

### Ending Homelessness in the Fox Valley

BEYOND A BED

2013 Annual Report

# According to the 2011 Fox Cities LIFE Study, in the last five years, the number of homeless individuals in the ored has risen by 48%.

### Dear Friends of COTS, Inc.,

Welcome to COTS! It's not about how many beds we have - it's about how many lives we can improve. 2013 has been a year of many successes! Staying true to our mission statement of "Ending homelessness in the Fox Valley" really gives COTS the creative freedom to constantly find new and better ways to give people the tools, confidence and support that they need.

Our approach has been to create a positive atmosphere where the residents feel celebrated, and no small achievement is overlooked. COTS' residents not only benefit from the services provided by COTS, Inc., but they also give back to COTS and the community by volunteering. COTS, Inc. is unique in the fact that we operate as the bridge between crisis homelessness and permanent supportive housing. The following highlights from 2013 illustrate our mission to ease the transition from homelessness to independence:

- Due to the success in 2012 of the "Living Debt Free" program, more space was allocated to this program in 2013. Living Debt Free allows extra time for some residents that have already received living skills and programming to work toward a new goal: paying off debt.
- 2. The "first 90 days" program was implemented. This ensures that all residents receive much-needed community referrals, connections to necessary services such as AODA, mental health counseling, etc., and important living skills all within their first three months of residence at COTS.
- 3.97% of all residents in our Aftercare Program remain in safe and stable housing.
- 4. During 2013, we served over 142 residents, plus 3 children. We also served over 70 former residents through our Aftercare Program.

In addition, Riverview Gardens, which began as a special project of COTS in December of 2011, filed to become a separate entity in July 2013. This was the plan set forth by the Board of Directors with the purchase of the former Riverview Country Club. ServiceWorks, Riverview Garden's job training program, is on target to serve over 150 individuals in 2014 from various members of the Continuum of Care. Riverview Gardens is a financially selfsustaining social enterprise focused on job training for people in need, using urban farming in a park-like setting. With the filing to become its own distinct organization, COTS Executive Director, Cindy Sahotsky and Board Chair, John Schmidt moved over to Riverview Gardens. The symbiotic relationship between Riverview and COTS is truly a remarkable accomplishment and one that we are extremely proud of. COTS then began a new chapter of leadership when it brought on Andrew Wilson as the new Executive Director for the transitional shelter.

On behalf of COTS, we want to thank you for your support and dedication to the men, women and young adults whose lives have been changed through our programs. COTS does not rely on government support, so we are truly blessed to have such a giving community. You are truly helping us in our mission of "Ending homelessness in the Fox Valley."

Anthony Wilhelms Board President Andrew Wilson Executive Director







#### COTS Board of Directors Members

Anthony Wilhelms, President

Gail Constancio, Vice President

Dave Pierre, Treasurer

Kurt Ellison, Secretary John Schmidt, Past President Emily Hartfield John Claypool Hillary Anderson Cindy Sahotsky Kristen Reynolds Andrew Wilson

#### **Executive Director**

Andrew Wilson

#### **Development Committee**

Kristen Reynolds, Chair Marty O'Brien Andrea Dunsirn Tammy Clark Brent Kessler Jill Andersen Andrew Wilson Lindsey MacDonald COTS, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that fulfills a need within the Continuum of Care of the Fox Cities by providing temporary transitional shelter for the men, women and young adults experiencing homelessness in Outagamie, Winnebago and Calumet counties. Our goal is to enable individuals experiencing homelessness to transition to self-sufficiency and independent living.



COTS is home to over 60 people every day. We provide case management, living skills classes, and basic needs (shelter, utilities, food & household and personal needs) for each participant in our program. Residents pay a monthly program fee of \$260; however, the actual cost for programming is over \$700/month per resident. Each resident of COTS is expected to be a good community member, and remain free of alcohol, drugs and criminal activity. Every resident participates in our Living Skills Program, including RentSmart (a landlord/tenant course), Dave Ramsay's Financial Peace University, and obtaining/maintaining employment.

2 We Are - If Goes Beyond A Bed

Residents set individualized goals, and progress is reviewed weekly with staff for the duration of residency. Most residents work at least part-time. In addition to their participation in ServiceWorks, residents at COTS volunteer in their community and give back to others.





