

OUTREACH NEWS

COMMUNITY MINISTRIES



Outreach in the Midst of COVID

We're In This Together

Our entire organization has re-engineered its operations in the midst of this crisis — superbly! We are serving in new ways wherever we can, within safety protocols. We continue to have “essential service” staff on the front lines serving clients’ needs at each of our five sites; Wheaton, Warrenville, Carol Stream, West Chicago and Lombard. Vital services including youth development, family stabilization and counseling, older adults programs, transitional housing and employment opportunity programs could simply not be possible without the dedication and commitment from staff and volunteers alike — their devotion is a blessing to all we serve.

Church Partners: Our partner churches are stepping up with help to do God’s work. A number of churches have identified new ways to help during this time of social distancing from virtual mentoring

to a ‘shoppers helpers’ ministry to support our seniors. Care and Share grants have been received from two churches, one business and one foundation partner to expand our Crisis Emergency Fund.

The “New Reality” At Our Resale Stores: Staff, volunteers and customers have been eager to re-open Jubilee Furniture and Discoveries from the day we closed in mid-March. Plans are in place to “safely engineer” our stores during this gradual re-opening. In May, we launched our ‘virtual’ store at Jubilee Furniture, where customers can shop current inventory online through the OCM website, with curbside pick-up available. We have instituted all necessary safety protocols and will re-open our doors to customers on June 4th — and anticipate tremendous support!

(Story continues on page 2)



“A thousand thank yous. God bless every person who is thinking of us in these difficult times. This is really hard, but God is good to my family and never abandons us. God bless people of such good hearts that are helping people most in need.” — OCM Client

Page 1 Cont'd: Outreach in the Midst of COVID

Status with Our Stimulus Bill Application: Thank you for your prayers! Both our local bank (Providence) and our Business Office were fully prepared on day one to submit our loan application, under the federal Stimulus Bill. Our Stimulus Bill application was approved and our loan has been received! We praise God that this loan will allow us to retain our staff and our ministries through the summer. Now we pray for Step Three — careful management over several weeks to maximize the amount of ‘forgiveness’ we receive for this loan.

Summer Youth Development Plans: Our staff are working on Options A, B or C for summer youth programming — can we, how do we, ease back into group activities? It’s hard to predict right

now so we need creative options. We are praying for wisdom, guidance and *unexpected evidence of His guidance and care.*

Urgent Need - Summer Youth Employment Program: This program places 25 high school students in our college prep program into paid work experience internships over the summer. We lost our funding, due in part to COVID-19’s dramatic impact on two of our business partners. We have two applications out to emergency response grants seeking \$50,000 to cover student stipends and summer staff who provide employment oversight, academic and life skills classes which are an integral component of the program. Our students are motivated – so we are praying for *unexpected evidence of God’s care to provide for this need!*

Special Thanks to Our Partner Churches Helping During This Crisis

All Souls Anglican Church

College Church in Wheaton

Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church

First Presbyterian Church, Glen Ellyn

First Presbyterian Church, Wheaton

Glen Ellyn Covenant Church

Mission Church

Wheaton Bible Church

Wheaton Christian Center

Wheaton Christian Reformed Church

Willow Wheaton

Outreach Launches Host Family Program

DuPage County continues to have a significant number of youth facing homelessness — with expectations of a startling increase over the coming months as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

From day one, Outreach has been committed to a wholistic approach supporting our most vulnerable youth. Our Transitional Housing ministry has helped young women and men for over 40 years and is expanding by launching a new program where host families from the community open their home to provide safe, short-term housing and support to young people as they work toward stability and becoming independent.

Nania came to OCM in 2019 and was a resident at Hawthorne House for 11 months. She utilized many of the programs including the Transitional Housing and Employment Opportunity Program, as well as Counseling and Case Management. She is a bright and energetic young woman with solid work ethic, big dreams and

strong faith — and she was ready to move to that next step of total independence — *almost.*

This was the ideal Host Family scenario. And Rob and Tammy Lewis knew they were the right people to jump in and help Nania. Rob and Tammy initially met Nania a few years back, through an Open House hosted by Hawthorne House house parents, Doug and Sarah Zimmerman, who went to church with them at All Souls Church in Wheaton.

