

OUTREACH NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2016



THROUGH STRUGGLE & GROWTH

School Partnership Helps Student Gain Social, Emotional Skills Through WYO Counseling

When Kimmerly Buchholz, Wheaton Youth Outreach youth & family therapist, began meeting with Peter,* a middle school special education student, he struggled with social skills and couldn't control his anger.

"Peter moved to the area in 6th grade, and went from a very intense self-contained special education classroom to a local middle school," says Kimmerly. "He was often very impulsive in his reactions. When we started meeting, we immediately began working on self-regulation of emotions."

But the initial goal was just to build a relationship. "By meeting weekly, usually playing card games, Peter became more comfortable and was able to learn and practice social skills," says Kimmerly. They worked on remembering past conversations with people, friendly teasing about football teams to show he was paying attention to

those conversations, accepting Uno losses and shaking hands after a game, etc. "Though he would still sometimes struggle with relating to others, he became very comfortable in the school and with his support system," she says.

Over the course of a year, Peter kept struggling at times, but he also showed growth. He tried to join the basketball team in 7th grade but had poor sportsmanship and didn't make the team; in 8th grade, he joined a football league and thrived. "Tackling was a healthy way to cope with his anger, and Peter responded well to counseling examples related to football," she says. "He made friends with his teammates and was even asked to represent the team in a local kicking and punting competition. It brought Peter great pride to be recognized for something positive rather than for his negative behaviors.

"His ability to regulate his emotions improved, as well as his social skills," adds Kimmerly. "Peter was able to laugh off a card game loss rather than throw the cards like he might have when we first began meeting." But one of his greatest successes, she says, has been gradually mainstreaming into regular education classrooms, where he's thrived with typical expectations.

Recently, Kimmerly, Peter and Peter's mom jointly agreed to end counseling sessions, but Kimmerly hopes they will contact her if they need additional support in the future. "This is a good example of a longer-term, positive relationship with a client that has led to growth in managing his emotions and his coping skills," she says. "It's also led to another great partnership with a school in our community."

**Name changed*

Celebrating a College Graduate

Congratulations to Terry Moore, a College Opportunity Program scholarship student, who graduated from Eastern Illinois University! Gigi Nyesoah, College Opportunity Program coordinator, attended the ceremony.

Terry majored in organizational and professional development with a concentration in supervision and leadership and an emphasis in safety and security. He hopes to enroll in graduate school in the near future.



REACHING OUT TO LOCAL VETERANS

The Wheaton Youth Outreach counseling program was recently awarded a \$500 grant from Veteran Cultural and Clinical Competence (V3C), which will go toward the scholarship fund for veterans living in the Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans in Wheaton.

“The need for evidence-based post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) therapy, with emphasis on family, for residents at Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans has been established,” says Gail Hoffman, director of Wheaton Youth Outreach. “The barriers are that veterans must travel long distances and service hours are not compatible with veterans’ work hours. We offer the perfect solution: We’re less than two blocks away from the shelter and we offer evening hours.”

The grant was awarded to Outreach following the Veteran Cultural and Clinical Competence (V3C) Learning Series, a learning collaborative the Outreach Community Counseling Centers took part in to increase access to mental health services for veterans, National Guard, and military reserves families.



CREATIVITY ON DISPLAY

Collaboration between Jubilee Furniture and the Employment Opportunity Center allows one student to shine while developing new skills.



Chris Ellerman
CEO

OVERHEARD: INSIGHTS FROM THE CEO

“We are watching several key trends happening in Illinois: The state’s social service system is rapidly deteriorating. Organizations are laying off staff, closing buildings, shutting down. Mental health services are deteriorating. The cost of living is going up. Baby boomers are retiring, leaving the state and leaving behind a leadership gap. Yet Outreach is continuing to grow. As I see it, we have six core strengths: First, our staff. Second, our long-term donor base. Third, our connection to the local faith community. Fourth, we are strategically positioned within communities with needs; the neighborhoods we are in allow us to serve families and grow church partnerships. Fifth, we are not alone. God is clearly with us. And finally, we have a strong vision for our future.”

- Shared by Chris Ellerman, CEO, at the all staff meeting on February 11, 2016

Thanks to one student in the Employment Opportunity Center (EOC), merchandise at Jubilee Furniture is flying out the door!