#### "I always wanted to come back to this house," Ray grins. Ray lights up as he shows off his beautiful, recently remodeled home.

Ray's life wasn't always so rosy. "I come from an alcoholic family," he explains. Ray has struggled with alcoholism his whole life. After spending 15 months in a treatment program, Ray decided to move to Oshkosh for work. Unfortunately, living in Oshkosh moved him away from his meetings, his church—all of his support systems. He relapsed after two weeks and ended up in the hospital with heart issues.

"I realized I liked the way my life was when I was sober...I had to start all over again." Ray had lost his job and decided to move back to Appleton. He sometimes stayed in one of the local emergency shelters until he applied to COTS and was accepted into the program.

#### Finding Financial Peace

"It's what I needed at that time of my life," Ray says of his time at COTS. "COTS allowed me to still live my life in a safe, secure environment...It [allowed me to] reconnect with myself." He says that he especially benefitted from taking Financial Peace University. He has saved his paperwork from the class and still reviews it. Ray also says that he appreciated being able to talk to staff whenever he needed.

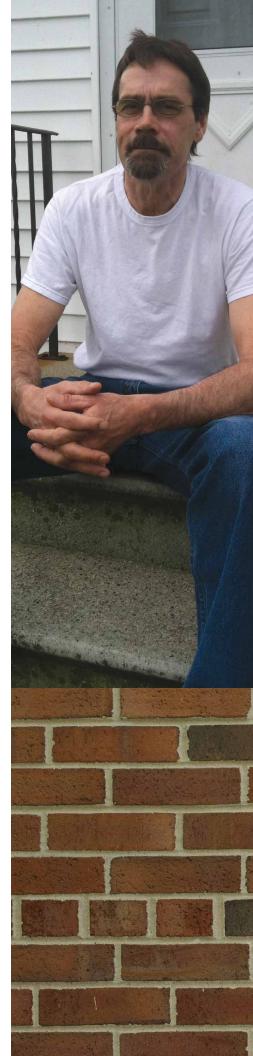
A few months ago, Ray learned that he would be able to rent his childhood home. After living at COTS for eight months, Ray moved into the home with his girlfriend, also a former COTS resident. Ray lights up as he shows off the house, highlighting the new windows (which keep the heating bills low) and its proximity to a local park.

#### "You have to believe in yourself"

Ray stays in touch with COTS through our Aftercare Program. He is also working full-time at STEP Industries, which, along with COTS, continues to support him with maintaining his sobriety. When asked how his life is now, Ray responds without hesitation, "Fabulous! It couldn't be better!"

Ray's advice to others who may be facing similar situations?

"You have to believe in yourself and you have to believe in God. And never give up."



#### Single Men

In 1998, COTS was established as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation to serve men in the Fox Valley. For many years, COTS' founder, Reverend Orville Janssen, provided a "cot" on the rectory porch for homeless men. We have come a long way since our founding and currently have the capacity to serve 37 men through our Men's Program.

In 2013, COTS started Living Debt Free, a program for men who "graduate" from regular programming but need more time to pay down debt. They may stay at COTS for an additional two years. These adults also serve as mentors to the young adults in our program.

#### **Single Women**

We have been serving single women experiencing homelessness since 2005, after seeing a consistent need for transitional shelter and programming focused on women. We currently have space for 16 women.

In addition to providing the services available to residents of our Men's Program, residents of our Women's Program focus on economic empowerment. To assist with this effort, COTS collaborates with Harbor House and the Housing Partnership on a Domestic Violence Economic Empowerment Project for the women we serve. The collaborative project focuses on breaking the cycle of domestic violence by promoting financial independence for vulnerable women. Women and single mothers in the COTS program work with an economic justice advocate to improve their economic self-sufficiency. The economic advocate engages businesses to hire women affected by domestic violence, matching said opportunities with appropriate residents and supporting them until employment stability is achieved.

#### **Single Mothers With Young Children**

In 2010, we started our Single Mothers with Young Children Program in response to the growing need for transitional shelter and supportive services for single mothers with young children. Our program addresses the root causes of homelessness for these moms, especially the issues of unemployment and stability for their children. Most of the mothers and children in our program are referred to COTS from local domestic abuse havens. Our Single Mothers with Young Children Program is currently at capacity with a waiting list.