But this wasn’t the first either of them had volunteered at Outreach! They didn’t realize it, but before they met in 2004, Tammy had volunteered for many years, in the Mentoring and Big Buddy program for 8 to 14 year-olds beginning in the 90s. Rob, on the other hand, was once a dorm ‘parent’ at WYO’s boy’s home as a (very) young man in the 80s after graduating from Wheaton College! All those years’ later, recalling how, “the Ellerman’s (Chris



and Carlene) were a big encouragement those three years — a big influence for sure.” It is uncanny how things fall into place.

”

“If you live the life of faith, when God gives you opportunities, you just step into it.”

Since they moved back to Wheaton, both Rob and Tammy have been very involved in God’s work, coordinating mission trips, elders in their church — even opening their home to those in need on occasion. They knew this endeavor was what they were called to do, with Rob sharing, “If you live the life of faith, when God gives you opportunities, you just step into it. It really is obedience — that’s what we’re supposed to do and trust that God will do his thing. Sometimes we expect that God is going to give you something really challenging, but in this case it was surprisingly easy.”

Rob continued, “Some people may think that this would be a huge disruption, but what I found out was that it was not a disruption at all, but something we really enjoyed.” Tammy added, “We just looked forward to hanging out and watching Project Runway and The Voice — and how normal it was.” Nania giggles in agreement and quickly adds, “and *Fried Rice Fridays!*”

The transition for Nania to her new ‘home’ was simple for her. “It was easier to come into their home because I knew them. They have a huge heart for people they don’t even know. I love that they invite people into their home.” And although Rob was worried she might be lonely after leaving Hawthorne House, she corrected him by saying, “It was great, because I got all the attention!”

When reflecting on this chapter of her life, Nania shared, “I’ve learned that your family doesn’t have to be related to you or look like you.” “I’ve learned how to ask for help now. I didn’t want to feel vulnerable and have learned that its not a big deal.”

Outreach welcomes everyone to consider becoming a host family. The commitment is 6 to 14 months. The Lewis’ had a very positive experience, Rob mentioning that they had, “full support, training and education going into this, knowing we had that support system in place from the entire organization was huge for us,” Tammy noted, “Sharing your life with someone you wouldn’t necessarily cross paths with and learn about their background and how very different worlds can be. It expands our lives to have someone come in your life now and it’s bigger because of you.”

Nania recently moved into her own apartment. She attends Wheaton Bible Church, holds down three jobs and is taking courses at COD. She is very creative and dreams of becoming a television writer. She is hopeful when she states that “after what I’ve been through. I would love to do this for others some day.” If she ever gets lonely at her new place, she can look to those strong friendships she developed at Hawthorne who she says, “feel like sisters.” And, of course, the Lewis’ will be there for her, commenting, “I feel like they will be in my life forever.” And, let’s not forget *‘Fried Rice Fridays!’*

The Vision for The Host Family Ministry

In 2020: Recruit, train and engage five host families; three for young women and two for young men.

For more information, please contact Vanessa Roth at vroth@outreachcommmin.org.

MINISTRY UPDATES

Overcoming the Unemployment Gap

Jubilee Village & Hawthorne House

Every headline reports the devastating impact on our economy as a result of the pandemic. As of mid-May, the unemployment rate in the U.S. increased to over 14% and forecasts warn that this trend will continue in the coming months. But, in many neighborhoods, even in DuPage County, we see just how disproportionately Covid has affected job loss, with unemployment rates approaching 3x the national average.



At Outreach, 40% of residents in our transitional housing centers have been furloughed or lost their jobs due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Although they were quickly approved for unemployment benefits, as of June 1st, none had received the benefits they were counting on. Michelle de Muir, Program Director at Jubilee Village, noted that one resident “expressed deep gratitude she was living at Jubilee Village”. Having lost her job and daycare due to the pandemic, she wondered where she and her daughter would have ended up if she had been living elsewhere.

The challenges are very real — but we are in this together. Michelle reports, “We are learning how to support each other in different ways. ‘Community Meals’ have always been a weekly highlight for residents — a time to laugh together and share what’s happening in their lives. Instead of dining communally, our house parents now prepare and deliver those meals to each resident separately.” Finding safe ways to interact with each other — and fostering community — has taken a new form. House parents and residents talk and play games while standing in their doorways, which can get loud with happy voices! It’s healing to have laughter and joy, which brings great relief to the inevitable times of isolation and loneliness.

