



Together We Cope

BRIDGING THE GAP



Annual Report 2014

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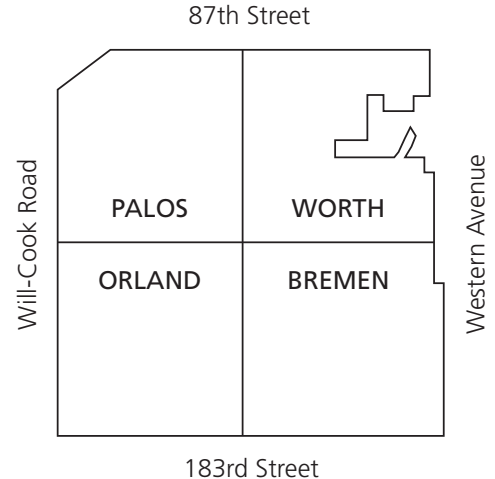
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Service Area

The service area of Together We Cope is bounded by 87th Street on the north, Will-Cook Road on the west, 183rd Street on the south, and Western Avenue on the east (with the Mount Greenwood area excepted because it is part of the city of Chicago). Our service area includes the townships of Bremen, Orland, Palos, and Worth. Within those boundaries, we serve Alsip, Blue Island, Bridgeview, Chicago Ridge, Country Club Hills, Crestwood, Evergreen Park, Garden Homes, Harvey, Hazel Crest, Hickory Hills, Hometown, Homewood, Markham, Merrionette Park, Midlothian, Oak Forest, Oak Lawn, Orland Hills, Orland Park, Palos Heights, Palos Hills, Palos Park, Posen, Robbins, Tinley Park, and Worth.



On the cover: Together We Cope's productive fiscal year 2013-2014 included (clockwise, from top right) Robert Morris University chef Mark Wroczyński packing groceries for the Food Pantry Challenge with TWC staff member Katlin Bewley; guests at the Red Carpet Dinner Dance (clockwise, from top) Brendan Hackett, Cathy Moran, Maura Moran, Courtney Hackett and Evan Moran capturing the excitement; client services manager Tina Hennis providing assistance; staff member Vanya Bankhead and her husband Tommy enjoying the volunteer picnic; and volunteer Marie Miller sorting clothing donations for Nu2u.

Looking back on a year of great generosity



*Frank Trombley
President, Board of
Directors*



*Kathryn Straniero
Executive Director*

Together We Cope is able to fulfill its mission year after year because of the amazing support we receive from the south suburban community. From the largest partners to the smallest donors, people in our little corner of the world are among the kindest and most generous human beings to be found.

We work hard to maintain the trust our donors have in us and the work we do. We are proud to report that we continue to get the highest ratings from organizations that assess nonprofit fiscal management, accountability and transparency. We have received three consecutive 4-Star ratings from Charity Navigator, the highest rating an organization can earn for sound fiscal management. We've also attained a Gold-Level rating from GuideStar Exchange for demonstrating commitment to transparency.

Of equal importance is that the local community rates us highly as a worthwhile cause. For example, two new restaurants opening their doors in the south suburbs last year staged pre-opening charity nights and made Together We Cope the beneficiary of each evening's proceeds. Other restaurants that have long supported our work continued to host our clients to free Thanksgiving or Easter dinner. Local businesses, churches, schools and community organizations continue to support us with food, clothing or fund drives. They have spread the word about the good work we do so that other groups have now joined our cause. Even as we write this letter, children in a local Vacation Bible School are collecting canned goods for our food pantry so other little ones do not go hungry.

These partnerships we have formed are very meaningful to us. We value these relationships, and are gratified to see them grow in number. Our focus on "neighbor helping neighbor" has brought out the best in so many people. We know we are fortunate to have this support, and we pledge to further our efforts to deserve the trust so many have placed in us.

*Frank Trombley, President, Board of Directors
Kathryn Straniero, Executive Director*



Bridging the gap for Southland residents in temporary crisis by providing food, shelter, clothing and referrals, empowering them to return to self-sufficiency.

