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Administrative Center
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Tinley Park, IL 60477
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Nu2u Resale Shop
17010 S. Oak Park Ave.
Tinley Park, IL 60477
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Website
togetherwecope.org

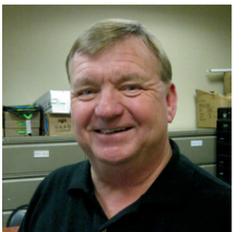


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Rumbaugh heads up pantry team

George Rumbaugh brings some deep experience to his new role as pantry services manager



at Together We Cope, where he replaces Gordon Collins who retired in September.

George has worked as a volunteer in the pantry for the past five years, including as a driver picking up food donations for the agency. In that role, George got to know every aspect of the pantry operation and many of the staff and volunteers. Beyond that, he spent more than 40 years in the grocery business at Jewel-Osco, where he started working in high school and ended his career as a store director.

"I love meeting people and have enjoyed working with staff, volunteers, donors and clients at TWC," he said. "I'm impressed with the numbers of people who get help from this little building on Oak Park Avenue," he said of TWC's reach into the community.

George and his wife, Cathy, have lived in Tinley Park for 26 years. They are the parents of six children and grandparents of nine.

TWC makes a holiday appeal

Together We Cope seeks community support for many services it provides to area families in need during the holiday season. We are making an appeal to all donors who have come to our aid in the past year, asking for support for one or more of TWC's holiday programs that bring comfort and joy to families experiencing a crisis at this time of year.

One of our most popular initiatives at the holidays is the Adopt a Child program, in which benefactors' donations fulfill the Christmas wishes of children in need by providing toys, pajamas and mittens. Another program that enjoys broad community support is the special holiday meals that our food pantry provides to families, including a turkey or ham and all the fixings for a special meal at Thanksgiving and Christmas. We also conduct a winter coat drive to give adults and children new cold weather outerwear.

Other emergencies can arise at any time of the year, but are especially pressing in the winter months. Utility bills that are in arrears, especially for home heating, can dampen spirits at the holidays. Likewise, missed rent or mortgage payments can threaten a family with homelessness just as cold weather arrives. A child with no boots, a senior with broken eyeglasses, a family with no hot water – these are emergencies that can break a family's budget at the holidays.

We hope area residents will consider a special holiday gift to Together We Cope, and be part of the "neighbor helping neighbor" spirit that drives our agency forward. You can direct your gift to a specific program, or to a general fund to meet any client need that arises during the holidays.

From toys and pajamas to turkeys and winter coats, families in crisis need help during the holidays.

- \$30 can provide a new winter coat for a child, \$50 for an adult.
- \$50 (two toys and a pair of pajamas) adopts one child at Christmas.
- \$75 gives one family a holiday meal package.

- \$100 could cover an unexpected family emergency.
- \$150 can turn the heat back on in someone's home.

Contact Tina Kessens at tkessens@togetherwecope.org to join the effort.

A client's story

Loss of a job triggers a family crisis

Heba and Abdullah Zayed were delighted when their new baby, Amir, joined their family. Though their budget was extremely tight, they managed to juggle their expenses in order to keep food on the table and a roof over their heads. When Abdullah began to lose hours at work, he fell behind on utility bills and began to use his rent money to cover those costs. The landlord was angry, as this was not the first time they would be late on rent.

Unfortunately, Abdullah's employment came to an abrupt end and he was ineligible for unemployment benefits. After two months he found a job at a grocery store in Indiana, but once again the Zayeds would be late with their rent. Now two months in arrears, the family of five faced eviction. With nowhere else to turn, they came to Together We Cope.

TWC worked hard with the landlord to keep the family in their home, especially

so the children could stay in their neighborhood school. But the landlord referred all calls to his attorney and vowed to go to court, where an eviction order eventually was entered. The family found an apartment with lower rent and heat included, and within the same school district. The new landlord was very cooperative, and TWC helped with the security deposit and first month rent.

