



GOING BEYOND THE CALL

WYFS' Counselors Join Forces with Local Firefighters

Warrenville Youth & Family Services' (WYFS) Counseling Center is gaining more than 60 new team members, as the site joins forces with the Warrenville Fire Protection District. The two organizations began discussing the partnership in the fall of 2017, in reaction to recent community needs.

The Warrenville Fire Protection District first approached Angela Mains, WYFS director, seeking a way to help those in the community affected by recent spikes in opioid overdoses. As a leader in the community, WYFS leapt at the opportunity to help their vulnerable neighbors in need. "They approached us to see if we would be available to go on site when there's a crisis of some sort, where we can be there to intervene and support victims or victims' families," said Sandy Oyler, WYFS Counseling Center Program director.

The collaboration was put into place by

Outreach team members: Angela Mains, Sandy Oyler, Gail Hoffman, Wheaton Youth Outreach director, Warrenville Fire Protection District Assistant Fire Chief David Kruzi and Chief Dennis Rogers.

After discussing the needs of the community, the team quickly realized there was a need to support the local firefighters as well. "[The conversation] expanded to also working with the firefighters themselves who may be exposed to trauma and may be experiencing effects of that," remarked Oyler. "We began discussing how can we support them, either on site or through debriefings."

"We've had this great relationship with [WYFS] through the Hot Shots Program," said Kruzil. "Since [WYFS] provides all different services for the community, it only made sense that when our guys are rolling up on another opioid overdose crisis

(which have been dramatic this year) and our guys who live in the community know these people and they go, 'we need help,' we thought—let's see what we can do with [WYFS]."

Through conversations with the fire department, the Outreach team decided to implement a three-part system. "The first part is training the firefighters on trauma," said Oyler. "This involves describing what it looks like and how to prevent it. The second step is going on-site to support victims and victims' families. And the third piece is debriefing with the firefighters after a traumatic event, to help them get through what they experienced."

While conducting research for this plan, the counseling team also found new data, which shows that helping first responders
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From left to right: Chief Dennis Rogers, WYFS Director Angela Mains and Assistant Fire Chief David Kruzil

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ahead of a trauma is more valuable with the effects of the trauma being less detrimental in the long run. "We did a little research on best practices, and what we found was that the traditional model of critical incident stress debriefing (that are used a lot in today's situations after a disaster or a trauma) can be harmful," said Oyler. "We found we could help build up firefighters so that they're not as effected by the experience. That led us to do a lot of research on resiliency and the idea of developing grit, which is a measurable thing, and focusing more on how to help firefighters ahead of the trauma rather than just coming in after something bad has happened."

The WYFS counseling team also recognized that the resiliency training would need to go beyond the fire department's walls—that spouses of firefighters need to be properly equipped as well. "When we went out to present to the firefighters, we also mentioned that we recognize it can also be hard to be a spouse of a fire fighter because of the demands of the job, and I would imagine that first responders can go home and probably find it difficult to talk about their day because, how do you explain what you've seen? That really resonated with them," said Oyler. "So we have decided to reach out to the spouses of the firefighters as well."

"The firefighters' resiliency, which is what is going to be done with [WYFS], is really an inoculation," said Kruzil. "It's preventative care, and how to avoid getting yourself

in that slippery slope or to get to the point where you feel like you cannot communicate at work, at home, or that you can't communicate with anybody because you feel that no one understands."

Assistant Chief Kruzil has been fundamental in changing the way preventative health care is perceived among first responders in Warrenville. "We're called to fix other people's problems. We weren't willing to admit that we needed to be fixed at times, we just couldn't do it, and everybody pays a price for that," said Kruzil.

In 2016 the Illinois Fire Services Institute began incorporating First Responder Resiliency Awareness curriculum in all IFSI courses. Kruzil believes this was crucial in changing the fire departments for the better. "It had to start at the top down to make it ok to talk about within the organization," said Kruzil.

The WYFS Counseling Center is going beyond program development and implementation, and are becoming an integral part of the Warrenville Fire Protection District team. The new collaborative not only builds relationships between the two organizations, but helps each better serve the Warrenville community.