#### Young Adults

COTS' Young Adult Program, started in March 2012, focuses on addressing the root causes of homelessness for young adults. Some of our young adult residents are 18 years old and still in high school. Without timely and comprehensive intervention, these young adults are at risk of becoming the Fox Valley's next generation of homeless adults. COTS is the only shelter with a directed program for young adults ages 18-24 aging out of foster care and other juvenile programs. COTS reaches those young adults who have not had the appropriate role modeling and provides them with opportunities to learn personal accountability and develop leadership skills. The opportunities provided at COTS give young adults the will to think and dream about their future and consider higher education or continuing education for the first time in their lives. COTS currently has space for eight young adults.

#### Aftercare

Based on best practices, COTS has a formal Aftercare Program; no other shelter in the area provides this program. When residents leave COTS, they receive continued support for an additional two years. To prevent another incident of homelessness, home visits and periodic check-ins are provided to Aftercare clients. We contact individuals in Aftercare at regular intervals from their date of discharge from COTS or as needed to provide case management and other assistance, and they can reach out to COTS' Outreach Coordinator at any time. At the end of 2013, 97% of our former residents in Aftercare maintained safe, stable, and independent housing.



## Melonie:

## Mow I've Overcome"

"If anyone ever had a predisposition for alcoholism, it's me." Melanie is a bubbly, 30-something brunette with a big smile. She started going to bars with her family at the age of 14. Drinking was the way her family bonded.

Melanie got married at the age of 19 and soon after started a family. During her pregnancies she would stay sober, but would quickly fall back into her old drinking habits after giving birth. Her husband also drank heavily, which made it even harder for her to maintain sobriety.

After a while, Melanie realized that her relationship with her spouse was unhealthy. They divorced in 2012, and engaged in a long custody battle. She signed an absolute sobriety clause in order to keep custody of her children, but couldn't even last a month. "I knew I had to get help," she remembers.

#### 44 worked for it."

Melanie decided to risk losing custody of her children by checking into treatment. She stayed in treatment for 4 months. While there, Melanie found employment at STEP Industries, an organization that provides employment, support, and guidance to people in recovery.

After leaving her treatment program, Melanie had nowhere to go. She knew that she could move in with her mother, but since her mother drank, Melanie knew that it would be an unhealthy environment for her so she turned to COTS.

While at COTS, Melanie learned life skills she needed to succeed. "Before, I never had anything to worry about. I was married at 19, divorced at 33," she explains. She continued working at STEP Industries and learned how to budget on a small income. "It made me feel so much better because I worked for it," Melanie recalls.

#### "A new beginning"

Fast forward over a year, and Melanie is doing great. She remains involved with COTS through our Aftercare Program, which supports former COTS residents for two years after they move out. Melanie has been sober for two years, and is working full-time as a massage therapist. Her smile grows wide as she talks about her job. "I love pampering people!"

She also saved up enough money to live in her own apartment, seeing it as "a new beginning" despite its humble appearance. Melanie continues to fight for custody of her children, but continues to see them on weekends.

She has learned countless life lessons from her experience. "I wanted to give up so many times, but I didn't," she explains. Her advice: "You can't do anything positive with your life if you don't have selfworth. Find something that you keep fighting for. For me, that's my faith, myself, and my children."

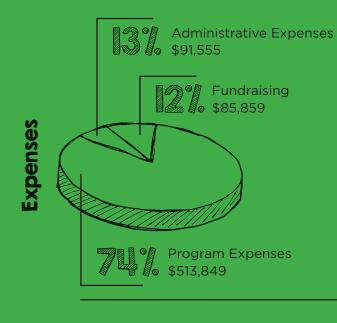
#### Finally: "Never give up."