Meet our clients

Bridging the gap takes more than food

Together We Cope's mission is to bridge the financial gap faced by families experiencing all manner of temporary crisis. In 2013, our caseworkers helped more than 12,000 clients solve a wide range of problems to get them back on their feet.

Patching together a new life with some friends

Pets can make a house feel like a home. When 25-year-old Chris lost his job, it seemed like his whole life suddenly derailed. Behind on rent, he missed an eviction court date in December and then was taken by surprise when the police knocked on his door and evicted him—immediately.

Single with no children, he could find a place to stay temporarily. But two dogs and two cats were now homeless, too. He returned a rescued dog and cat to the Animal Welfare League, boarded his beloved dog at a local animal care facility and his cat with a cousin. All of his possessions went into a storage facility.

He didn't know where to turn, but a friend suggested Together We Cope. When he received groceries from the

food pantry, Chris was especially touched to discover we'd added dog food and cat food to sustain his little friends once he reclaimed them.

He found two part-time jobs, then a small apartment he could afford. When the landlord learned that the security deposit and first month's rent were coming from TWC, he let Chris move into the apartment immediately.

But Chris' house wouldn't feel like home without his pets. TWC worked with the boarding facility, which ultimately reduced its boarding fees for the dog. Chris's second paycheck went toward bringing his little friends to their new home.

Giving a mother the ultimate gift: time with her son

At 46, Marina has become the kind of health care professional who patients love. She has a skillful, compassionate touch that makes a huge difference to those who are sick or injured—people who are truly vulnerable. But one grateful patient accidentally cost Marina her job.

The patient gave Marina a thank-you card, a kind gesture. Although Marina didn't know it, the patient also had tucked \$50 inside the envelope. The patient mentioned the gift to another hospital employee, and soon Marina was out of a job for violating the hospital's ethics code, which prohibits staff from accepting gifts.

Losing a job is always hard, but Marina faced an even tougher challenge at home. Her 29-year-old son, who had leukemia, was bedridden and very close to the end of his young life. Her 23-year-old daughter helped at home while also trying to find a job.

Marina found part-time work through temporary staffing and filed for unemployment. To bridge the gap, she turned to Together We Cope, which provided rent money to help Marina until unemployment funds came in and also gave her groceries from the food pantry.

The agency reached out to Marina's daughter as well, providing lists of suitable jobs in the region, resources to help write a solid resume, and



Volunteer Joan Peterson mans TWC's Pluck-a-Duck booth, raising funds at Tinley Park's Caribbean Block Party in 2013.



Volunteer Andy Ashmus gets a donated bike ready to roll for the resale store, Nu2u, where proceeds help support TWC programs.

Meet our clients

a clothing voucher that added a professional touch to her wardrobe to make job hunting easier.

For Marina, TWC's help enabled her to support her family in all the ways a mother is called upon to do: keeping a roof over their heads, supporting her daughter's job search, and—most importantly—being there for her son at the end of his life. "You are giving me the biggest gift," she told her case worker. "At this point, there is nothing I want more than time with my son."

Helping an immigrant create a safe home

Moving to America from Bosnia, 30-year-old Eva was determined to build a better life for herself. In Wisconsin, she joined other Bosnian refugees who had begun to build a community.

Eva found work and bought a car, made friends and started a relationship with a man, eventually moving in with him. But he became violent toward her, making her new American home unstable and as dangerous as the one she had left behind. She fled, heading to Illinois where other Bosnians had relocated.

Fortunately, she turned to the Crisis Center of South Suburbia where she found a much-needed safe haven. She also got help landing a new job at a bank and finding a place to live. But her struggle wasn't over. She found that someone hacked into her checking account and withdrew \$600. Shortly after discovering the loss, she learned her car insurance had lapsed because the bill had gone to her Wisconsin address. Driving to pay the bill, Eva was hit by another driver who had no insurance. She wasn't injured, but her car was damaged. Her carrier dropped her.

