,495 volunteer hours)

Our Annual Auction

On May 4th, 2024, 135 people gathered at the German American Society for our annual auction:

Off to the Races: The Kentucky Derby with Birch

Together, we raised \$191,347

Over 50 participant families, 10 members of the community, and 3 board members volunteered their time to make this auction a success!









2023-2024 **Fiscal Year Financials**

REVENUES, GAINS, AND OTHER SUPPORT: Contributions: \$1,354,958

In-Kind Donations: \$22,688,764 Membership Service Fees: \$1,090,374

Recycling Income: \$20,273 Other Income: \$11,465

Total Revenue: \$25,165,834

EXPENSES:

Program Service Expenses: \$1,576,315 Management Expenses: \$327,546 Fundraising Expenses: \$143,301 Total Cash Expenses: \$2,047,162

Goods Distributed: \$22,688,764

THESE ARE PRE-AUDITED NUMBERS. FOR THE MOST RECENT AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND 990S PLEASE VISIT BCSI.ORG/DONOR-RESOURCES

The Heart of Birch: Financial Literacy

The Financial Literacy Team



Our Theory of Change

Take re\$tart

Shop Weekly Volunteer Monthly

Financial Meetings









One-on-One Meetings

The heart of Birch's financial literacy program is individualized financial counseling.

All families meet one-on-one with a financial counselor at least twice a year. While the income, debt, and need for budgeting for many families may be similar, the motivations and financial goals of each family are unique.

Our counselors form relationships with each family to fully understand their current financial situation and the best path forward. This individualized coaching is key for families.

Our goal in 2025 is to start increasing family meetings to once a quarter.

What is re\$tart?

re\$tart is Birch's financial literacy course, developed in-house and built with the specific demographic of Birch families in mind. Many families say re\$tart is the first time they feel financial information is accessible to them.

461 re\$tart attendees in 2024

Topics Include

- Family Vision and Goals
- Financial Institutions and Credit
- Insurance
- Debt Reduction
- Savings
- Family Communication
- Record Keeping and Budgeting

Now taught in Spanish!

In January 2025, re\$tart will make its debut in Spanish, taught by our newest Financial Counselor, Matias Castano, with administrative support from Yesenia Ortega.



All families complete the four session re\$tart course in their first year at Birch.

Starting re\$tart I didn't know how saving or paying off bills was going to be possible. With the tools I have learned from re\$tart I now see it happening. 99

- Birch participant

Through the abundance of in-kind donations from businesses, farms, and organizations, our food program is foundational to helping families who are falling through the cracks in the Portland Metro area. We believe food security is the first step to financial stability.



Sustainable <u>Families Pr</u>ogram

GIVE

\$80/month in program dues

2 hours volunteering each month

A teachable spirit!

RECEIVE

\$1,200+ in groceries each month

One-on-one financial counseling

Financial classes



Birch participant families are supplied with groceries and household items, so they can reallocate those grocery savings to their financial goals.

Typical family goals:

- Paying off debt
- Building an emergency fund
- Saving for a medical procedure
- Saving for home repair
- Saving for education

Agencies Program



With over 1,000,000 lbs/month of food and household item donations, there is often abundance beyond what our 880+ participant families can take. There are 64 other nonprofit agencies who pay \$150/month and shop weekly for their own charitable missions. Our partner agencies include homeless shelters, food pantries, domestic violence shelters, and substance abuse centers who regularly serve up to 45,000 individuals weekly.



Farmers Program

Farmers play a vital role at Birch. With 25 farmers in our farmer program, they come daily to help us reduce food waste by taking product for compost and animal feed.



Participant Perks

While participants are doing the hard work and staying on track, we're grateful to offer some wonderful perks in addition to groceries.

- Danner Boots
- Blueberry picking at Tara Farms
- Thanksgiving Ham or Turkey
- Holiday Gifts and Toys
- YMCA Camp Collins Scholarships





Current Participants: Meet the Hordichoks

With Andy working as a K-12 band teacher, finances were tight for the family of five. Andy and Kate have enjoyed building a relationship with their financial counselor, Dino, and consider him "more of a friend who genuinely cares how we're doing even when life pushes us backwards on our financial journey."



Emergency Funds at Work



All Birch families are guided to build an emergency fund of 3 to 6 months of expenses so that when something unexpected comes up, they aren't forced to go into debt. Realistically, no family can build their entire emergency fund without having to use it.

In their time at Birch, the Hordichoks' emergency fund has come to the rescue to:

- 1. Replace their hot water heater
- 2. Replace their furnace and heat pump
- 3. Complete a whole-house re-pipe after discovering badly corroded galvanized pipes

Unique Circumstances



Kate and Andy each have severe hearing loss stemming from childhood. Kate is also legally blind.

Volunteering



Both Andy and Kate volunteer their time monthly by adding insight to Birch's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee.

