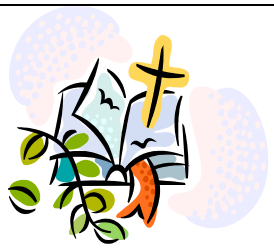

ECHHO NEWSLETTER

September 2009

UNSUNG HEROES

It's been a while since we recognized the two people upon whom ECHHO counts the most: **< Marlena Knill** and **Wilma Hackman >**. They are the individuals of boundless patience and tact who coordinate the rides and other services for ECHHO clients. Often likened to "herding cats", the work of ECHHO means arranging and rearranging things, which often have to be arranged yet again. It takes special people to perform this kind of juggling act without losing their cool. It is a rare quality to do so with continued respect and empathy for the clients we serve. Wilma and Marlena do this day after day. We take this opportunity to sing their praises. Without Wilma and Marlena, ECHHO wouldn't be ECHHO.

DONOR CLOSET MAKES OUR DAY

On a recent lucky day, ECHHO got some much-needed assistance from the Donor Closet of the Edmonds non-profit organization MS Helping Hands. An all-volunteer organization, the Donor Closet recycles durable medical equipment and mobility equipment to people in need, for a minimum suggested donation. After its monthly operating expenses are met, the organization provides financial assistance grants to Washington residents with Multiple Sclerosis. Two energetic volunteers from Donor Closet arrived in their state-of-the-art van (funded by a grant from Boeing), and they proceeded to load up a batch of dysfunctional power chairs and scooters that had been gathering dust and taking up space at ECHHO for quite some time. These chairs and scooters will be repaired and placed back into service by Donor Closet. (In addition, Donor Closet has a drawing each month and donates a free power chair or scooter to a Washington resident with MS.) We at ECHHO were impressed with the friendliness, efficiency and logo t-shirts of the two anonymous volunteers who accomplished so much so quickly. Check out this outstanding organization at www.mshelp.org.

NEW MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATE

Effective October 1, 2009 the rate at which ECHHO reimburses volunteer drivers will be reduced from 40 to 25 cents per mile. The Board of Directors and staff arrived at this decision reluctantly after much consideration. It has simply become too expensive to do otherwise. In 2009 ECHHO has been averaging $1,000 per month to reimburse drivers. This cost cannot be sustained. As we all know, the cost of doing business of any kind continues to rise. We continue to search for new ways to keep ECHHO going. The majority of our clients receive our services at no cost. A few make donations to ECHHO, but many cannot. Our mission could not survive without the generosity of our volunteer drivers. For those who request reimbursement, we regret the necessity to reduce the amount you receive. **To all our drivers, we say "Thank you."**

Total Volunteer Hours for August	**211.5**
Transportation to Medical Appointments	144.0
Chores and Errands	57.5
Social Support/Visits	10.0

126 Pieces of Medical Equipment Loaned
111 People Served
2,991 Miles Driven