To commemorate Mother’s Day, Hearts of Grace (our women’s leadership network), organized a special celebration for JV residents. The young women expressed great appreciation at the lovely catered meal from Wheaton College’s Bon Appetit, along with flowers and gifts to personally honor each mom.

OCM’s goal has always been to lead in the development of Christian community housing, serving both the transitional housing needs of vulnerable young people and the more permanent, supportive housing needs of young mothers. Now, more than ever in our history, we are thankful for all who make it possible to serve youth and young adults who are vulnerable.

The Kids are Savvy

As students complete their 10th week of e-learning, our Youth Development teams continue to maintain close contact with our students and their families, providing supplemental tools for academic enrichment and encouraging creative and fun ways of connecting. Collaboration with each local school has been essential in ensuring each child has the technology and support to succeed.

Program Coordinators are in weekly contact with each family to support parents, to assist with student and/or family needs and creating comprehensive educational tools.



“WYFS afterschool and mentoring programs are holding at least one virtual ‘hangout’ weekly, so students and volunteers have opportunity to engage and maintain gains made through program,” shares Leslee Cremer, Youth Services Director. “My tutor is so fun, he even plays games with me online during the stay-at-home. I’m glad he’s my friend,” shares Ben, 11, Quest and LINK student.

“Individualized outreach has been key,” reports Lathie Norton, Site Director at our York Center, “One school asked us to step in after struggling with engagement from two students. Staff called each family, powered through the language barrier, and worked with each child over the phone, helping them with their assignments and getting them back on track. One student (who also struggles with virtual learning because he is so shy) even joined ‘Zoom God-Time’ last week for the first time.”

Outreach is committed to remotely supporting our students for as long as necessary. We will continue to plan for an academically enriching, safe and fun summer program, which will be more important this year than ever before!

Counseling Centers Now 100% Telehealth

In just four days, all Outreach Counseling Centers successfully transitioned to 100% telehealth, allowing OCM therapists to provide mental health treatment ‘virtually’ during this pandemic — which is crucial for the hundreds who rely on these services.

“We are seeing many experiencing a feeling of increased mental or emotional strain brought on by the changes and the uncertainty of this pandemic. It can be an incredibly isolating time for people,” comments Brian Lux, Director of Clinical Services. “Enabling

sessions to be done virtually was critical.”

New creative interventions have emerged as the new medium of teletherapy. Therapists are being introduced to family members who have become supportive voices and expand client’s coping options. Julia Guest, Bilingual therapist at WYFS shares, “It seems like some clients are doing better during this lockdown. Yes, many of them miss their friends but their symptoms for anxiety, depression, ADHD and others is not interfering with their life as often as before.”



Heather Anderson, Counseling Program Director at Wheaton Youth Outreach noted, “Some clients are excited to show me where they live, or to meet their children before the sessions, so this is giving us another way to connect to what is happening in our

client’s lives. One of my elderly shut-in clients has learned how to use her cell phone and tablet to participate in sessions and shared how she is re-learning the accordion while sheltering-at-home.”

Achieving this success has only been possible because of the tireless commitment, flexibility, compassion, and service of the therapists and counseling team. We are blessed to have them as part of the Outreach family.

Our Families Are in Crisis

During times of hardship, OCM Case Managers are on the front line advocating for children and families in need. They assist with resolving various crisis situations including financial issues, loss of employment, potential loss of housing, emergency food, legal matters and navigating public systems such as unemployment insurance and disability. With the onset of Covid-19, we have seen a considerable increase in the number of requests for services, as the challenges of people already struggling is amplified even further. “It is not surprising the call volume has more than doubled since the beginning of March, and, unfortunately, we don’t anticipate that changing anytime soon,” adds Vanessa Roth, COO of Outreach.

”

“This is an amazing community response and we have an amazing team — doing amazing things during this crisis — together, this is a powerful combination” notes Outreach CEO, Chris Ellerman.