According to Crista Olson, Jubilee Furniture operations manager, a student named Lee* is using her creativity to help sell furniture. “Lee, who is interning at Jubilee Furniture as part of her training in the new Employment Opportunity Center, has been painting some of the tired pieces we struggle to sell with a chalk paint recipe to create a trendy, distressed look,” she says. Lee started with small pieces like side tables and chairs, and has graduated to large pieces like china cabinets.

“When I first started working at Jubilee Furniture, Crista suggested I try painting furniture and it turned out I was really good at it, and received really great feedback,” says Lee. “I enjoy the process—it’s relaxing

and creative. Plus, it’s fun to see something go from ordinary to something that really stands out in the store.”

“The first one Lee painted sold the first day we put it on the floor, and the second one sold before she finished it!” Crista says. “What’s even more amazing is that we tripled the selling price on each item. Needless to say, we are now teaching the other sales associates to paint when we have some down time on the sales floor.” The increased sales are a win-win for everyone, as all proceeds from sales at Jubilee Furniture support programs and services at Outreach.

Lee was working in a low wage job at a local grocery store when she first learned about EOC. “When I learned about the program, it seemed like a much better opportunity that could lead to future internships and

a future job at a good company,” shares Lee. “In the long-term, I hope to work in technology. In the short-term, I’m using what I’ve learned in the program to take steps towards starting my own business. I started an Etsy page to sell small things that I’ve painted and we’ll see where it goes, one step at a time!”

Alex Hoerr, EOC job coach/case manager, says Lee’s internship has helped her learn more about her identity as she emerges into adulthood. “Her rehabbing projects have affirmed her abilities as an artist with a creative mind,” she says. “Lee has expressed thankfulness to Outreach for helping her learn in a supportive environment.”

**Name changed*



GIVING BACK

Across Outreach's ministries, programs are finding innovative ways to give back to their community. The result? Radical lessons in putting our faith into action. Here's a glimpse at our recent service projects:

Warrenville Youth & Family Services

Ronald McDonald House Visit

The WYFS LINK mentoring program recently visited the Ronald McDonald House in Winfield, which serves families with pediatric patients being treated at Central DuPage Hospital. The group was given a tour by of the volunteer staff members.

According to Leslee Cremer, youth prevention specialist, the mentoring group was excited about the tour and eager to learn. "We learned that Ronald McDonald is funded through volunteer donations. The children and families are able to stay at the Ronald McDonald House for only ten dollars a night, but can stay for free if they cannot afford the fee." Families are provided with meals, laundry facility, workout room, TV area, and a play area complete with gaming systems and toys.

One student said, "The Ronald McDonald House tour was very interesting and inspiring. It made me realize just how much people will go above and beyond just to help someone who is going through a tough time with their child. It was a very moving experience."

Leslee adds that, after the tour, the kids wanted to find out how they can support the house. "We decided to dedicate a night to making Valentine's Day cards and cookies for the families who benefit from the Ronald McDonald House," she says. "It's a pleasure to witness the empathy and compassion our students have for the children and families."

Firemen Appreciation

LINK mentoring pairs held the first annual "Feed a Fireman" night on January 11. The group prepared a chili dinner, served the meal and cleaned up. "It was great to see the matches engaging with the firefighters. The kids are in awe of their presence," says Leslee. After dinner the matches were given a tour of the fire department.

The matches planned this event as a means of serving the fire department. "Our group wanted to provide the WFPD dinner as a thank you for all the support they have given WYFS youth service programs," says Leslee.

Outreach Community Center in Carol Stream

Volunteering at Local Food Pantry

The high school program at OCC recently had the chance to volunteer at People's Resource Center, a food pantry and community service organization in Wheaton. The students performed several tasks, including helping shoppers go through the food line, unpacking donations and restocking shelves.

According to Jeremy McDowell, high school education and employment instructor, this opportunity provided students with valuable community service experience. "My hope is that our students will continue to see a need in the community and decide that they can be the ones to do something about it," he says. "We are using opportunities like this one to foster a lifelong desire to serve others in our students."