Their disabilities give them a unique and valuable perspective on Birch policies and procedures.

Savings done right

Using their Family Vision plan, they created separate savings accounts that align with what matters to them most.

Here are their goals:



Kids Savings

Braces for all three kids are in their near future.



Car Savings

They want to make sure they're not caught off guard when maintenance costs arise on their ten year-old car.



Home Savings

They want to be prepared for any repairs that come with home ownership.



Travel Savings

They would love to go on an airplane trip with their kids in the next two years!

"We use fun strategies like putting money from pop cans and credit card rewards in our travel account." - Kate Hordichok



It can be hard to be patient to accomplish things, but we remind ourselves - Kate Hordichok how blessed we are to be where we're at.

Our Teaching Garden

Since 2012, the Sunderland family has donated their property for Birch's teaching garden where participants volunteer from February through October.

The goal of the garden is to teach families another path to sustainability. Here they learn about the nitty gritty of growing their own food through practical application.







2,450

Pounds of produce harvested in 2024

Distributing the garden treasures is an added perk, though our focus is on the quality of the educational experience, not the quantity of the produce.







2024 Garden Lessons 🧑



- Homemade Pest Prevention
- Retaining Wall Building
- Different Garden Techniques
- Seed Saving



Trap crops: plants you grow to lure the pests away from the produce you want to eat.

Different Garden Techniques:



A structured format of gardening with the idea of one plant per square foot



A method of composting in ground, beneath the soil where you are planting

No Till

A scientific approach where you do not disturb the top soil and thus the organisms living in the top soil





We love having our youth volunteers learning new skills in the garden!

Garden **Volunteering**

670 **Volunteer** hours







Together We Have Grown - Over the Years











How have we adapted to our current space?

- Expanded shopping hours
- Revised layout of shopping floor
- Increased refrigeration space to prioritize perishable items
- Reformatted volunteer spaces
- Shared office space







Capital Campaign: Growing to Meet the Need

The gap between what many working families earn and what they would need to reasonably "get by" grows every day. In our current facility, we find that we aren't able to fully meet the demand for our program.

Testing the Waters

In 2024, Birch received funding to conduct a feasibility study to test whether Birch Community Services is ready for a \$15 million campaign to help us expand our facilities to meet the growing need over five years (including operating expenses). Staff and a consultant, Kathy Holstetler, interviewed 30+ donors, community members, and volunteers. Thank you to all who participated!

We Found:

- Our supporters are loyal and generous. Birch is fortunate to have very high donor retention.
- Trust in our programs and leadership is high.
- We need a wider network of supporters and better name recognition before launching our campaign.
- We need to grow our staffing and infrastructure to execute funding, planning, and an eventual move to a larger space.

Next Steps

While the feasibility study showed us the work we'll need to complete before we officially launch the capital campaign, we're excited to work towards this goal with our community.



An Exciting Future

With careful consideration, the leadership at Birch have made the bold decision to choose growth, pointing inevitably to the need for a new location.

A New Space Will Offer:

- More room for classrooms, meeting spaces, warehouse square footage, and parking to meet current and future needs.
- Safer docking for deliveries and processing of product away from the shopping floor.
- A better experience for volunteers and an ability to host more groups.
- Improved ADA accessibility.
- The potential for an owned property vs. a leased one, leading to greater long-term security and stability for Birch.



Keep an eye out for ways you can help, whether it's bringing a friend to the auction, helping spread the word about Birch, or joining one of the campaign committees. There will be a place for everyone in this amazing crossroads moment for Birch! If you're ready to jump in now, email cloie@bcsi.org.

Ways to Support

Meeting our mission to build a financially stable community is made possible through tremendous support from people like you. As varied as our histories, circumstances, and what brought us to Birch, there are many ways to offer your support.

Help Spread the Word 🍞



While our reach is far, we also have been called a "best kept secret". You can help us change that!

Engage Online

Follow, like, and share our social media posts.

Visit Birch

Bring a friend to tour the warehouse.



Share Opportunities

Alert us to a community event our volunteer ambassadors can attend.



Volunteer

Birch is powered by volunteers!

Volunteer in the Warehouse

Sort produce and stock shelves for families.

Become a Birch Ambassador

Share our story at community events.



Come as a Group

Contact emily@bcsi.org to arrange a corporate or community group volunteer experience.



Additional details and signups can be found at bcsi.org/volunteer

In-Kind Donations



Our food program and fundraising efforts couldn't happen without the generosity of so many organizations, businesses, and families.

Donate an item for our auction!

Vacation stays, gift baskets, unique experiences, or other special items our event guests would love to bid on.

Contact: emily@bcsi.org.



Gift Toys

Drop off a new toy at the warehouse anytime throughout the year for participant family holiday gifts.

Make Connections

Introduce Birch to your friends with farms, food production facilities, or retai stores who might have product to donate.

