

Client Service Center

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

Nu2u Resale Shop

17010 S. Oak Park Ave.
Tinley Park, IL 60477
708.633.9180

Administrative Center

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

Website

togetherwecope.org



A Client's Story

Cold, hungry and sleeping in the car

She walked into our office one day in late November without a coat and wearing flip-flops on her feet. Both she and her baby had colds, and they were hungry. She, her fiancé and the baby had been homeless for a year, and had spent the last few nights in their car. She said sometimes they could spend a few nights at a friend's home, other times they can afford a hotel room.

Jackie had done a great deal lately toward improving her life, but now she hit a roadblock and reached out for help. Her fiancé collects Social Security disability, and Jackie received unemployment compensation for a while after losing her job while on maternity leave. That income sustained them for a while and they had a small apartment in Gary, IN. Then her benefits expired. She tried earning money as an on-demand private driver, but her

car's transmission went out and she didn't have a vehicle for a time. They lost the apartment.

Now she'd landed a job at a big box department store in IL, and had a chance for an apartment in Worth. But coming up with the security deposit and first month's rent was an obstacle. Ironically, now that Jackie was working, her income and the fiancé's disability payments meant they made just a bit too much money for some forms of assistance. A Together We Cope case manager went to work tapping other forms of assistance, and succeeded in convincing the landlord to accept partial payment from TWC for the initial housing costs, and a later payment from the couple. TWC also supplied the little family with food, clothing and some home furnishings.

Moving into the small apartment was a milestone for Jackie. She'd earned it, for the most part, and accepted a helping hand from Together We Cope to get her to the finish line. To her, the help was a blessing in her moment of greatest need.

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Try your 'Luck on the Links' June 7 **'Back to School' plans under way**

Together We Cope's annual golf outing is Wednesday, June 7 at the beautiful Odyssey Country Club in Tinley Park, this year with the theme of "Luck on the Links."

Guests will enjoy a Las Vegas theme throughout the day, from betting hole games to various raffles. The outing can accommodate up to 144 golfers, so line up your foursomes and register early for this fun day on the links. Cost is \$125 per person for the entire day's activities, while golf only is \$95 and dinner only is \$45. A light lunch is offered at midday for golfers. Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. with coffee and doughnuts in the clubhouse. The shotgun start is at 11:30 a.m.

Sponsorships at several levels are available for this year's outing. Additionally, local businesses can enjoy a free advertising opportunity by putting their promotional items in golfer gift bags. Water bottles, pens or snacks with your business name on them are always popular items.

Registration and sponsorship information is with Kathy Rogge, TWC fundraising coordinator, at 708-263-0302 ext. 6101 or krogge@togetherwecope.org.

There is nothing quite like the excitement of new beginnings, and the beginning of a new school year is filled with special promise. Yet, the basic need of new school supplies is beyond reach for too many of our neighborhood school children. Imagine the child who, with no small sense of embarrassment, takes dull crayons, half pencils, and mismatched supplies from a battered backpack. Equally difficult, is the reality of a young teen whose academic success is jeopardized by the lack of required supplies.



You can erase this image. Replace it with a delighted smile over new crayons and pencils, and the excitement of a brand new backpack. See anticipation replace uncertainty for youngsters, pre-teens and teens who begin the school year with a sense of confidence. The impact of your monetary gift or the donation of a backpack is beyond measure. You will provide so much more than school supplies. Your message is resounding: each child matters. Every child deserves a positive new beginning.

Please sponsor a child in Together We Cope's annual Back to School program. For as little as \$30, you will provide a backpack and a box of pre-packed school supplies. School supply boxes are specially purchased in bulk, so your gift goes a long way!

You may also wish to consider a backpack drive. This is a great opportunity for groups, organizations, sales teams, or even a neighborhood gathering! You can help us provide a wonderful selection to our young neighbors in need. The deadline for backpack donations is Friday, July 14. For more information about a backpack drive, or personal donation of backpacks, please contact Tina Kessens at tkessens@togetherwecope.org, or call her at 708-633-5040, ext. 7231.

Stay tuned for the big sale

We're planning a super sale of hundreds of housewares items donated to Together We Cope after the recent 2017 International Home and Housewares Show at McCormick Place. Tentative date of the sale is May 6-7, at a location yet to be determined.