Students shared that the experience has affected them. "I got to see where people came from and I could connect with them because I have a similar story," said student Norberto Lopez. "It was great to see the younger children smile when they received the food they wanted," he added.

"I always knew there was a need in my own community, but actually doing something about it opened my eyes to the real need," said another student, Tim Hydzyk.

Jeremy hopes the partnership with People's Resource Center will be ongoing. "It's easy to say yes to helping those in need through an organization that truly cares for others," he says. "I'm thrilled our students felt the same way."

Valentines for Rehabilitation Patients

Older Adults program participants have been using their creativity to give back. At

Adele's Story: An Older Adult Opens Up

As one older adult exited the bus after attending an Older Adults Program activity, she turned to the staff and said, "Thank you very much. I had a wonderful time."

Marissa Sabio, Older Adults activities coordinator, says this may seem like a normal bit of social nicety, quickly forgotten, but she and Linda Hawkins, Older Adults Program Director, were both pleased and stunned. "Adele* entered our program about two years ago, so beaten down, nervous and distrustful after coming out of chaotic, dysfunctional living arrangements that she felt almost voiceless," says Marissa. "The first few times on the bus, she wouldn't speak, merely handing us a piece of paper on which she'd written down stores along our grocery route where she wanted to shop." She often sat by herself at luncheons and would wander off alone on local field trips.

Now, as she's opening up to others around her, people know her by name, speak fondly of her and note her kindness to others. "She signs up for most of our activities and events and other people know to look for her and join her," says Marissa. "The Older Adults Program celebrates this milestone, as we see a once silent, isolated person become integrated into a loving, supportive community."

**Name changed*



its weekly Tuesday Activity Group (TAG), the group recently made almost 100 Valentines for patients at Marianjoy Rehabilitation Center.

"Many older adults know of the good work and service provided by Marianjoy from first-hand experience," says Older Adults activities coordinator Marissa Sabio. "They loved being able to reach out to the patients there."

One older adult said, "We just want them to know people are thinking about them." "We know how lonely it can be and how difficult it is to work on getting better," added another participant. "Hopefully this will brighten their day."

The group had a blast as they reminisced about past Valentine's Days and tried out different poems to write inside the cards. One said, "This is so fun! I haven't put together a homemade Valentine in years! It's like when we were young!"

At an activity group in December, the group participated in "Holiday Mail for Heroes" through the Red Cross, providing greeting cards to men and women in the military, veterans and families in their communities. The program hopes to continue giving back to nonprofit organizations as a way to encourage older adults' generosity, mental sharpness and artistic skills.

Thanking Building Staff

At OCC's Villagebrook satellite, the teen council has been meeting weekly since last fall with the goal of building leadership skills and friendships through community volunteering, projects and weekly meetings. The group of 11 middle school students recently created appreciation baskets for the cleaning crew, maintenance staff and office staff of Villagebrook Apartments. "The youth came up with this idea in a brainstorm session and have written thank you notes for the hard work they do to keep this community clean and functioning," says Lathie Norton, Villagebrook program coordinator. "It's so encouraging to see them come up with the idea to serve those who serve others."

Puente del Pueblo

Winter Coats for Refugee Families

In late November, temperatures plunged in the Chicagoland area. When staff at Puente del Pueblo noticed Sudanese refugees walking around without coats or hats, they knew they had to take action.

"The refugees, who had recently arrived at Timber Lake apartments, had never seen snow," says Matthew McNiel, director of Puente del Pueblo. "In Sudan, the 'cold' season lasts from December 14 to January 31 with an average daily high temperature of 89°F. They were not knowledgeable enough about our climate to make good decisions on their own."

The solution? Puente created an event to provide winter gear to not only the Sudanese refugees, but also the refugees from Iraq and Burma living at Timber Lake. Iglesia del Pueblo, the Hispanic congregation at Wheaton Bible Church and a ministry partner to Puente del Pueblo, hosted the event on November 21, which included an in-home, "in-closet" assessment with seven families.

"After distributing coats, hats, scarves and gloves, members of Iglesia del Pueblo showed the families, pictorially and theatrically, how to dress for winter," says Matthew. "The Sudanese thought it was hilarious that people need to wear up to five layers of clothes in the winter." The group also provided morning sweets, coffee and juice for all who attended.