#### Outcomes: All Programs individuals served (plus 3 young children) residents graduated from **Financial Peace University** of residents in our of residents Aftercare Program maintained safe, stable, and independent housing

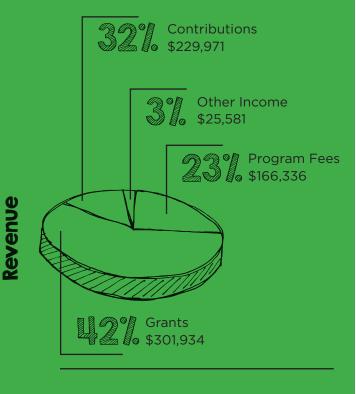


of residents leaving COTS moved into safe, stable, and independent housing

### Financials



Total Expenses \$691,263





Total Revenue \$723,822

Brad began his young adult life with an admirable goal: To become an architect. He went to college for a year and a half to study architecture, and even found a job at an architectural firm. However, once he saw what day-to-day life was like as an architect, he realized it wasn't for him.

Around the same time, he ran out of money. "My family's always been in financial crisis," he explains. "My family has gone through a lot...my dad's in prison. There's been a lot of heartache."

Brad felt like he didn't have any choice except to drop out of college. Finding himself with no career prospects, he began drinking heavily, which led to a string of poor choices. Eventually, he lost his apartment and found himself with nowhere to go.

#### "I want to have a happy life"

Fortunately, Brad found COTS. The now-24-year-old has been in COTS' Young Adult Program for the past year. He explains, "I've been in troubled spots in my lifetime. I've been trying to learn from my mistakes and move on. I want to have a happy life."

"I've been learning a lot financially," Brad continues. "Financial Peace University has been working well." Brad's major goal is to pay down the student loans he accrued while in college. He has paid down \$1,500 in debt since being at COTS.

With the assistance of COTS and Riverview Gardens, a close partner of COTS, Brad was able to find a stable, full-time job. "Job stability was the number one thing I needed," Brad explains.

#### Giving back to the community

Brad has also given back to the community by volunteering "thousands" of hours at a local animal rescue. "Every hour that I'm there, I just love it," he grins. "It's my home away from home."

Recently, Brad received assistance from the COTS Barrier Removal Fund, which helped him get back his driver's license. Now, Brad hopes to save up enough money to purchase his own vehicle. After paying down debt, Brad's ultimate goal is, "To have a good, stable job—something I can be stable with. And have a family."

## Brad: Finding Stability

### Donor Honor Role

\$50,000 + J. J. Keller Foundation, Inc. Thrivent Financial Foundation

#### \$10,000 - \$49,000

Anonymous Appleton Medical Center Foundation Bemis Company Foundation A capacity building grant from unrestricted funds within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region Crystal Print Foundation, Inc. Frank C. Shattuck Community Fund\* Jewelers Mutual Charitable Giving Fund\* Kimberly-Clark Foundation Oshkosh Corporation Foundation, Inc. Theda Clark Medical Center Foundation U.S. Venture/Schmidt Family Foundation, Inc. Ward Family Foundation

#### \$1,000 - \$9,999

American National Bank - Fox Cities John and Bianca Anderla Anonymous Appleton Alliance Church Appleton Noon Lions Club, Inc. **Ariens Foundation** Arthur J. and Gladys K. Schmidt Charitable Fund\* Associated Bank Associated Financial Group Badger Plug Company Bob and Mary Karisny Family Fund\* Calvary Bible Church CMD Corporation **Community First Credit Union** Dr. Abdul and Nasreen Majid Fund\* Dunsirn Family Charitable Fund, LLC Jim and Arlene Eichstadt **Festival Foods** First English Lutheran Church Fox Banquets & Rivertyme Catering, Inc. Fox Cities Stadium Charitable Fund\* Green Bay Packers Foundation The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America Hartwig Family Foundation Herrling Clark Law Firm, LTD James L. and Gail B. Cummings Family Charitable Fund\* Kalscheur Family Foundation Kerwin Fund\* Ladies of St. Bernard Jeff and Sue Lafortune Memorial Presbyterian Church Menasha Corporation Foundation Mielke Family Foundation, Inc.\*\* North Star Asset Management, Inc. John and Lynn Pfefferle Steven and Sarah Pfile Plexus Corporation Charitable Foundation Principal Financial Group Pro-Con Progressive Converting, Inc. Robert & Patricia Endries Family Foundation\*\* The Robert W. and Susan T. Brown Family Foundation Ken Romenesko Schenck SC John Schmidt and Julie Schaller-Schmidt Tom and Mary Schmidt Albert and Shirley Schmidt Schmidt Family G4 Fund\* Secura Insurance Companies Charitable Fund\* Seifert Family Fund\* Shopko Foundation Martha Spalding St. John's Thrift Store St. Pius X Congregation St. Thomas More Parish Sullivision, Inc. **Thomas Tatlock** Theda and Tamblin Clark Smith Family Foundation, Inc. ThedaCare Anne Van Hoof We Energies Foundation Wells Fargo Foundation Anthony and Ashley Wilhelms William A. Siekman Foundation William J. & Barbara A. Schmidt