The **DuPage Foundation** has come through in a big way during this crisis, providing a grant to support two new case managers to oversee the increase in crisis calls, and a second grant to support the expansion of counseling services to our most vulnerable residents. Corporate partner, **Compass Mortgage** led the way with a commitment to expand our crisis emergency fund, creating a matching challenge program to generate support from their network. Altogether, Outreach has received \$50,000 in additional crisis emergency grants from corporate partners, sponsor churches and local families!



Older Adults Update

The health of our seniors is our number one priority, so most Older Adult Programs (OAP) are on hold — *BUT* Outreach Community Center volunteers and staff have been getting creative over the last several weeks with inspiring ways to stay connected with the many seniors we serve. Technology has been a godsend with new apps to play games and FaceTime to live chat. Within a week, our Shoppers Helpers ministry sprang to life, providing grocery shoppers for high risk seniors who cannot go to the store.

Before the Covid roadblock, the Older Adults Program had been relishing their ‘new to us’ bus. Upon its arrival, one of our clients, Sandy, even gave the sparkling minibus a big hug! Then proudly rode up and down on the lift in her motorized chair. Peter noted, “You know we always forget to thank God for incidentals like going to the grocery store, out to lunch and the festivities that all require transportation.”

Typically, we have over 30 riders for our weekly trips to Jewel and Aldi, and to Walmart/Target twice each month. Eileen noted, “I love riding the bus. I meet someone new each time.” So, for all those who took part in raising \$50,000 through last year’s Race to Buy the Bus Challenge — one senior, Juanita, stated it perfectly, “your kindness will never be forgotten.”

OCC has been humbled by the words of several of our seniors over the course of these last several weeks. Linda Hawkins, OAP Director and Kim Van Oss, OAP Coordinator, are in awe every day at the support received from our volunteers and are equally impressed by the grace and hope that emanates from them to our clients! One of our residents said last week, “I’ve never been taken better care of.” For all those who continue to support the Older Adults ministry, Carolyn’s heartfelt words probably say it most succinctly, “God bless all who extend their time and effort for us.”

THE SERVICE GIFT OF GIVING

Finding New Ways

Volunteering in the Time of COVID-19

With all the uncertainty in the world these days, one thing is for certain — we miss our volunteers! With most of our on-site opportunities on hold at this point, we've seen new and creative ways volunteers are engaging with students and clients from all our sites.



The need to help our Older Adults secure groceries was an immediate concern. Within two weeks, Outreach Community Center (OCC) staff trained and mobilized 30 volunteers to serve as Shoppers Helpers, shopping at the local grocery store on behalf of their 'match' and delivering right to their front door.



Without the option of meeting students in person, the York Center staff and volunteers from Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church quickly adapted their lessons to connect virtually, creating 'Zoom GodTime' — a weekly highlight for the students.

Upon hearing that the elementary students were bored with their technology devices at home, the teaching staff at OCC connected with First Presbyterian Glen Ellyn, to provide board games for each student that will stimulate the students' creativity and problem-solving skills.

Serve & Impact

Across our agency, volunteers serve in an array of roles that impact our local communities. Visit outreachcommin.org/volunteer to discover how you can make a difference through volunteering. Not sure where to start or what would be a good fit? Contact Mindy Inman, Director of Volunteer Services at minman@outreachcommin.org.



In The Driver's Seat

Volunteer Spotlight: Dave Heslinga

Dependable transportation is often taken for granted. Without it, many face obstacles in retaining employment. Outreach relies on volunteers to ensure many of the young adults participating in the Employment Opportunity Center (EOC) have a way to and from work.

When Dave Heslinga retired from his civil engineering career in 2018, he was looking for a meaningful way to serve his community. He learned about the need for drivers through the OCM newsletter and has been helping our young people ever since. Dave shared, "A lot of these guys have had some difficult circumstances in life, and I am happy if I can make a small difference in someone's life."

Dave appreciates hearing about the students' future plans. He shared a story of a young man's commitment to go to trade school and become an electrician so he can one day be a property manager and own his own buildings. The EOC's training program encourages participants from diverse back-grounds to pursue their high school diploma and to gain paid work experience and on the job training.

Volunteering and being active in the local faith community is a way of life for Dave. He notes, "As a Christian, you serve others and care about others." In addition to volunteering at Outreach, he donates his time at a local food pantry, at World Relief, and is an elder at Highpoint Church in Wheaton.