"The firefighters have been really open to us getting to know them," said Oyler. "They've invited us to events at the firehouse so that we really get to know them and their culture— so that when we do get to appear on the scene of a crisis they already know us and feel comfortable with us being with them."

"With our new collaboration, our goal is to have Sandy and the principle players at Warrenville Youth & Family Services become part of our family," remarks Kruzil.

The WYFS team that will be on-call to assist victims' families will consist of five team members including: Sandy Oyler, WYFS Counseling Center director, Leslee Cremer, Youth Services director, Pat Fallon, WYFS Counseling Center intern, Nancy Merlo, WYFS Counseling Center bilingual therapist, and Diane Tabilo, WYFS Counseling Center bilingual therapist.

This partnership is not only unique among the Outreach Community Ministries' sites, but it also unique to DuPage County, "I do think this is a little bit cutting edge. I believe we're definitely the first within DuPage County that has an arrangement like this," remarked Oyler.

Both organizations are deeply rooted in the Warrenville area and are deepening this partnership to help the community grow and flourish.

"It's another great way to show the community that we're wanting to be part of them," said Oyler. "That we want to support them, that we know them, and it's just a great way to meet more needs that we might not otherwise have a chance to meet in our work."

OUTREACH SPREADS CHRISTMAS CHEER



Shoppers browsing for the perfect gift at OCC!



Staff and volunteers strike a pose at the Christmas Store in Carol Stream.



Staff and volunteers cranking out gifts at the gift-wrapping station at Puente's Christmas Store!



Friends enjoying the Christmas Store hosted by Puente.

Outreach Community Center in Carol Stream (OCC) and Puente del Pueblo (PdP), a ministry of Wheaton Bible Church and Iglesia del Pueblo, each hosted annual Christmas Stores on December 9, open to families living in the neighborhoods served by each resource center.

The Christmas Stores allow families to select and purchase gifts for their children at a savings of 75% off retail price. Proceeds from each Store are designated to the site's case management services, helping families served by each resource center throughout the year who need financial assistance in meeting basic needs including housing, job development activities, medical care and transportation needs that arise for families living paycheck-to-paycheck.

"Parents walk away from the store with a sense of dignity because they have Christmas gifts for their children, selected and then paid for with their own money," said Vanessa Roth, chief operating officer at Outreach Community Ministries. "They can take pride in knowing when they write 'From: MOM' on the gift tag, it really IS a gift selected and purchased by mom."

An especially exciting aspect of each Christmas Store is that so many volunteers serve that day. Each site utilizes hundreds of people who have fun serving in a meaningful way. One volunteer stated that serving at the OCC Christmas Store is the highlight of the Christmas season for their family each year.

Outreach Community Center in Carol Stream (OCC)

This year marked the OCC Christmas Store's 23rd anniversary, which originated in 1994 and served 65 families.

This year, 376 families shopped for 933 local children. Families without monies to shop at the time of the store

meet with an OCC case manager to determine how help can be provided.

425 people volunteered 4,579 hours in 2017. Volunteer work begins months before the Store. Roles include check-in, translators, drivers, child care, helping shoppers, wrapping gifts, stockers and more.

The Christmas Store is made possible by the generous support of our community partners, the dedication of our volunteers, gift drives by area organizations and financial support of sponsors and individuals.

Puente del Pueblo

This year, 174 families shopped for 495 children in West Chicago. Families were greeted by friendly volunteers, Christmas decorations, music and more!

255 people volunteered 1,659.5 hours. 2017 community sponsors included Burritos Parrilla Mexicana, Chase Bank, CHRIS Mechanical Services, Inc, and Jimenez Carnicerias Inc.

Volunteer Highlight



Local teens served up sweet treats at Puente's annual Christmas store. Volunteer Anna Jones gathered her friends together to bake cookies for the store's guests and volunteers. "My life group and I decided it was a wonderful way to serve and give back to the Lord for all the blessings he has already given to us," said Anna Jones. "It was an amazing experience and a privilege to bake for those who had little in our community."