The children also received backpacks full of school supplies from our agency, and the family was given a clothing voucher to outfit the family with apparel from our Nu2u store. In addition, the Zayeds were registered with our food pantry where they would receive monthly groceries as well as formula and diapers for the baby. A family once facing homelessness now rested assured they would be financially stable. Together We Cope was able to turn a bad situation into a positive experience, and Heba expressed her gratitude by saying, "You have no idea how much your help means to us. We are so thankful."

What a deal!

Customers of TWC's resale shop, Nu2u, are enjoying great discounts since the new 50% off policy was launched Oct. 1.



"Our shoppers love the idea of getting half off any item they can find in our store," said Cori Scanlan, store manager. It makes things more interesting for them, and it helps generate greater sales for us."

Proceeds of sales at Nu2u help support the many client programs offered by the agency to south suburban families in temporary crisis. Donations of new and gently used clothing and housewares are always appreciated, and are sold to the public or given free of charge to clients who shop at the store with TWC vouchers.

The store, located at 17010 South Oak Park Avenue in downtown Tinley Park, is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; from 2 to 7 p.m. on Thursday and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Further information is with Cori at 708-633-9180.



Many needs met during the holidays

This is a special time of the year at Together We Cope. It's a time when many of our clients need a little extra help to provide a good holiday for their families, and a time when our friends and supporters always step up in a big way to meet those needs. It is the true spirit of the season, watching neighbor help neighbor during a family crisis.

We're making a special appeal in November in letters to many of our friends. We are grateful for the constant support they show our agency all year long, and trust they will join us this holiday season to help south suburban residents in need. Donations to TWC are used in many ways at the holidays. One of our most popular programs, Adopt a Child, provides toys and warm pajamas to hundreds of area children at Christmas. Other donations fund our annual winter coat drive, in which adults and children can receive new coats as cold weather sets in.

We make a special effort at Thanksgiving and Christmas to provide all of our client families with turkeys or hams and all the fixings for a special holiday meal. Many businesses, schools, churches and individual donors join us in that campaign, but there's always a need for more food to help families celebrate the season with joy. Donations also support our emergency fund to help families pay for things like overdue heating bills or an unexpected medical bill. In this holiday appeal, we invite donors to choose a program they'd like to support with their gift – including allowing us to use the funds to support any need that arises over the winter. Further information on the holiday appeal is in a news story elsewhere in this newsletter.

Wishing you joy and peace all through this season.

— Kathryn Straniero, executive director

Dine with our donors

The following restaurants donated their wonderful food to our annual pasta dinner Oct. 5. We hope that you support them when dining out.

Angelo's Fresh Market * Aurelio's Pizza * Beggars Pizza * Berkot's * Buca di Beppo * Buffalo Wild Wings * Chick-Fil-A * Creative Cakes * Culver's * Dave & Buster's * Durbins Pizza * EAT Enterprises * Ed & Joe's Pizza * Eurofresh Tinley * Fat Ricky's * Francesca's Vicinato * Gatto's * Hooters * Jimmy John's Crestwood * Jimmy John's Tinley Park * Kenootz Pizza * Kernel Sweettooth * Let's DO Lunch * Little Joe's Pizza * Mama Vesuvio's * Mariano's * McDonald's * Mindy's Ribs * Nick's BBQ * Nothing Bundt Cakes * Olive Garden * Orland Park Bakery * Ottimo * Palermo's 95th * Palos Country Club * Papa Joe's * The Patio * Plush Horse Tinley Park * Rich's Pizza Joint *

Rubino's Italian Imports * Salina's Pasta & Pizza * Side Street American Tavern * Subway Oak Park Avenue * Winston's Market



Farewell to two friends

Together We Cope recently said farewell to two employees who have served the agency well, Cate Dietz and Gordon Collins.

Cate, former office manager and volunteer coordinator, retired in August after 14 years with TWC. She coordinated the agency's nearly 200 volunteers, dispatching them to the areas of greatest need every day.



Cate Dietz

Cate also organized the twice yearly volunteer appreciation events at TWC, making sure each volunteer was recognized for his or her contribution to the goal of keeping TWC up and running each day. "Cate knew all of our volunteers so well, and could get a great bunch of people together on a moment's notice for any special project," said Kathryn Straniero, executive director.