"The free distribution of winter wear was an effective and dignifying strategy in this particular situation," says Matthew. "It was God's timing that the distribution moment happened during the first major snow and cold snap of the season!"

In addition to meeting practical needs, a spiritual seed was planted. "We invited Sudanese families to the Arabic-English Bible study at Wheaton Bible Church," he says. "They answered that they would be happy to join us."



SERVING THE MOST VULNERABLE

Thanks to a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education, students at Currier Elementary School in West Chicago will be receiving extra support—and a Warrenville Youth & Family Services counselor will be playing a key role in the process.

Outreach is one of 50+ community partners to work with the West Chicago school district through WeGo Together for Kids to help the district's most vulnerable families, and starting in January WYFS Bilingual Youth & Family Therapist Diane Tabilo became embedded in the school to provide extra support to students.

"Having a bilingual social worker on site at Currier Elementary will increase the likelihood for students to receive the support they need," says Diane. "Barriers such as transportation, language and cost will no longer exist for this population while at Currier. Also, early intervention is key to

increasing protective factors and decreasing risk factors so that students have better chances to succeed as they continue to develop." Diane also hopes the students' parents and families will feel more supported, which will strengthen them to encourage and care for their children.

While Diane brings a fresh face to counseling in Warrenville and West Chicago, her roots at Outreach run deep. Her father, William Hawke, aunt, Jenny Lund, and grandmother, Vivian Lund, have all served on the WYFS board and been actively involved with WYFS. Diane grew up hearing stories from her family about WYFS's positive impact in the Warrenville community, but she never thought about working there until she graduated with her social work degree in May 2015.

"My Aunt Jenny, grandma and parents encouraged me to apply at Outreach, but my

family was not the driving force behind my decision to seek out opportunities at the organization," she says. "I truly believe in Outreach's mission and am blessed to fill a position that is such a great fit for me, both personally and professionally. Additionally, I am honored to work within the community in which I was raised and currently reside."

Sandy Oyler, clinical supervisor, is just as excited to bring Diane aboard. "Diane is an excellent clinician and I look forward to supporting her as she helps students thrive both educationally and emotionally," she says. "Through this grant Diane will also be able to work with families to help enhance parents' stability and engagement in their children's lives. Diane has a track record of being successful at both these things, and I have no doubt that she will be an asset to the Currier community."

MARI'S STORY

One Young Mom Finds Hope through the Employment Opportunity Center

At 19 years old, Mari was living in a cramped basement with two kids. She desperately needed a way to pay rent, but she needed so much more than that. She needed to graduate from high school. She needed a steady job. She needed opportunity. And that's when Mari found what she needed—the Employment Opportunity Center at Outreach.

"When I heard how the program worked, I was all in," says Mari. "I needed help finding a job, but the support was beyond what I even expected. I love my case managers. We're kind of like a family." Mari says they're always there for her, providing her mentoring and motivation.

"The Employment Opportunity Program truly wrapped around Mari and provided holistic care," says Alex Hoerr, job coach/case manager. "The program provided a tutor to help Mari study for her GED, internships at Discoveries Resale Shop and Jubilee Furniture so she could gain employment experience, and transportation to her job and her children's daycare." In addition, Mari attended counseling sessions at Wheaton Youth Outreach to work through her background.

After reaching her training goals and impressing the resale stores with her professionalism and skills, Mari moved on to an internship at KeHe Distributors in Naperville, where she works in the Human Resources department and with the mail room staff team. Her supervisors have praised her work ethic and extended her internship. She recently received her GED, and KeHe held a graduation celebration to honor her success!

Alex has been blown away by the success Mari has achieved in a short amount of time. "She's done everything on her own—it takes a lot of organization, persistence and assertiveness to get the resources you need when you're in Mari's situation. It's been neat to see her effort pay off."

"It's definitely been a struggle," Mari agrees. "There were times I wanted to give up, but Alex would tell me to keep pushing. Now, I have my driver's license, my GED, a job and my own apartment. I can't believe I accomplished all of these goals! But I wouldn't have been able to do it without Outreach."



NEW LOCATION, NEW SERVICES AT YORK

York Community Resource Center, a multi-purpose neighborhood resource center serving residents in south Villa Park, has moved to a new location! Now located inside the Taiwanese Community Church in Lombard, this central spot provides easy access for elementary students.