#### \$100 - \$999

Family Foundation, Inc.\*\*

Albany International Corp. Anonymous Robert and Bernadette Bachman Dan Balliet Lester and Rae Ann Balster Bartelt Insulation Supply, Inc. Jeanne Beckley Tom and Jackie Bertram Bryan and Rebecca Blankfield Bill and Teri Bohn Clark Boren Brennan Revocable Trust Mary Butler Guy Bytof **Richard Calder** James and Carmelita Carmichael The Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Green Bay, Inc. Gary and Amy Cebulski Jeff and Karla Chaudoir Marvin and Debra Cherney The Clarence Wallace and Dolores Lynch Wallace Family Foundation Tammy Clark Mark and Gail Constancio David Coolev Fred and Norrita Corsmeier Covenant Leasing, LLC Creative Group, Inc. Jim Dallman

Robert and Anita Damon Dennis and Laureen Davey John Davis **Deimer Family Trust** Derksen Family Charitable Fund Anne Des Marais Doug and Carla Salmon Foundation Dave Dudek Craig and Rebecca Dunphey James and Ammie Ebben John and Kathryn Edlebeck Helen Edmonds First United Methodist Church Fox Valley Tool & Die, Inc. Michael and Mary Gage Jayne Gibbon John Gloudemans **Yvette Grimmett** Steve and Mary Hamilton Lee Ann Hammen Bob and Gerri Heffron Dorothy and Bryan Hollenbach Holy Spirit Parish Ray and Mary Hosmer James and Kathleen Houlihan Infant Welfare Circle of the King's Daughters\* Sheila Jenkins Anita Kapp Bill and Mary Kay Kessenich Suzanne and Richard Kewley Robert and Mary Klein Barb Kolbe Konz Wood Products Jean Kordus Lee and Betty Kraus Norman Krutzik Garv and Jillian Lallensack Jim and Mary Langlois Daniel and Janice Letko Melissa Long Michael and Diane Mahlik Debra Martin Mary L. Downs Revocable Trust Ruth Masse Mary May Paul and Maureen McAvoy **Richard McCrory** Charles and Lesley McKee **Rick Meese** Minerva Marketing Silvia Muldrow Tom and Pam Mullins Nativity of the Mother of God **Orthodox Mission** Leo and Sue Nickasch Mark and Shelia Noll Mary O'Connor John and Martha Odle Mabel Olson Steven and Cindy Otto Outlook Group Corp. PDI Financial Group

James and Karen Pfefferle Dave and Lisa Pierre Perry and Carol Pierre Prospera Credit Union The Real Estate Group Foundation Fund\* Edwin and Mary Jane Renaud Shawn and Kelly Richeson Rotary Club of Appleton Downtown Victoria Rotzel Walter and Amelia Rugland Darwin and Joan Schmalz Timothy and Jill Schmidt James and Denise Schmitz **Elizabeth Singler** St. Edward Congregation St. John Nepomucene Catholic Church St. Patrick's Bookstore St. Paul Congregation Stellar Blue Web Design, LLC William and Susan Stone Lorine Theisinger Al Tyczkowski and Penny Paris Tony and Diane Uitenbroek Alvin Vandenberg Roger and Ethel Walbrun Patricia Waselchuk Tim and Camille Welch Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Graham Werner Walter and Beverly Wieckert Don and Joyce Winrich Marge Wippich

#### \$1 - \$99

Peter and Mary Arts Alan Babcock John and Barbara Bell John and Agnes Biese Alan and Sharon Blake Mary Bolwerk Therese Bonfiglio Kenneth and Phyllis Boulay John and Rita Bradish Kathleen Bradley Mary Ann Brochtrup Pam and Mike Burnett Jim and Margaret Burns **Russell Burns Doris Carlson** Brian and Cheryl Casey Mary Collar **Timothy and Nancy Collentine** Otto and Carolyn Cox **Rosemary Cummings** Robin Delain Patricia Dercks Robert and Suzanne Dernbach Charles and Karen Dorn Paris Drake Audrey Driessen East Wisconsin Savings Bank Rose Ebben