In-Kind Hotline: (503) 251-8860



Ways to Support

We are grateful for the tremendous support we received in 2024 and look forward to partnering with you throughout 2025!

Targeted Giving (WISHLIST!)

Check out our wish list below and let us know how you want us to utilize your donation.



Tech Updates

\$15,000 - Many of our

tech resources are 10-20

years old! This would

cover new computers,

phone system, software updates, etc.

Participant Support

\$20 - Provides groceries and financial classes & counseling to one household's first week on the program.



New Truck

\$180,000 - We need to replace one of our trucks that gets a lot of miles picking up in-kind donations each week.

Financial Donations

Your financial support is a cornerstone for our success, empowering us to make a lasting impact in the community. And there are plenty of ways to offer your support this way!

Set Up a Monthly Gift

A monthly donation can be an option for making a bigger impact than a one-time gift.



Gifts of appreciated stock are an easy and taxeffective way to make a gift to Birch. Stocks can be transferred electronically from your brokerage or investment account or, if you hold securities in certificate form, let us know, and we can advise on the next steps.



Sponsor the Birch Auction

Sponsorships are a great option for supporting our primary fundraising event of the year while securing public recognition for your company or family.

We encourage our sponsors to fill a table

It's the perfect opportunity to share our mission with the folks in your world!

and join us for the fun.

Birch Auction Save the Date: April 12th, 2025



Please scan the QR code to make your gift online, or return the attached envelope to donate.

If you have any questions or would like to give in another way, don't hesitate to reach out to our Director of Development, Cloie Cohen, cloie@bcsi.org, (503) 251-5431.







Together We Serve: Donors and Community Partners

Community Volunteer Highlight: Meet Kathleen Copeland

As a recent retiree, Kathleen felt the need to give back to those struggling to make ends meet.

Kathleen Copeland is a retired administrator for the Gresham Barlow school district. She held many roles, most recently as the interim principal for Centennial and Parkrose High Schools.

While she donated financially, she also wanted to directly serve with an organization who helps the families whose children she had spent her career teaching.

At 70, she volunteers weekly in the warehouse - accumulating over 100 hours in the past year, sorting pallets of dry goods such as cereal, canned goods, and other non-perishable foods as they arrive from in-kind donors.

We are grateful for Kathleen's heart for service and having 100 hours of her smiling face!





Participant Alumni Highlight: Meet The Ronnie Family



Before joining Birch, Scott and Julie Ronnie were a pretty average couple, both working full time, and frugal with their money. They decided to invest in real estate on top of their busy lives with the hopes of Julie being able to stay home with their son. The added commitments of time and money unfortunately took a negative toll on the family.

The Ronnies joined Birch in January 2021 and transitioned off the program in April of 2023. They have paid off \$100,000 in debt and Julie has been able to stay at home with their son.

The Ronnies love Birch because of the tangible, practical goals participants achieve. They appreciate how everyone contributes their time and collectively, the families support one another and share their stories.

Even though they've transitioned off the Birch program, you'll still find Julie at Birch volunteering weekly in the warehouse. Scott and Julie were also quick to lend a hand after attending our Birch auction and spent a rainy evening last April loading event supplies in the Birch truck - still dressed in their most dapper Kentucky Derby themed attire.

Grateful for Our Donors November 2023- October 2024

7-11 Corporate AARP Oregon Michael and Vicki Abbate John and Deborah Adeniji Betty Admire Aaron and Kolina Aigner Lynn Ainley Akol Logistics Albertsons Alder & Company Carilyn Alexander Alexis Foods Alien Transport Madeline Allen Aloha Produce Alpenrose Dairy Amazon Christine Anderson Myrna and Jerry Angell Apex Anodizing Apple Foods Wayne and Carol Arakaki Jonah and Jennifer Attebery April Avery

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Cameron McKillop & Heather

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Oregon Children's Outreach Oregon Convention Center Oregon Spice Company Oregon Steel Mills Organic Valley Organically Grown Company
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Dave and Claudia Riewald Right Price Market Tim and Jan Rippey Jeff and Melissa Rippey Randall Charitable Trust Stephen and Karen Roberti Matt and Lori Roberts Erin and Justin Roberts Linda Robinson Steven & Patti Robrahn Terence Rokop Roma Performance Foods Scott & Julie Ronnie Rose E. Tucker Charitable Trust Lawrence Rout Andrew and Valerie Rowlett Leann and Greg Rowlett Sandra Rubin

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Vazquez Transport
Trina Vasquez
Polina and Miroslav Vdovich
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Carolyn Williams
Women's Life Change
Teresa Wrightson
XPO Logistics
Marybeth and Eric Young Zarephath's Pantry Michael Zavoskey Lynzie Zawadzki Ruth Zirkle Stacey Zych

Grocery Outlet Grocery Outlet Happy Valley Gulick Trucking







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Building Healthy, Stable Families