Shoppers will find a dazzling array of items, from high end cookware by manufacturers such as Calphalon, Rachael Ray, Anolon and Cuisinart, to everyday dishware and glassware. There also will be small appliances and furniture, including patio furniture, for purchase.

Together We Cope was thrilled to be chosen one of only five Chicago area charities to receive the goods from the housewares show. All proceeds from the housewares sale will benefit client programs and services.

Watch our website, togetherwecope.org, for announcement of the location of our big sale. To read the story behind the major effort it took to collect the housewares and transport them back to TWC, see "From the Director" on page 2 of this newsletter.



Smile for us!

Online shoppers can give Together We Cope a boost when they access shopping giant Amazon by logging into their accounts using the smile.amazon.com address, instead of the usual amazon.com. It costs the shopper nothing, and Amazon donates 0.5% of eligible AmazonSmile purchases to TWC. Just log on at smile.amazon.com, choose Together We Cope as your charity choice, and then shop. Thank you for supporting Together We Cope.



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Walk (or run) this way!

Three annual fun fitness events that benefit Together We Cope are on tap for this spring and summer. The annual Hunger Walk sponsored by the Greater Chicago Food Depository helps generate resources to keep TWC's food pantry stocked. The INTENT Tinley Park

Duathlon also benefits TWC with a generous donation after that event. This year the Tinley Park Fire Department's annual "Run for Your Life Safety" 5k run or walk on May 7 features a food drive to benefit Together We Cope.

Check our website, togetherwecope.org, for further information on these events as it becomes available.

Small army gets job done!



One of our most ambitious fundraising efforts ever unfolded late in March when we bused about 85 volunteers to McCormick Place on the Chicago lakefront to pack up hundreds of items donated to Together We Cope by exhibitors in the 2017 International Home and Housewares Show. TWC was one of only five Chicago area charities chosen to receive the merchandise. We are so excited about this new opportunity and its revenue potential.

Donated items ranged from dishes and small appliances to cookware and even some furniture.

I can't describe the energy of our volunteers, and staff members, as they scrambled all over the huge exposition center to locate the exhibitor booths donating items to our agency. Volunteer teams then bubble-wrapped each piece, boxed them up and placed the boxes on skids to be wrapped for trucking back to Tinley Park. Linda Lopez, our development director, racked up 23,000 steps on her Fitbit that day! Volunteer Jan Schweig made more than 100 box lunches to feed our hungry crew. Still another great volunteer, Ardith McGlothlin, arranged for her son, Charles McGlothlin, to donate trailers from his trucking company, Complete Trucking in Alsip, to transport the merchandise to an off-site storage facility. Another good friend, Jay Williams of Partners in Hope in New Lenox, brought his truck to McCormick Place to help out. Our food pantry manager, George Rumbaugh, and employees Mike Racila and David Daoud took TWC trucks there to pick up still more merchandise. Staff and volunteers unloaded all of the merchandise, and then tackled the huge inventory task.



TWC volunteers faced a sea of donated pots and pans waiting to be wrapped and boxed for delivery to our agency from the 2017 International Home and Housewares Show at McCormick Place in Chicago.

Kathy Rogge, fundraising coordinator, and Meg Meyer, volunteer coordinator, choreographed each step of this elaborate venture and did an outstanding job. Our office manager, Tina Kessens, along with resale store manager Cori Scanlan did a lot of the legwork at McCormick Place. We now prepare for the public sale of the items scheduled for Saturday, May 6, and Sunday, May 7 at a location to be announced.

I'm always grateful for the more than 150 south suburban residents who donate their time and talent to keep Together We Cope up and running each day, but this venture gave me a whole new appreciation for the constant energy and dedication of TWC volunteers and staff. Thank you all for such a fine showing of support.

— Kathryn Straniero, executive director

Watch our website togetherwecope.org for further information on the May 6–7 Housewares Sale at a location to be announced.

Spring cleaning? Think Nu2u



Together We Cope's resale shop Nu2u is sporting a new spring look, thanks to all of our supporters who cleaned out closets and cupboards at home and donated gently used clothing and housewares to us. Our resale shop provides a vital revenue stream for our agency, and all proceeds go

directly to support programs and services for area families in temporary crisis.