JALENA'S STORY: FINDING HOME

Jalena was almost 19 when she found out she was pregnant. Unable to continue living with her single mom, who was unable to support both Jalena and her baby, she moved out and lived between her grandmother's house and her car while pregnant, working two jobs and going to school.

As her due date neared, she knew she needed to find somewhere to go. After researching online for housing for young moms, she found Jubilee Village (JV). While the moving process was stressful because her daughter came early, she immediately settled in and felt at home. "The staff was warm and welcoming from the very beginning," she said. "They're helpful and resourceful, and they don't judge."

Jalena is most thankful for the stable housing, but truly appreciates the community she found at JV. "If I just had a bad day, I could call Holly Points (Jubilee Village case manager) or Jana Jenkins (houseparent) and talk. If I ever had any concerns, I was able to voice it to them without feeling awkward or weird about it."

As Jalena adjusted to life with her baby, she set small goals with Holly such as budgeting and planning for the next steps. She decided to quit her part-time job in retail and find something more stable; she recently started a full-time job at Central DuPage Hospital as a call operator specialist. Jalena also started taking classes at College of DuPage, where she's working toward her associate's degree and hopes to eventually obtain her bachelor's degree in business or media production.

"My career goal right now is to be financially stable, to make it on my own without any help or public assistance," she said. "But my ultimate goal is to be a better mom for her daughter, doing everything I can to make sure she's getting all the resources she needs to feel safe and to thrive."

When Jalena first arrived, she figured she would leave the two-year program in one year. She assumed it would only take a year to get herself in a stable situation. Now, Jalena doesn't want to leave and thinks two years is too short. "I thought I would be

all alone and isolated from everyone else that I love, but that's really not the case," she says. "I can see friends and family as much as I want. Being here is only helping me do better."

Holly says she's there to support each young woman at Jubilee Village over the two years, and the program is personalized to each one. She agrees that, after going through the first year, Jalena has learned a lot. "She's become a lot more realistic—working hard to be independent, and accomplish what she needs to before she leaves. She's really good at doing what she needs to do, so I'm more of a support and provide accountability."

The support at Jubilee Village goes beyond just budgeting and accountability. Jalena felt that her experience at Jubilee offered her hope and a fresh start. "I remember a community meal with Dave and Jana (houseparents), where Dave basically explained what the word 'Jubilee' means—it means a second chance," says Jalena. "I definitely feel that here. I have been blessed with the chance to start over, and to do it while learning to be a mom."

Despite working hard and trying her best, Jalena doesn't know how she would have made it without JV. "It would've been ten times harder, trying to find financial stability while working a part-time job, going to school and learning to parent a newborn—I probably would've had to drop something." She says the houseparents and counselors have helped slow her down and put her on the right track.

Jalena realizes she has been given a special opportunity and doesn't want her time at JV to be over. "This place is a blessing," she said. "I would stay forever if I could."

Jubilee Village serves single, formerly homeless mothers, ages 18-24, and their children. In 2017, Jubilee Village served 21 women and 20 children, only meeting a fraction of transitional housing needs in DuPage County.

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

CEO Chris Ellerman Honored for 40 Years at Outreach



"When we love and respect people, revealing to them their value, they can begin to come out from behind the walls that protect them."

Jean Vanier, philosopher, theologian, humanitarian and founder of L'Arche Communities for the Disabled and their Families

Congratulations to Chris Ellerman, chief executive officer, on 40 years of service at Outreach Community Ministries!

Chris first started working at Outreach in 1977, as the only employee. He and his wife Carlene have opened their home to homeless teens and young adults and together have transitioned over 70 young people into adulthood through their family-based mentorship work. For the past 20 years, his work has focused exclusively on ministry leadership and holistic, compassion ministry development. Today Outreach is a substantial organization sponsoring five faith-based community service organizations in collaboration with over 25 partner churches, serving the most vulnerable residents in DuPage County.