For a young woman trying hard to build a new life in her adopted country, it was too much. She turned to Together We Cope for financial assistance, receiving money for all of one month's rent and half of another. She also received a clothing voucher to help replenish her

wardrobe, much of which she had been forced to leave behind when she fled the abusive environment in Wisconsin.

Eva was grateful for all the support, including a list of counseling resources. With professional guidance, she told her caseworker, she was confident she would be able to overcome the unfortunate start she had made and begin building the life she wanted.

Supporting professionals when tough times hit home

At Together We Cope, it can be impossible to tell the difference between someone who's dropping off a donation and someone who has come in to get help.

Rick, 53, began working in computer technology nearly 30 years ago. His skills provided a solid income, and he continued to develop them as the field exploded. But the troubled economy finally touched Rick's employer, who responded by trimming Rick's hours—significantly. Suddenly, Rick found it nearly impossible to pay basic bills, from his mortgage to his utilities. It was a turn he had never expected his life to take.

That's when he turned to Together We Cope, where a caseworker began the process of signing him up for a host of government-sponsored programs designed to bring the kind of relief he needed—programs Rick never knew about before, like LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program), which helps with winter energy costs, and those through CEDA (Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County Inc.), which provide a host of other services.

But the agencies are scrupulous in making sure the need is legitimate and help is warranted, and it took a full year of filling out documents.

Fortunately, some help came soon. One program that provided help quickly was SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), also known as food stamps. Between those benefits and Rick's monthly visit to Together



Fundraising coordinator Karen Moran (center) introduces a client to two staff members from The Horton Group. The Orland Park firm donated turkeys for Christmas dinner in 2013.



All proceeds from the Race Around the World Duathlon benefit TWC. The annual event raised nearly \$18,000 in 2013.

We Cope's food pantry, he was able to keep his kitchen shelves filled. "We feel that life's toughest challenges are easier to meet when you get a good meal," his caseworker said. "It can really help keep you going."

It took 18 months before Rick's applications won approval and he received the financial help to keep his home. Despite the ordeal, he was so grateful for the help from Together We Cope that he stopped by to thank his caseworker in person.

Meet our clients



Families First case manager Kaitlin Aldworth selects a sofa for a client who's getting settled in a new home.



Grants and programs manager Gina Rydz selects a saucepan at Nu2u to help restock a client's kitchen.

Providing guidance through Families First

Most 19-year-olds can use some support. Often, it comes from the family. But for one young woman, Together We Cope provided the guidance and help she needed to get her life on track.

Brianna, a college student working toward a career in health care at a downstate university, tried to attend classes while raising her 3-year-old daughter. But it proved too much and in June, she came home to the southwest suburbs. She found part-time work as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) and moved in with her parents. But when their house went into foreclosure, Brianna wound up staying with one relative, then another, sometimes landing in a homeless shelter, her child in tow.

Knowing she needed help and passionate about building a better life for herself and her daughter, Brianna came to Together We Cope. She immediately received food pantry groceries, a clothing voucher for the resale shop, and help signing up for government programs including Medicaid and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Brianna was grateful. But with her eye on the future, she knew she needed more. Willing to work hard to put her life back on track, she was an ideal client for Families First, a special program that coordinates a host of resources ranging from rental assistance to parenting classes to ensure clients get what they need to successfully rebuild their lives.

Two months after walking in the door for help, Brianna had made significant progress. She had successfully applied for student financial aid and enrolled at South Suburban College for the fall semester. Just before classes began, Brianna's caseworker found her an apartment. The Families First program covered the rent for six months, but Brianna paid about 20 percent of the cost every month, bringing a money order to her caseworker, who set it aside to build up as a nest egg she could collect when she completed the Families First program. The approach helped Brianna get used to making a monthly housing payment, a skill she will use all her life.

Through Families First, Brianna got the resources and encouragement she needed to apply for child support. And between the guidance she received weekly from her caseworker and the practical knowledge she gained from the program's Life Skills course, Brianna began to take control of her life.

During the winter, she took a second part-time CNA job, bringing her monthly income from \$160 to \$1,500. Astute at managing her time, the 19-year-old working mother earned her associate's degree in March—a step toward a full-time job in health care and toward college for a bachelor's degree.