Serving as a volunteer provides an opportunity to put our faith into action and practice compassion for those in different walks of life. "We are grateful for Dave's dedication," said Mindy Inman, Director of Volunteer Services, "his consistency with his service has spoken volumes." She adds, "Driving is really a tangible service for us — it directly affects how many young adults we're able to serve."

Events

Historically, donor events have been central to our fundraising efforts at Outreach. In this ‘new normal’ we have learned that there is a lot of value in utilizing technology to share our story ‘virtually’ with a wider audience no matter where you are in the country. Future events will include a live streaming option, creating an opportunity for guests to gather for a meal in small groups at a host’s home, much like a ‘viewing party,’ allowing for real-time participation in the festivities of the live event such as live and silent auctions, keynote speakers, staff and client presentations and an opportunity to give online.

‘Virtual’ OCC Spring Dinner · March 17

Thank you to everyone who supported our first-ever ‘virtual’ OCC spring dinner event! Every day, we move closer to our goal, and look to the generosity of our Outreach family to help us get there. If you haven’t had the chance, we invite you to view videos from our guest speaker, Pastor Paco Amador along with memorable interviews with OCC participants — available on the OCM website along with an opportunity to give online.



Hearts of Grace Women’s Luncheon · October 23

Whether you choose to attend in-person or virtually, we invite you to join us at this year’s 21st annual Women’s Luncheon sponsored by Hearts of Grace, the women’s network of Outreach Community Ministries. We are thrilled to welcome keynote speaker, Anne Beiler, Founder of Auntie Anne’s, Inc., as she shares her Christian testimony and her deeply personal story. This special event supports vulnerable women and children in our community. Enjoy lunch with friends, fabulous prizes and inspiring stories of hope. To host a table or viewing party in your home, or inquire about sponsorships, contact Fredia Martin at fmartin@outreachcommin.org.



Golf, Food & Wine Experience · October 5

The annual Golf, Food and Wine Experience raises scholarship funds to provide housing, career and educational opportunities for young people in DuPage County. This year, our event has been rescheduled from June to October and enthusiasm is building with the addition of an in-home live-streaming option featuring auctioneer David Goodman and our ministry presentation. For further information, contact Joe Ancell at jancell@outreachcommin.org.



“*For I know the plans I have for you*”
declares the Lord “plans to prosper you
and not harm you, plans to give you hope
and a future” – Jeremiah 29:11



Your Gift Matters

Especially Today

Thank you to our Outreach family for the outpouring of support that continues to lift our spirit and support our ministry. “This is the largest challenge we’ve faced in the 42 years we’ve served,” reports CEO, Chris Ellerman. “With corporate, foundation and donor support severely impacted in the second quarter of 2020, every gift matters.” We realize everyone is affected by this crisis, but those who rely on OCM services are impacted the hardest right now, so we need everyone who is able, to chip in whatever and whenever they can, to see us through. Please consider an online gift today where you can direct your gift to the ministry of your choice. Please know that every gift matters, and is deeply appreciated.



[outreachcommunityministries.org/give](https://www.outreachcommunityministries.org/give)



OCM: Restoring Hope, Providing Opportunities

For 42 years, OCM has supported underserved families throughout DuPage County with youth development programs for elementary through high school, individual and family counseling and casework services, emergency assistance funds, college scholarship programs, employment opportunity programs, older adults programs, crisis intervention for teens and transitional housing for young adult women and single mothers.

Last year alone:

- Youth Development programs had almost 800 kids participate
- 1800 people were served through OCM crisis intervention and case management programs
- Over 900 individuals received counseling services
- Over 300 seniors participate in the Older Adult Program

Our Sites

- Wheaton Youth Outreach (WYO) launched in 1973
- Warrenville Youth & Family Services (WYFS) launched in 1984
- Outreach Community Center (OCC) launched in 1986
- Puente Del Pueblo (PdP) launched in 2008 by Wheaton Bible Church
- York Community Resource Center (YCRC) launched in 2014
- Employment Opportunity Center (EOC) launched in 2014

Retail

- ✦ Jubilee Furniture
- ✦ Discoveries Resale
- ✦ Twice as Nice by College Church
- ✦ Jubilee Cars

outreachcommunityministries.org

Providing Opportunities



Restoring Hope,