"Chris is a tremendous leader here at Outreach and in the greater DuPage community," said Vanessa Roth, chief operating officer of Outreach Community Ministries. "He has built our organization in partnering with local churches to provide hope and to bless all who we serve. It has been an honor to work alongside him. His desire is for OCM to be a platform for people to find Jesus. He is an inspiring leader to work for."

Chris was presented with a 40-year memento at three Christmas Breakfasts, breakfasts held annually in December for Outreach partners. The award was inscribed with a quote (shown above) from Jean Vanier, one of Chris' role models. When receiving his award Chris remarked, "thank you to Carlene for being my partner through it all. I've been able to serve because she's been by my side."

"Chris' dedication to this ministry and community is unparalleled," said Sue Herrmann, president of the OCM Board of Trustees. "It has been an honor and a privilege to serve on the OCM Board of Trustees with Chris and see him lead through passion and expertise as the CEO of Outreach."

"Chris leads with a high level of excellence that encourages all of us at Outreach to strive to serve our neighbors with our best abilities," said Bonnie Malcolm Chrisman, vice president of Resource Development. "His passion and vision for our community is unwavering, and we are looking forward to the innovative ideas Chris will bring to OCM in the years to come."



LOCAL 7-YEAR-OLD SEEKS DONATIONS IN LIEU OF BIRTHDAY PRESENTS



Seven-year-old Gray Taylor spread Christmas cheer over the holiday season by donating 59 books to the Books for Birthdays ministry. Books for Birthdays is a ministry project created by Hearts of Grace, the women's network of Outreach Community Ministries. Gray's mother, Rebecca Taylor, first learned about the ministry at the Hearts of Grace Women's Luncheon held in October.

Rebecca was drawn to the Books for Birthdays concept and wanted to contribute to the ministry. In fact, the Taylor family was looking to get more involved in the local community. "Now that we're living in this area, we're trying to be more intentional," said Rebecca.

Gray hosted a dog-themed birthday party for her friends on Saturday, December 16, her seventh birthday. The party invitation stated that in lieu of birthday presents, Gray requests that her friends donate a book to the Books for Birthdays ministry. When guests arrived, they were encouraged to drop off their donated books in a Christmas-themed box labeled with a small sign that read, "Gray's birthday book donations." The idea was a hit with Gray's friends; 21 children attended the party and 59 books were collected. "Some brought one or two [books] and some brought around 15," said Rebecca.

"We're extremely grateful for the sacrifice Gray made to provide these books to children we serve at the Outreach Community Center in Carol Stream," said Sue Herrmann, co-president of the Hearts of Grace Action Board. "What an amazing 7-year-old! Because of Gray, so many children will be blessed on their birthdays this year."

LINK MENTORING GIVES AND RECEIVES

Thank you to the St. Irene Catholic Church Ladies of Columbus Auxiliary and Council of Catholic Women in Warrenville for making Christmas special for students in the Warrenville Youth & Family Services (WYFS) LINK mentoring program! The Ladies of Columbus held a fundraiser in November to benefit the program, and proceeds paid for each mentoring student to receive a personalized gift. This is the third year the ladies have used the fundraiser to donate gifts to the program.

"LINK students, parents, mentors and staff continue to be blessed by this partnership!" said Grace Harrington, WYFS teacher. "It is a real highlight of the holiday season at WYFS."

The mentoring program gave back, as well, through service opportunities during the holiday season. The group volunteered at Feed My Starving Children on December 6 and participated in Warrenville's Christmas Sharing, which collects and donates food, clothing and toys to vulnerable local families, through Pack the Gym at Hubble Middle School.



GAINING INDEPENDENCE: CLAIRE'S* STORY



When Claire* first entered the Employment Opportunity Center (EOC) as a recent high-school grad, she was homeless, jobless and alone. Most of her family was homeless or living with multiple families in an apartment—there was barely room for her to sleep on the floor. She didn't have any connections or anyone to reach out to. Claire had nowhere to turn.