**Darlene Enders** Dan Flannery Fox Valley Retirees Club Ray and Becky Froehlich Dennis and Kay Fuerst Tom and Karen Garz John and Lynn Gavelek Fred and Dorothy Rowe Gedemer Larry and Sandy Griesbach Grube Family LLC Paul and Wendy Hartman Jerry and Mary Hein Harland and Carol Hietpas **Prudence Hitesman** David Janssen Tom and Diana Janssen Maurie and Carrie Jury Harvey Kandler Marge Koepke La Verne Kons Mark and Gloria Koth Todd and Nan Krizenesky Jane Kufahl Marita Lachapell Allan and Judith Leicht Andrew and Frances MacDonald **Richard Meidam** Charles and Barbara Merry Nancy Miron Neil and Sarah Mix William and Carolyn Muir Norman and Peggy Munson Jerome Murphy Lee and Bobbie Murray Gordon and Mary Nelson Jeanette Oates Marty and Rita O'Brien Thomas and Mary O'Hearn Marion Oudenhoven James and Mary Lou Probst Gerrard and Diane Putzer William Quella **Ron Rademacher** Ellen Rick Dave and Sue Rogers Deb Romenesko Brenda Schmitt Fredric and Connie Seidl Alice Steif Carol Stoegbauer Leon and Karen Straub Van Abel's LLC Paul and Linda Van Berkel Dave and Tari Van Hoof Heather and Mike Van Hoof Steve and Dee VanRyzin Stephanie Voight Marvin and Jayne Voissem Brian and Catherine Wallace Raymond Zagorski Cary Zaug

Donald Zuleger

#### In Kind

91.9/91.5 The Family Deb Agate Anonymous Ralph and Pat Buesing **Diane Bushelle** Catholic Central Conover Company Dura-Fibre, LLC Evergreen Credit Union First Congregational United Church of Christ First Presbyterian Church of Neenah **FNB** Fox Valley Freedom Center Food Pantry **Gabriel Furniture** Joe and Jen Gaerthofner Sandy Gebhart Gegan Elementary School Jeff and Lisa Geiger Jan Gonnering Great Lakes Roofing Corporation Kristin Hoff Holiday Inn Appleton J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc. Jack Richeson School of Art Patti Janikowski Ed and Kathy Kleckner Judy Miller Miller Masonry & Concrete, Inc. Mills Fleet Farm Miron Construction Co., Inc. N.E.W. Printing Pizza King Lyle and Victoria Reigel Rotary Club of Appleton West Foundation St. Joseph Food Program St. Katharine Drexel St. Mary's Parish Stein Gardens and Gifts Target Karyn Tellock The Gideons International The Volunteer Center of East Central WI Time Warner Cable U.S. Venture, Inc. Sue Uitenbroek Walmart Foundation WG&R Furniture Jessica Wickland Woodman's Markets Your Neighborhood Living, Inc.

#### "Thank you to our wonderful volunteers and Meal Ministers!"

- \* A fund within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region
- \*\* A supporting organization of the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region

**All Application Inquiries** Phone: 920-268-0603 Ext: 700 Fax: 920-734-4732

**Mens Program** 913 S. West Avenue Appleton, WI 54915 Phone: 920-268-0603 Ext: 702 Fax: 920-734-4732 **Womens Program** 1003 W. College Avenue Appleton, WI 54914 Phone: 920-268-0603 Ext: 701 Fax: 920-831-6593

**Young Adult Program** 819 S. West Avenue Appleton, WI 54915 Phone: 920-268-0603 Ext: 703 Fax: 920-734-4732 All Development and Volunteer Inquiries Phone: 920-268-0603 Ext: 704

**Aftercare Program** 913 S. West Avenue Appleton, WI 54915 Phone: 920-268-0603 Ext: 706 Fax: 920-734-4732

*OPD*, of residents in our Aftercore Program maintained safe, stable and independent housing.



appletoncots.org