



# Fall 2015

## We thank YOU...

As we enter this season of thanks, we can't help but turn our thoughts to the people who make it happen day in and day out. We have incredible residents who are committed to the hard work of transforming their lives on a daily basis. We are home to over 60 individuals experiencing homelessness. So far this year, 39 residents have moved out of COTS and into safe, stable, independent housing. We continue to support these residents through our Aftercare Program, and **96% (51/53) are sustaining safe, stable, and independent housing!** None of these successes would be possible without your support, and we have an incredible community. You are truly providing our residents with the tools they need to begin this next chapter of their lives and be part of their own solution!

## A Purpose-Filled Life

Written by a resident of COTS' Women's Program

I came to live at COTS after being in treatment for my alcoholism. I knew that I couldn't return to my old surroundings, so I made the decision to separate myself from my grown children and recreate myself.

Due to my disease, I knew that living alone was not an option. After researching

*continued on pg. 2*



many avenues that offered a structured community living environment, COTS offered the ultimate opportunities for my success.

I have lived at COTS since October of 2013. I will walk out this door with all the tools necessary to live a productive, successful, happy and sober life!

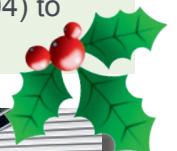
The benefits of this program

## Urgent Needs

**Help us provide our residents with the comforts of "home" this holiday season!**

- Valley Transit Bus Passes
- NEW Twin Sheet Sets
- NEW Hand & Bath Towels
- Toilet Paper
- NEW Twin Comforters
- NEW Pillows

Our complete wish list can be found at [appletoncots.org](http://appletoncots.org). All donations can be dropped off at our main office: 819 S. West Avenue, Appleton, WI, 54915. Drop Off Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30am - 4:30pm. Call 920-268-0603 (ext. 704) to make other arrangements.



*A former resident shows off his new home*

## Directory

### Board Members

Anthony Wilhelms, President  
Dan Lightfuss, Treasurer  
Patty DeGoey  
Emily Hartfield  
Patti Jorgensen  
Andy Schmidt  
Chris Serra  
Joe Wilz

### Executive Director

Cindy Sahotsky

### Committee Members

Patty DeGoey  
Emily Hartfield  
Patti Jorgensen  
Kelly Nutty  
Ryan Peterson  
Andy Schmidt  
Chris Serra  
Jessica Vander Zanden  
Charles Wachter  
Joe Wilz

## Contact Information

(920) 268-0603  
P. O. Box 1645  
Appleton, WI 54912  
[www.appletoncots.org](http://www.appletoncots.org)



[facebook.com/COTSInc](https://facebook.com/COTSInc)

*continued from cover*

are immense! In hindsight, I only had the mindset to get by, but now I have the skills to succeed! This program addresses every aspect of life. My personal experience is one of pure gratitude. I have learned to budget and save money effectively. I actually have a savings account for the first time in my adult life. I learn something new every day. May it be in general conversation with another resident or in casual conversation with my Case Manager or other members of the staff. Through my hard work, dedication, setting healthy boundaries and being receptive

**“I will walk out this door with all the tools necessary to live a productive, successful, happy and sober life!”**

to feedback from a well-educated staff, I will be able to apply all that I have learned to my future after the COTS program.

One of my biggest accomplishments since being part of the program is my 2 plus years of sobriety! One of the rewards from this feat is that I am gainfully employed and have made retirement provisions with a retirement account. Along with this, I have insurance benefits and will not be at the aid of the State or County. For me, this translates into being a great member of society and having a purpose filled life.

## The Ingredients for Success

Cooking class at COTS reveals inner strength of residents

“I’d been wanting to do volunteering, but I didn’t know what to do,” explains Mary Kay Maigatter, COTS volunteer. At a women’s retreat, she met one of the COTS Meal Ministers, who talked to her about the COTS program, sparking her idea to start a monthly cooking class at COTS.



made pumpkin pie. For Mary Kay, the benefit of the class goes beyond simply teaching the women cooking skills. “Maybe for an hour we can take them out of the craziness they’re going through,” she says with a grin. “They’re pleasant and ready. There’s this inner strength about them that I admire. I think they’re teaching me.”

“It just feels very natural,” she explains. Her first class she worked with the women to make chicken noodle soup. This month, they

**For more about volunteer opportunities, contact [Imacdonald@appletoncots.org](mailto:Imacdonald@appletoncots.org) or (920)268-0603 ext. 704.**

## Meal Ministry Team

Our Meal Ministry team is an “army” of hundreds of volunteers who deliver hot meals to our transitional shelter programs every Monday, Wednesday and Friday evening of the year. This amazing effort provides individuals experiencing homelessness with the basic need of nourishment.



Those we serve, who are accustomed to going without, greatly appreciate our Meal Ministers. As a COTS resident shared, “It is truly a blessing having dinner prepared and delivered by others.”

**“The formula is simple: When you cook for people, they feel cared for.”**—Ruth Reichel, chef and food writer, in her book “My Kitchen Year”

COTS’ Meal Ministers were recognized at our 2nd annual Chili Cook-Off in September.

**To sign up or learn more, contact COTS’ Development Director at 920-268-0603 ext. 704, or email us at [Imacdonald@appletoncots.org](mailto:Imacdonald@appletoncots.org).**

## New Kitchen Focuses on Community Building

Last fall, thanks to the generous financial support from the J. J. Keller Foundation, we were able to renovate the kitchen in our young adult building. This was a follow-up to the renovations made to the Men’s Program kitchen in winter of 2012.

The idea behind last year’s renovation project was to transform an old cafeteria-style kitchen into the “center” of the home, promoting a stronger community atmosphere.

We encourage relationship-building among our residents, as it helps to prepare them for life beyond COTS. Our newly updated kitchen is a space where residents in our Young Adult, Living Debt Free and Veterans Programs can come together as they eat and prepare meals.

The revitalized kitchen goes

above and beyond its original purpose, as it now serves as the gathering space for every resident at COTS, and some former residents, during our monthly community dinners!

Studies have shown that a more positive living environment leads to improved psychological and emotional outcomes. Because both updated kitchens on our men’s campus have positively impacted our residents, we have plans to renovate the kitchen on our women’s campus in the near future. With support from the surrounding community, we can turn yet another kitchen into the “center” of the home.



*Kitchen renovation day 1*



*Finished product*



P.O. Box 1645  
Appleton, WI 54912

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
APPLETON, WI  
PERMIT NO. 39

## Habitat's Rock the Block

The First Effort in COTS' Campus of Change Campaign

Rock the Block is a special Habitat for Humanity event held in a targeted neighborhood for a concentrated period of time. This fall, Rock the Block encompassed 31 projects in the neighborhood around the former Pierce Manufacturing plant, which encompasses the COTS women's campus. During the event, Habitat volunteers helped create a better sense of "home" for our residents, including painting shutters and replacing the concrete entrances at the duplex housing our single mother families to ensure safe entry.

**Thank you so much to the many Habitat for Humanity volunteers who helped to beautify our women's campus!**

*Now that the exterior of this campus has undergone some improvements, we plan to turn our focus to the interior through our Campus of Change Campaign. Stay tuned for ways on how you can help to provide the comforts of "home" for women served at COTS.*



*"Gratitude turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity...it makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."*

*- Melody Beattie*