



Empowering Individuals for Life

## ***From the CEO***

With Thanksgiving on the horizon, I remember all that I am grateful for:

- Our community supporters, donors, sponsors, and advocates.
- The ECHO staff that keep our programs welcoming, exciting, fulfilling, functioning and impactful.
- The wonderful participants in our Supported Employment and LIFE Day Support programs that make coming to work a joy.
- Our ECHO drivers that keep ECHO participants safe as they drive participants many miles all over northern Virginia each day.
- ECHO's volunteer Board of Directors that lend their time, talent, and treasure to the ECHO mission.
- Our ECHO Helping Hands volunteers that work with our direct support staff to make outings and activities fun and safe.
- Our Family Advisory Council members who provide ECHO with valuable feedback and help spread the word about ECHO in the community.

As we head into the holiday season, I also want to share a meaningful way to spread joy while supporting ECHO's mission. Our Holiday Gift Boxes are now available, each filled with handcrafted items made by adults with disabilities. It's a gift that gives twice: delighting your loved ones while supporting those we serve.

Order yours today at <https://echobakery.org/pages/holiday-gift-box>

I hope all of you have a Happy Thanksgiving!

With Gratitude,

***Paul Donohue, Jr.***  
**CEO, ECHO**

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# **Exciting News From ECHO Barkery: We're Expanding & Returning Home To ECHO's HQ!**

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Dear ECHO Supporters, Loyal Customers, and Fellow Dog Lovers,

We have paws-itively thrilling news to share! After years of delighting pups from our Ashburn location, the ECHO Barkery is on the move—back to our roots at the ECHO Headquarters in Leesburg. This exciting expansion marks a major milestone in our mission to empower adults with disabilities through meaningful employment and premium dog treats.

Launched during the challenges of the pandemic in 2020, the Barkery began as a creative way to keep our community working when traditional job sites closed. From humble beginnings, we've grown into a beloved social enterprise, now available in over 200 independent shops across the country and online—bringing joy to dogs everywhere while creating real opportunities for our incredible team of 20+ talented individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Returning to the ECHO's HQ is about coming full circle. This move gives us a larger, dedicated space to continue our work and better serve our growing community of customers and supporters.

Our growth is powered by you—your purchases, donations, and word-of-mouth have fueled this journey toward sustainability and greater reach. We are excited to settle into our new home as we continue to further our mission of Empowering Individuals for Life.

Thank you for your support in fueling our mission.

- The ECHO Barkery Team

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# ECHO Wins Nonprofit of the Year and Small Business of the Year at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Loudoun Chamber Small Business Awards!

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For 31 years, the Loudoun Chamber has celebrated excellence in our local business community through the annual Small Business Awards. This year, we are incredibly honored to share that ECHO was named both the Nonprofit of the Year and the overall Small Business of the Year!

This remarkable recognition would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our community. Thank you for believing in our mission and standing with us throughout the years. We are truly humbled and deeply grateful to be part of such a caring and inspiring community.

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# Blue Elegance: New Products Are Hitting The Shelves!

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This month at Blue Elegance, our team is busy crafting a sweet new collection of mini dessert candles! Additionally, keep an eye out for the launch of our customizable dog candles, featuring a variety of adorable breeds to choose from. We're also introducing new copper earring designs, combining creativity and craftsmanship for a beautiful, one-of-a-kind look.

**Shop Blue Elegance Today!**

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# ECHO Hero of the Month

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As a LIFE Day Support Specialist, Suzie Acker has distinguished herself by consistently supporting staff across all activities, always willing to assist wherever needed. She takes initiative without being asked and contributes thoughtful, creative ideas, including excellent additions to LIFE's monthly calendar. She was instrumental in designing a cooking show idea and she recently went above and beyond to help staff the Barkery booth at a weekend event.

**Thank you, Suzie, for all that you do!**

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# ECHO Ambassador of the Month

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We're thrilled to recognize Natasha Magrath and You've Got Maids of NOVA as our Ambassadors of the Month!

Natasha and her team have been steadfast supporters of our mission for years. Through the Sweeping Change Fund, You've Got Maids uplifts local nonprofits—and ECHO was proud to be a recent \$1,500 recipient. They've also been generous event sponsors and, most recently, donated a Day of Service, deep cleaning our facility and vehicles.

Thank you, Natasha and team, for your commitment to our community!

# A Conversation with Kinta Carter, Director of Fleet Services at ECHO

## Rick's Rundown



November Edition

I recently had the chance to see what ECHO's Director of Fleet Services, Kinta Carter, does firsthand when he stepped in as a substitute driver on the Purple Route—my route. From the moment he greeted everyone with a smile to the way he handled each stop with care, it was clear that Kinta knows the ins and outs of ECHO's transportation program better than anyone. He's been with ECHO for 12 years, and it shows. "I've always enjoyed driving," Kinta told me. "That's really what brought me into this department. What started as a love for being on the road turned into something much more meaningful—helping people get where they need to go every day."

Kinta oversees a vital service that provides door-to-door transportation for participants between their homes, ECHO programs, and employment worksites. "We currently have 12 routes that transport around 120 passengers a day," he explained. "Our routes are determined by geographical location so that we can serve participants efficiently while covering both urban and rural areas." ECHO's fleet includes 23 vehicles—buses, vans, and accessible vehicles equipped for mobility devices—and collectively, they log more than 400,000 miles annually across Northern Virginia. "It's a big operation," Kinta said with a laugh, "but one that runs on teamwork and dedication."

Of course, managing such an operation comes with its challenges. "The biggest thing is making sure all our participants get to ECHO safe and on time," Kinta said. "There are days when traffic, weather, or last-minute changes can throw things off—but our team is really good at adapting." He credits ECHO's strong safety record and excellent maintenance department for helping the fleet stay reliable. "Everyone takes pride in what they do," he added. "Our drivers know they're not just transporting passengers—they're helping people live more independent, connected lives."

When asked how someone can request a route change, Kinta explained the process is simple but thoughtful. "Anyone—whether staff or community members—can put the request in writing and explain why the route should be adjusted. We review each one carefully." After riding along with Kinta, it was easy to see why ECHO's transportation program runs so smoothly. His calm presence, attention to detail, and genuine care for participants make every route feel a little more personal. "At the end of the day," Kinta said, "it's about connection—getting our participants where they need to be safely, reliably, and with care."

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# Behind the Mission

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At ECHO, every success story starts with support from people like you. Whether it's building job skills, exploring the community, or gaining independence, our participants thrive because our mission is backed by the generosity, compassion, and care of our local community.

Your gift, no matter the size, helps fuel meaningful opportunities for adults with disabilities across Loudoun and Fairfax Counties.

Want to be part of the impact?

**Help Fuel Our Mission [HERE](#)**

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# Testimonial

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"Over the years we have developed a partnership with ECHO Inclusive Solutions and we are extremely pleased with the results. In our industry business can be unpredictable, but with each change, ECHO Inclusive Solutions has met our needs, and performed outstanding work day in and day out. Great employees and a great support staff make this a successful partnership."

**- David Faliskie, EIT**