Outreach plans to continue strengthening the programs and services at York. "One year into managing at York, we are continuing to work with community partners to ensure that the services offered match the needs in the community, and we are striving to grow the youth program," says Vanessa Roth, chief operating officer.

The youth program currently focuses on after-school tutoring for elementary students. "The program works with teachers

from Stevenson and York Center Elementary Schools to ensure that tutoring matches each student's individual needs," says Vanessa. The program includes homework assistance, social-emotional learning, recreation and snacks. This summer, the all-day youth program will again be offered to both elementary and junior high students.

Residents in the surrounding community also find help in the form of York's case management services. A dedicated case manager is now onsite, whose goal is to help individuals and families gain stability. Case management services include family needs assessment; referrals and linkage to other agencies for food, clothing, housing, child care and legal matters; job assistance and links to employment resources; home visits; and emergency financial assistance

to help with rent, security deposits and utility bill payments.

"Over the last eleven months, since its inception, Case Manager Zully Albornoz has made great strides in building relationships and creating awareness for our services in the greater Villa Park area," says Vanessa. "We are already serving multiple families, and expect that number to climb significantly this year as we strive to meet the need in this community."



Outreach

Community Ministries

Restoring Hope, Providing Opportunities

Outreach Community Center in Carol Stream • Warrenville Youth & Family Services • Wheaton Youth Outreach • Outreach Community Counseling Centers
Serving at Puente del Pueblo in West Chicago and York Community Resource Center • Resale Centers: Jubilee Cars, Jubilee Furniture & Discoveries Resale

Upcoming Events

You are warmly invited to join fellow friends of Outreach at our upcoming spring events.



OCC Spring Dinner

The 30th Annual Spring Dinner benefitting the Outreach Community Center in Carol Stream will be **Friday, April 29, 2016**.

This year's event features guest speaker Fr. Greg Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries, the largest gang intervention and re-entry program in the world. A well-known speaker, author and advocate, Fr. Boyle will bring an encouraging message of hope. In addition, hear stories of how OCC has made a difference in the life of southeast Carol Stream residents over the past year.

RSVP as a guest or table host to Mindy Inman, event manager, at 630-682-1910 or minman@outreachcommin.org. Learn more at outreachcommin.org/events.



Golf, Food & Wine Experience

The 5th annual Golf, Food & Wine Experience is being hosted in a new location: Butterfield Country Club in Oak Brook. Join us **Monday, June 20, 2016** for an afternoon of golf, complete with on-course activities, contests and prizes, followed by an exciting evening of wine and food pairings, a gourmet dinner designed by a celebrity chef, silent auction with mobile bidding, a live auction and more. Reception-and-dinner-only guests are welcome! Golf, Food & Wine raises scholarship funds for Outreach's transitional housing, college and employment programs.

RSVP at golffoodwine.org or contact Joe Ancell, major gifts officer, at 630-682-1910 or jancell@outreachcommin.org.

SUPPORT OUTREACH

Through your giving to Outreach, you demonstrate the importance of investing in Christ-centered programs that bring about Kingdom changes in the lives of those we serve and the communities where we serve.

Did you know...

- Gifts made by credit card have a 3% fee taken out. For example, a \$1,000 gift is charged \$30, significantly diminishing the effectiveness of your gift.
- Electronic Funds Transfers (EFT) are charged just 50 cents per transaction.
- Setting up a direct bill pay through your checking account is a fee-free way to donate, so 100% of your gift goes to Outreach programs.

Outreach Community Ministries is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Gifts are tax deductible as a charitable contribution to the extent provided by law.

Donate today using the enclosed envelope or visit outreachcommin.org/give.

SERVE + IMPACT

Serve your community and make a lasting impact by volunteering at one of Outreach Community Ministries' sites. Current opportunities in our neighborhood resource centers include one-on-one tutors, classroom assistants, mentors, and front desk receptionists. Or, volunteer at our resale centers as a store clerk or warehouse assistant. Whatever your gifts or schedule, we need you! To get started, view the volunteer job descriptions and complete the online application at outreachcommin.org/volunteer.