Thanks to Families First, Brianna is back on track.



Diane Centner, a “volunteer elf,” finds just the right toys for a client child at Santa’s Workshop.



Bonnie Ostarello (right), of Orland Park, helps Angel Anderson, 10, make jewelry she can give as a Christmas present through Gifts from the Heart.

Coming through for children

Fitting in with a full backpack when school starts

Children notice little things. At the start of a school year, having a new backpack filled with supplies from the teacher’s list helps them fit in and feel good, getting them off to a good start. For families in financial crisis, the cost of coming up with necessary notebooks and pencils can be painfully high.

Since it’s essential for youngsters to be prepared to succeed in the classroom, TWC provided nearly 1,500 backpacks filled with supplies through its Back to School program, distributed to families in August 2013.

Hearing that a \$20 gift covered the cost for one child, hundreds of donors responded. That enabled TWC to buy enough backpacks and pre-packed boxes of school supplies appropriate to each grade level.

The total value of donated school supplies in 2013 was \$87,600.

Granting wishes through Santa’s Workshop

More than 1,400 south suburban children found just what they wanted under the tree on Christmas morning in 2013, thanks to a new Santa’s Workshop that made it even easier for people to take part in TWC’s popular Adopt a Child program.

Rather than adopting a specific child and shopping to fulfill that specific “wish list,” donors had the chance to buy whatever toys they wanted—or make cash donations—to stock our new Santa’s Workshop.

Our expert team of “volunteer elves” shopped there and chose the very thing that was on each child’s list. Each one received two gifts along with warm pajamas, winter hats and gloves, and even extra school supplies at a total value of \$80 per child. Donors enjoyed stocking the workshop, and a lot of them seemed to have a knack for picking out the toys that turned up on a lot of lists.

The total value of toys distributed in 2013 was \$123,430.

Teaching children how to give back

Dozens of children from our client families created homemade presents for their loved ones through TWC’s Gifts from the Heart program.

Local teachers provided craft projects and all the supplies for children of client families to create up to a dozen gifts to give their families and friends. Our partners, Beta Beta chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma, an educators service society, conducted the program in December at Zion Lutheran Church in Tinley Park.

Among them was Jennie Freed of Tinley Park, who helped several youngsters make bracelets to give their loved ones at Christmas. “The children are always so proud of making their own gifts,” she said. “It’s a gentle way to teach them that Christmas is for giving as well as receiving.”

Boosting sales and making brides smile



An unusual donation of high-couture wedding gowns enabled TWC to fulfill the dreams of dozens of brides and raise funds that helped support programs and services for clients in 2013.

The July event, which also generated publicity for Nu2u resale shop, featured nearly 1,000 bridal and bridesmaid dresses, a generous donation from Ronia Ghusein, the owner of Eva's Bridal of Illinois in Oak Lawn. During the spring of 2013, Ghusein decided to give TWC the high-end gowns she had acquired for an outlet store that she operated briefly, and then put into storage. Some had been created by such well-known designers as Vera Wang.

Over a Saturday and Sunday in July, more than 100 brides found the dress of their dreams. The special weekend sale took place at a Tinley Park storefront donated by another generous patron. The space had served as a bridal salon, and its mirrors and dressing rooms were still in place. TWC continued selling the gowns throughout the year at Nu2u.

Bridal gowns were offered for \$75, and bridesmaid dresses for \$50. The samples and never-worn gowns were all in excellent condition, with some high-couture gowns featuring lace handmade in Italy and France.

"I couldn't believe it," said one happy bride-to-be. "I found the exact dress I imagined wearing on my wedding day."

A special two-day sale of wedding gowns proves popular with dozens of brides-to-be, raising funds that helped support TWC programs in 2013.

Nu2u plays important supporting role

TWC's resale shop, Nu2u, plays a vital role in raising funds, serving clients and connecting us with the community.