Gordon managed the food pantry for three years, bringing some new organization and procedures to the task as the agency grew. Among his greatest contributions was developing relationships with other food pantries in the area so they could support each other when certain items were needed by any of them. A surplus of bread at one agency could be shared with other pantries, for example, and TWC could get a crate of apples at a later date when it was most needed. "Gordon could strike a deal with anyone and quickly get what was needed by TWC clients," Kathryn recalls. Gordon, who was already a retired firefighter when he joined TWC, retired from the food pantry in September.



Gordon Collins

Welcome to new staff

Amanda Harper of Richton Park has joined TWC as a caseworker in client services. Amanda previously worked for four years as a child welfare specialist with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. A graduate of Indiana University, Amanda has three children. Her first impression of TWC? "Everyone is so kindhearted here, it's a good atmosphere," she said.



Amanda Harper



Rochelle Burke

Rochelle Burke of Oak Forest works part-time in Nu2u, and loves the fact that revenue generated there "goes to help so many people," she said. Rochelle and her husband, Rick, are the parents of four children and grandparents of one. Her take on TWC? "I love the team atmosphere, where everyone helps each other. And there's a good work ethic, everyone works so hard," she said.



Stephanie Musto



Katie Huffman

Stephanie Musto of Oak Forest works in our client services division, greeting and registering clients in the food pantry. A student at Moraine Valley Community College, Stephanie is working toward certification as a respiratory therapist and hopes to work with children suffering breathing difficulties. "The thing I love about TWC is that it helps the community in so many ways, and I meet a broad range of clients every day. It feels wonderful to help people," she said.

Katie Huffman of Tinley Park comes to us fresh out of graduate school with a master's degree in social work, and is a caseworker in client services. "I enjoy working with people, and TWC provides a broad experience because it has many different programs and age groups of clients," she said a few months into her new job. She also observes that TWC is a friendly and welcoming place, both to clients and employees, and that makes the experience enjoyable.

Say hello to the new TWC fundraising staff



Kathy Rogge



Michelle Sabbia



Meg Meyer

Wife, mother, small business owner and volunteer for scores of community causes: That sums up the life of Kathy Rogge of Oak Forest, new fundraising coordinator at TWC. Kathy previously was employed by TWC as a client caseworker and volunteer coordinator some years ago, and returned to the agency this summer to help rebuild the fundraising department. In between, she developed a Young Living Essential Oil home business and became the first female governor in Sertoma's central Illinois region. "Things have changed a lot since I last worked for Together We Cope," she observes, "and we have many more services now." Kathy's goal is to continue with the agency's current fundraising events and perhaps "refresh them a little with some new fun and entertainment," she said. "I'd also like to venture out with some new events, try some things we haven't done before."

Joining Together We Cope's fundraising staff this summer, Michelle Sabbia of Orland Park brought with her a broad background in marketing and fundraising. She was drawn to TWC "because it does good work, and helps so many people in times of need," she said. She's equally impressed with the agency's army of volunteers, noting "without them this place would not run." Goals in her new position are to help increase awareness of TWC in the communities it serves, and to increase revenue through donations so the agency can continue to help residents in need. Michelle and her husband, Michael, are parents of three adult children.

Meg Meyer of Orland Park is dividing her time between TWC's fundraising department and the position of volunteer coordinator where she manages the nearly 200 area residents who donate their time and talent to our agency. She previously worked in an administrative post at Sheehy Funeral Home, and has volunteered with other causes in the community. "I find it so refreshing to come to a job every day where 90% of the company is made up of volunteers who want to be here, who are not being paid," she said. She also finds TWC's staff to be "friendly, giving and compassionate," she said. Meg and her husband, David, are parents of four children.

Save the Date!

The Red Carpet Event, Together We Cope's annual dinner dance and auction, is Friday, March 3, 2017 at the Odyssey Country Club in Tinley Park. TWC's fundraising staff is planning a fun evening with some new twists. The event features dining from the Odyssey's sumptuous buffet and dancing to live music, as well as games and raffles with great prizes. As always, donations of items for the silent and live auctions are always welcome and help generate funds for TWC programs. Information on tickets, sponsorships and the auction is with Kathy Rogge, fundraising coordinator, at 708-263-0302 Ext. 6101.

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