Thankfully, she found Outreach. She entered EOC and began by taking tests to assess her job readiness and skill set. She was placed in an internship, by EOC, at Discoveries Resale in Warrenville, but there were worries about her ability to hold down a full-time job.

Meanwhile, EOC staff connected her to Outreach's transitional housing program. When she first arrived, she was quiet. "She rarely spoke, and when she would, it was actually verbally quiet," said Hawthorne House Program Director Bethany Bacon. "We had to ask her to speak up because we couldn't hear her."

But little by little, Claire began growing in confidence. Although she had a few

setbacks during her internship, she kept coming back and saying, "I can do this."

She also gradually started speaking up for herself. "Over the course of two years, she's learned to express her opinion and to advocate for herself," said Bethany. "This has helped in every area of her life."

She worked her way from the internship to a part-time job in data entry and Claire was then promoted to a full-time job within the company. According to Bethany, her coworkers keep training her in different areas of their company so she could get more experience, and have increased hours and pay. "Internships are usually awesome learning experiences for the girls but don't always transition into a full-time job," she says. "It's so great that Claire now has a full-time job that she loves, and her coworkers love her and support her."

Claire has also started attending college. She struggled with some of her classes but worked hard, found a tutor, and made a comeback from some early challenges.

About six months ago she obtained her very first car through Jubilee Cars. She saved her money ahead of time to pay for expenses such as registration and car insurance. "It was a really big deal because she had never saved that much money before," says Bethany. "The fact that she has a car is incredible. She had only received her license two months before she got the car!"

She recently took the next step toward independence and signed a lease for an apartment. Bethany says the transformation has been incredible. "If you asked me in January if I thought this girl could live alone by September, I would not have been sure. She had many things stacked against her. But she has done an amazing job."

Bethany credits Claire's hard work and the support she received for her success. "Claire is very appreciative. She doesn't take anything for granted and it comes out with everyone she meets," she said. "Wherever she goes, job, school, or anywhere else, everyone says she's so great. Because she has such a sweet personality and strong work ethic, others want to rally around her and help her succeed."

Her transformation wouldn't have been possible without the partnership between Outreach's transitional housing program and Employment Opportunity Center. "EOC helped Claire find employment and get through school so we could focus on her life skills, aptitude, independence and self-sufficiency," she says. "We're so thankful that Claire is one of many young people that our transitional housing program and Employment Opportunity Center could provide with hope and opportunities."

The Transitions Program is a vital service for young adults in DuPage County, serving women ages 17 to 24 who are given the opportunity to gain financial and emotional independence. In 2017, the program served 7 young women in transition.

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



OCC Spring Dinner April 13, 2018

Join us for the annual Spring Dinner benefiting the Outreach Community Center in Carol Stream and featuring keynote speaker Juan Ortiz. Held at the Embassy Suites in Naperville, the event will raise funds which directly benefit the Center's many programs. To host a table, contact Michelle Kelley at mkelley@outreachcommin.org.



Golf, Food & Wine Experience June 18, 2018

The Golf, Food & Wine Experience will be held at the Butterfield Country Club and will feature a live and silent auction, a full day of golf and an evening reception. The event will raise funds for transitional housing and college and career programs. For more info, contact Joe Ancell at jancell@outreachcommin.org.

Plan to join us at an upcoming event! Event proceeds assist our DuPage County neighbors in transformative ways. Events are great opportunities to introduce new friends to the mission of OCM.

For details contact Event Coordinator Michelle Kelley at mkelley@outreachcommin.org or 630.682.1910.

SUPPORT OUTREACH

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

Your gift today will...

- Infuse needed funds in our sites' youth development programs.
- Help stabilize families through case management and counseling services.
- Provide support for older adults who are vulnerable.
- Give young women who are homeless a place to call home.

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 our secure website at outreachcommin.org/give. Or contact Bonnie Malcolm Chrisman at 630.682.1910. Thank you for your support!

SERVE + IMPACT

Whatever your time or talents, we have a volunteer opportunity for you. Current opportunities 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. To get started, visit outreachcommin.org/volunteer.