Revenue from Nu2u made it possible for TWC to fund much-needed client programs and services in 2013. The store also enabled us to help clients directly in ways that made a significant difference. Using vouchers, many found new clothes they needed for a job interview—or for a new job. Those who lost everything in a flood or fire received furniture and household goods to help get life back to normal a little sooner.

The shop also provides a vibrant connection with the community, from regular shoppers to donors who bring their lightly used clothing and household goods to Nu2u because they support TWC's mission.



Revenue from Nu2u supports client programs.



Among the 100 volunteers who man the food pantry is Janet Salcik, who makes a one-hour drive from Chicago to Tinley Park to help TWC.



Rich Faber has stayed with TWC long after he began volunteering with his son, who chose to fulfill his high school community service requirement here.

Feeding 80 families each day

His clothes were shabby, his worn coat two sizes too small.

On a snowy day, he wore gym shoes and no hat. He hadn't eaten anything all day, and didn't have supper the night before because "we ran out of food." He was 9 years old.

A TWC staff member noticed him, pale and weak, sitting on the floor in the crowded reception area while his father registered for groceries. Taking him by the hand, she led him into the food pantry, where his appearance galvanized several grandmothers volunteering that day. They grabbed chocolate milk, a sandwich, chips and cookies. Before he took the first bite, he spoke so softly they strained to hear each word. "Can I take this food home to share with my brothers?" he asked meekly. One grandmother offered to pack a special "brothers bag" that she invented on the spot to ease his conscience. Finally, the boy began to eat as the grandmothers found winter gear for him in the resale store.

His family was among those who sought help for the first time that day

from TWC, where the number of people served climbed in FY 2013. Open five days a week, the pantry takes in 55,000 pounds of food each month on average, distributing the groceries to about 85 families every day.

TWC is a member agency of the Greater Chicago Food Depository, which provides USDA-supplied staples at no cost, additional subsidized food at low cost, and groceries rescued from chain grocery stores. CEDA provided produce bimonthly. And as part of a local network of food pantries that share groceries they cannot store, TWC received such items as lunch meat, snacks and baked goods in 2013.

Variety—and quantity—on the pantry shelves came from individuals and groups that hosted food drives for TWC. The range was great, from a Girl Scout troop that packed a half dozen "birthday boxes" of cake mix and decorations for the pantry's youngest clients, to the U.S. postal carrier's "Stamp Out Hunger" program that brought in 40,000 pounds of food in 2013.

It takes 15 volunteers to operate TWC's food pantry each day—an effort that must be sustained as the number of clients continues to grow.



Local Boy Scouts sort hundreds of pounds of food they collected for TWC through Scouting for Food, a national program to help end hunger.

Meet our volunteers

Lending support by lending a hand

Much of the credit for the smooth daily operation of TWC goes to its nearly 200 active volunteers. Every month, our volunteers put in hundreds of hours, whether it's in the food pantry, where they make sure hungry families get nutritious food, or in the resale shop, where it's "all hands on deck" every day to generate revenue that helps us sustain our programs. Because our volunteers are so dedicated, we're able to serve hundreds of families every week, helping them make the right steps to get back on their feet.



Nolan



Hillblom



The volunteer picnic is a chance to celebrate for (clockwise, from left) volunteer Board member Len Schaafsma, food pantry manager Gordon Collins, volunteer Ken Humpf and executive director Kathryn Straniero.

Two volunteers share Reimer Award

JoAnn Hillblom of Mokena and Mary Nolan of Orland Hills have been named the 2014 recipients of Together We Cope's annual Reimer Award for outstanding volunteers. The award is given to agency volunteers who demonstrate the care and compassion that is the spirit of Together We Cope. It is named for Theodore H. Reimer Jr., a late member of the agency's board of directors and a longtime volunteer.

Previous winners are

- 2013 – Ronald and Joanne Shear
- 2012 – Valerie Chudy
- 2011 – William Dillon and Andy Ashmus
- 2010 – Anne Brandt and Dianne Peloso
- 2009 – Leonard Schaafsma
- 2008 – John and Patricia Slack
- 2007 – Beverly Consier
- 2006 – Joseph Barrett, Ernie Hauff, John Simoni, and Ulysses Uribe
- 2005 – Nancy Rosian



Grace Kilpatrick is among volunteers who happily sort through donations to fill the racks with new items every day at Nu2u.



