



Ending homelessness in the Fox Valley

Campus of Change

Fall 2017

A word of thanks...

During this season of thanks, we cannot help to think about how fortunate we are to live in such a generous community. Thanks to you, over 60 people call COTS “home” every day. And, thanks to you, the most vulnerable members of our community are able to have a safe place to take a breath while they get their lives back on track.

Each day, our residents astound us with their resilience and determination as they face multiple barriers to self-sufficiency. Here are a few of their recent successes that you have helped make possible:

- In the six months he’s lived at COTS, one of our Veterans paid off \$5,000 in debt and was able to purchase a car to drive himself to and from appointments and work;
- One of our residents is “paying it forward” by volunteering at a local nursing home. He is playing the guitar and piano for the residents there;
- One of our residents was promoted to supervisor at work. He has saved \$2,000 and has started looking for his own apartment!

These are just snapshots of what YOU make possible by supporting COTS. You give our residents the gift of time to learn how to budget, to build up a savings, to stabilize their mental health, to go back to school. You help us address the root causes of homelessness; when our residents move out of COTS, they remain independent! **You give our residents the tools to break the cycle of homelessness.**



Above: *Our Living Debt Free Program Service Coordinator discusses budgeting with one of our residents.*

Below (from left): *Principal Financial volunteers make laundry detergent for our residents; The Cherney family leads a fish fry for our residents; 40 volunteers from Home Depot held their Celebration of Service at COTS and transformed the exterior of our Veterans building with new landscaping, gutters, and appliances.*





Directory

Board Members

Patti Jorgensen, President
 Dan Lightfuss, Treasurer
 Greg Gill, Jr., Secretary
 Patty DeGoey
 Emily Hartfield
 Andy Schmidt
 John Schmidt
 Kristene Stacker
 Anthony Wilhelms
 Joe Wilz

Executive Director

Cindy Sahotsky

Committee Members

Patty DeGoey
 Emily Hartfield
 Patti Jorgensen
 Ryan Peterson
 Andy Schmidt
 Kristene Stacker
 Jessica Vander Zanden
 Anthony Wilhelms
 Joe Wilz

Contact Information

(920) 734-3609
 819 South West Ave.
 Appleton, WI 54915
www.appletoncots.org



facebook.com/COTSInc

A Place to Call “Home”

Tiny feet scamper across the room followed by a series of giggles. A toy bucket is dumped onto the floor, and 2-year-old Olivia picks up a stuffed fish and begins swooping it through the air. Olivia and her mom, Amanda, live in our duplex for Single Mothers with Young Children, after shorter stays at Harbor House and Homeless Connections.



The backyard of our duplex provides a safe haven for single mothers and their families

Little Olivia has lived in 5 different places in her short life, and COTS has been the longest place she has called “home.” Amanda moved to Wisconsin when Olivia was still an infant, fleeing an abusive relationship with Olivia’s father and looking to be closer to her family. At first, she struggled to find a stable place, and has been plagued with ongoing health issues beginning with cancer 5 years ago. COTS appealed to her as a place to, “be able to get back on our feet and have a healthier routine.”

“Now we have a better life...Olivia can go outside and play”

At COTS, Amanda has been able to take a breath and begin planning for the future. This is her first time being the only adult in the home. “I’ve always been the one taking care of everyone else,” she explains. Now, she is able to focus on herself and her daughter. She joined the ServiceWorks™ Program at Riverview Gardens and is a transitional employee, where she learns transferable job skills and will be connected with, “a job where I’ll have financial stability and that works with daycare.”



Inside our duplex

Did you know?

- **98%** of COTS residents are employed or have a steady income; however, the majority fall below the federal poverty line.
- So far this year, residents have volunteered **2,375 hours** across the community

Olivia’s teacher stops by to let Amanda know Olivia is doing well in daycare. Amanda grins as she says, “Now we have a better life...Olivia can go outside and play. COTS gives me support, an outside perspective. They’re trying to help me out.” Olivia and Amanda have the stable environment they always wanted and deserve.

Behavioral Health Services Now at COTS

Mental health issues are a root cause of homelessness. In fact, according to Project Rush (Research to Understand and Solve Homelessness), 57% of people in the Fox Cities who experience homelessness or are near homeless are told by a medical professional they have a significant mental health condition. However, only half say they getting the help they need.

Many patients seen at Partnership Community Health Center's (PCHC) satellite clinic at COTS suffer from some form of depression, anxiety or other chronic mental illness, all complicated by a lifetime of trauma and addiction. For many, getting help off-site causes anxiety, or they may have transportation barriers. To address this need, thanks to funding from The Basic Needs Giving Partnership*, we now offer substance abuse counseling and behavioral health onsite in our clinic. These services are integrated with primary care to ensure we are taking a truly holistic approach to patient care.

** funded by the U.S. Venture Fund for Basic Needs within the Community Foundation from the annual U.S. Venture Open golf outing, with additional money from the J. J. Keller Foundation and other community partners*

Since August 24th, 13 different patients have received behavioral health services.



The counseling room at the COTS clinic.

Opening DOORS at COTS

For several years, DOORS (“Directing Ourselves and Others in Responsible Social Activities”) provided a way for individuals in recovery to engage in healthy replacement activities. DOORS is now located at COTS as a way for our residents, and the residents of Ryan Community (a halfway house), to participate without transportation barriers in inclement weather. “DOORS allows people to come together in a laid-back way and have fun without drugs or alcohol,” explains Dan McGinnis, COTS Aftercare Coordinator and staff contact for DOORS.

DOORS kicked off at COTS in early October, and takes place each Thursday. Really, it’s about finding healthy ways to have fun. Activities range from foosball and pool tournaments to talking about issues around drugs and alcohol during the holidays.

DOORS is resident-directed, so they choose the topics and activities. Jeremy, a Living Debt Free resident, leads the group. “It allows you to do things that you normally wouldn’t do, in a safe environment,” he shares. Jeremy is a longtime DOORS member, and looks forward to building an environment of trust in DOORS at COTS. “You can pretty much talk about anything, and most likely somebody has gone through something similar.”



“You can pretty much talk about anything, and most likely somebody has gone through something similar.”



**P.O. Box 1645
Appleton, WI 54912**

Match Challenge

In order to continue to meet the needs of families, COTS will open a new program at Sacred Heart Congregation in the former Tri-Manor Building. During the renovation and conversion from single occupancy, 15 COTS residents will have their own private rooms and shared community spaces, and will receive ongoing case management. The program will provide a “next step” for residents who have multiple barriers to market rate apartments.

Generous donors have provided us with a \$50,000 match challenge for our Sacred Heart project. **Any gifts given toward the Sacred Heart project will be doubled!** You can make your gift go twice as far. Please include “Sacred Heart project” on your check memo if you would like to donate to this exciting project.

Holiday Wish List

Each year, we host a Christmas party and give each of our resident a present. The following donations would be included in their gift bags:

- Puzzle books
- Travel mugs for coffee
- New long underwear (sizes S-XXL)
- Candy
- Hand/foot warmers
- New men’s and women’s socks

Items can be dropped off at 819 S. West Ave, Appleton, M-F 8:30 am-4:30 pm. Thank you in advance!