Volunteer Bill Dillon has provided service with a smile in the food pantry twice a week for 10 years.

Meet our volunteers



Longtime volunteers John and Pat Slack sample dishes at the Food Pantry Challenge before awarding the Good Home Cooking Award.

Cooking up an idea to help clients eat better

Canned clams? Pigs feet? Pork rinds? Anyone who's ever volunteered at a food pantry has probably come across an unusual donation and wondered, "How would I use this?"

In 2013, new volunteer Patty Houlihan was packing bags for clients and realized how challenging it can be to prepare a meal using nothing but groceries from a food pantry. To help clients make the most of the groceries they get, she wondered, what if culinary school students competed to make delicious dishes using only groceries from the TWC pantry?

With Robert Morris University as a partner, the Food Pantry Challenge was born. Student chefs picked up meat, produce and staples at TWC, then had 24 hours to come up with recipes and four hours to cook the food for a panel of judges to sample at the university's

campus in neighboring Orland Park. The November 23 "iron chef" style competition created 100 recipes and also drew coverage from the local media, raising public awareness of hunger.

The winning menu included 14 dishes ranging from sausage/Ramen stroganoff, which featured a novel use

for Ramen noodles, to a pork-and-bean dish featuring braised pig's feet, an item that many cooks might find difficult to use. Grand Prize winners were chosen by judges Nicholas Kapellas, managing partner at Bonefish Grill in Orland Park; Donna Lorent-Migliorese, local store marketer at Texas Roadhouse in Tinley Park; and José Torres, executive chef at Rock Bottom Brewery in Orland Park. Additionally, longtime TWC volunteers John and Pat Slack awarded a Good Home Cooking award.

A recipe book has been distributed to clients and is also available on our website at www.togetherwecope.org.

Getting into the Christmas spirit

Volunteers at Together We Cope love to pitch in. They also keep an eye on TWC's bottom line. In 2013, they came up with a new idea for the annual holiday lunch: instead of heading to a restaurant where TWC hosts volunteers for lunch, what if volunteers hosted a potluck right on the premises? On a Thursday before the agency opened, they came in with appetizers, salads and lots of desserts while TWC provided the main courses. Thanks to the generosity of the volunteers, a popular annual event was born.



The holiday potluck luncheon proves a hit with volunteers (from left) Aurora Scaramella, Judy Sepic and Shell Schmidt.

Meet some of our donors

TWC recognizes longtime supporters Chuck and Donna Freiberg, whose business, C.D.E. Collision Centers, was the Red Carpet sponsor for the annual dinner dance fundraiser.



Finding motivation in the joy of giving

Chuck and Donna Freiberg smile as they recall little random acts of kindness that have brought them so much joy over the years. There was the time Chuck picked up the lunch bill, anonymously, for a table of elderly ladies all dressed up for a Christmas meal together as he conducted a business meeting at the next table. “They looked so darned cute, and they were having so much fun,” he recalls. “I wanted to make the day extra special for them, so I paid their bill on my way out of the restaurant. I still smile when I think about those ladies and what fun they were having.”

The Freibergs have a history of little kindnesses like that. In March, they brought a very big kindness to Together We Cope, where Donna volunteers in the food pantry. Owners of C.D.E. Collision Centers, their business was the Red Carpet sponsor for the annual dinner dance fundraiser.

“All through my career and life, I’ve gotten joy doing things for people. I guess I’m trying to see where I fit in

the community,” Chuck said. Donna, grateful she was able to stay home and raise the couple’s three children, is happy to give back by being involved in a good cause. “The first time I walked in the door at Together We Cope I was blown away by what goes on in here, the amount of food coming in and going out of the pantry. The experience has made me think about how fortunate I am in my life. Being at Together We Cope has brought me joy,” she said.

Chuck Freiberg opened his own business in 1982 with one auto body repair shop in Chicago and only three employees. Since then it has grown to eight shops and 100 employees, with another shop set to open later this year. “I’m very honored to sponsor Together We Cope’s event,” he said. “Donna and I believe in this cause.”

Bonefish Grill

When Bonefish Grill opened its doors for the first time in the southwest suburbs, the popular restaurant chain

wanted to share the excitement with a local charity. Together We Cope happily accepted the offer. On Bonefish Grill’s opening night in September, patrons who bought a \$35 ticket could sample everything from Bang Bang Shrimp to cocktails, with all the proceeds going to TWC. The event sold out quickly, establishing Bonefish Grill as a solid member of the business community—and one of the area’s most popular restaurants.

Uncle Julio’s

The opening of Uncle Julio’s in Orland Park in October brought Mexican fine dining to the southwest suburbs. It also introduced a restaurant chain with a strong commitment to the community. At a special opening night private party, diners had a chance to sample Uncle Julio’s signature salsa, mesquite-grilled specialties and unique margaritas while knowing their dollars would benefit Together We Cope. Two seatings and a ticket price of \$25 per person proved a popular draw, with every seat sold well

Meet some of our donors



Rock Bottom Brewery creates a special beer that was sold to raise funds for TWC at a popular event.



Clients receive all the trimmings for a holiday dinner from Mark White, account executive at MillerCoors, which partnered with Hayes Beer Distributing Company to provide traditional fixings to 200 families in 2013.

in advance, laying the foundation for Uncle Julio's continued success.

Texas Roadhouse

Thanksgiving is a time when the family meal is the centerpiece of the day. To ensure that TWC's neediest clients had a chance to celebrate, Texas Roadhouse restaurant invited dozens of families to enjoy a traditional turkey dinner with all the trimmings at its Tinley Park location. Restaurant staff, and their own family members, volunteered to serve up the special meal at two seatings that day. The event generated smiles throughout the restaurant, from the dining room to the kitchen. Texas Roadhouse has generously provided the meal for several years.

Rock Bottom Brewery

For a lot of people, Easter dinner is an important tradition, an opportunity to enjoy the kind of dishes that only come around once a year. Reaching out to TWC's clients who are most in need,



Children get into the Christmas spirit at the Tinley Toyland Parade in December, marching down Oak Park Avenue and donating terrific toys to TWC that help brighten the holidays for client families.

Rock Bottom Brewery in Orland Park opened its doors to dozens of families last April, as it has done in previous years. The dinner provided delicious food and a definite high point of the

holiday. Rock Bottom also hosts an annual fundraiser for TWC in which a percentage of food sales on a given night is donated to our agency and a special brew is sold to raise funds.

Getting involved

How you can help us



The 2013 TWC Golf Outing



The Red Carpet Event



The annual National Association of Letter Carriers food drive

There are many ways you can help Together We Cope bridge the gap for families in crisis.

Donate food

Individual donations of food and personal care items (like soap, shampoo, diapers) are welcome at the back door of the pantry between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, or between 1 and 7 p.m. on Thursdays.

Groups and organizations of every size host dozens of food drives for TWC every year. Our staff is happy to help, from providing boxes to sharing a list of suggested donations to collecting food after the drive. For information, contact pantry services manager Gordon Collins at gcollins@togetherwecope.org or 708.633.5040.

Write a check

Unrestricted donations help us provide assistance wherever our clients need it most. You can also support specific programs:

Back to School

Donations to the Back to School program equip a child with a complete set of school supplies and a backpack to start the school year.

Adopt a Child

Donations provide Christmas gifts to area children who are facing an empty holiday due to their parents having to deal with an unexpected financial crisis.

Sponsor an event

Event sponsorships support TWC's major fundraising efforts. For example, our annual golf outing offers eight levels of event sponsorship ranging from customary hole sponsorships to one-of-a-kind "Master Sponsorships," and everything else in between.

Come to one of our events

Donating to TWC can be as easy as buying a ticket to play a round of golf, or a couple of tickets to a dinner dance because all event proceeds are used to help local families in crisis.

Drop off a winter coat

Donations to the Together We Cope Winter Coat Drive fund may be made at any time of the year.

Donate clothing and housewares

Donations of gently-used clothing and household items are always in demand at Nu2u. Donate resale items at the back door of Nu2u from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; from 2 to 6 p.m. Thursday, and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday.

March against hunger

Participating in the Greater Chicago Food Depository's annual anti-hunger walk can provide more food for our agency if you sign up through the TWC website at www.togetherwecope.org. The event takes place in June.

To learn more about fundraising opportunities, contact Karen Moran at 708.263.0302 or kmoran@togetherwecope.org

Financial profile

Fiscal year ending June 30, 2014

Earning Trust with the highest ratings

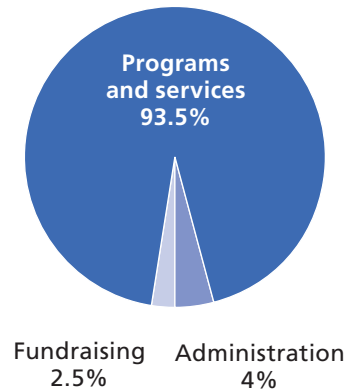
Together We Cope is proud to have received top ratings from two national organizations that help donors make informed giving decisions.

For the third consecutive year, TWC received a 4-Star rating from Charity Navigator, the highest rating an organization can earn, for sound fiscal management and commitment to accountability and transparency. Only 10 percent of organizations rated by Charity Navigator have received at least three consecutive 4-Star evaluations, and we are grateful to be honored in this way.

Kathryn Straniero, executive director of TWC, said the agency is thrilled with the recognition. “Of every dollar donated to Together We Cope, 93 cents goes to programs and services for our clients,” she said. “While the need continues to grow, so does our community support. Our focus on ‘neighbor helping neighbor’ has brought out the best in so many people. This rating from Charity Navigator helps us as we strive to deserve the trust so many have placed in us.”

TWC also earned a Gold Level rating from GuideStar Exchange, the country’s first central source of information on U.S. nonprofits.

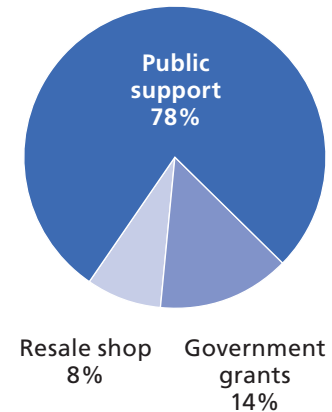
Expenditures



Expenditures

Programs and services	\$ 3,391,672	93.5%
Fundraising	\$ 91,930	2.5%
Administration	\$ 157,028	4%
Total	\$ 3,640,630	100%

Sources of Income



Sources of Income

Public support [including in-kind donations of \$2,256,668]	\$ 2,812,778	78%
Government grants	\$ 508,664	14%
Resale shop	\$ 279,986	8%
Total	\$ 3,626,633	100%

Together We Cope is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

Services at Together We Cope

Urgent services

- Shelter assistance
- Flood- or fire-victim assistance
- Medication assistance
- Domestic violence assistance referral

Financial services

- Housing assistance
(rent, mortgage, security deposit)
- Utilities assistance
(gas, electric, water)

Non-financial services

- Food
- Clothing
- Transportation
- Referrals and resources

Together We Cope's mission is to bridge the gap for Southland residents in temporary crisis by providing food, shelter, clothing and referrals, empowering them to return to self-sufficiency.

Service hours

Together We Cope serves clients from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and from 2 p.m. until 7 p.m. on Thursdays. TWC offices are closed on Saturday.

Resale shop hours

The Nu2u resale shop is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, from 2 to 7 p.m. Thursday, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

Client & Pantry Services

17010 S. Oak Park Ave.
Tinley Park, IL 60477
708.633.5040

Administration

17728 S. Oak Park Ave.
Tinley Park, IL 60477
708.263.0302

www.togetherwecope.org