"The community has been very generous with donations for our resale shop, and it is that generosity that keeps the operation going," said Kathryn Straniero, executive director of TWC. "Our shop is the place to find that unexpected little gem, or that secondhand furniture you want for your rec room at home or apartment at college. And the stock changes every day as new donations come in," she said.

The store is located at 17010 So. Oak Park Ave. in downtown Tinley Park. Store hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; 2 to 7 p.m. on Thursday; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Further information is with Cori Scanlan, store manager, at 708-633-9180.

The perfect dress

Together We Cope benefitted recently from a generous donation of hundreds of special occasion dresses by Eva's Bridal International in Orland Park, a business which has made similar donations in the past. Gowns included wedding, bridesmaid, prom and cocktail dresses in many styles and sizes. The dresses were samples in excellent condition and were offered at deep discounts to Nu2u shoppers during a special sale in February. Many dresses are still available at the resale shop. Further information is with Cori Scanlan, store manager, at 708-633-9180.



Congratulations, Bob and Diane Centner

When Bob and Diane Centner retired from their careers, they looked for a way to give something back to their Tinley Park community in a volunteer capacity. They looked into several opportunities,



and decided Together We Cope was just the place they sought. Now, all these years later, they are the recipients of the 2017 Reimer Award for Outstanding Volunteers.

They began volunteering in TWC's food pantry in 2009 and have become staples of the agency's operation. Bob remains in the food pantry, where he works tirelessly to keep the shelves stocked and to load/unload trucks. Diane moved from the pantry a few years ago to the office, where she took on new duties. "I wanted a new challenge," she said, "and I've found the office work lets you understand more of the agency's operation." Diane also volunteers for several client programs, such as Back to School and Adopt a Child, and community events on behalf of TWC such as Pluck a Duck and the Duathlon.

Bob and Diane were sweethearts in sixth grade, then went their separate ways in life. "We met up again 30 years later and eventually married," she said. Together they are the parents of three grown children and enjoy three granddaughters. Bob is retired as a supervisor of a manufacturing company, and Diane retired from Joliet Junior College where she managed employee relations.

"We are so fortunate to have Bob and Diane with us. They are wonderful representatives of Together We Cope," said Kathryn Straniero, TWC executive director.

Read all about it – digitally!

We're offering a digital option for our newsletter at Together We Cope, a move designed to increase efficiency and decrease printing and mailing costs for our agency.

If you'd like us to send our quarterly newsletter to your inbox instead of your mailbox, just email us at mseltzner@togetherwecope.org and let us know. The cost-saving measure will allow us to serve more families struggling with a temporary crisis in their lives. Thank you for considering the email option for our newsletter.



Saluting our dinner dance partners

Chuck and Donna Freiberg, owners of C.D.E. Collision Centers, were honored during Together We Cope's annual dinner dance in March for their longtime support of the fundraiser, and of our agency.

C.D.E. has been the \$10,000 presenting sponsor of the annual dinner for the past four years, and was a sponsor at other levels for several years previously. The Freibergs, of Homer Glen, said they support Together We Cope because of their commitment to community.

"Chuck and I are blessed to be able to help out," Donna Freiberg said. "We wanted to give back to our local community, and we heard about Together We Cope and the great work it does." Donna began by volunteering in TWC's food pantry several years ago, and saw firsthand the wide scope of services our agency offers to south suburban families in crisis. "It was shocking to see so many people in need in our own backyard," she said. Donna also serves on a new advocacy group recently formed to further promote and support TWC programs.

The Freibergs have grown their family business to 15 locations in Illinois, Indiana and Michigan. They opened a new facility in Tinley Park a few months ago. Two of their sons and other family members are involved in the business operation.

Linda Lopez, director of development at TWC, expressed gratitude for the Freibergs' ongoing commitment. "We are very grateful to Chuck and Donna for their generous and loyal support. Their gifts of both time and treasure help drive our mission to aid our neighbors in their time of crisis," she said.



Bridging the summertime gap

Summer is such a special time. We enjoy less structured days, a break from homework, lots of backyard fun and family gatherings. We plan vacation escapes, enjoy trips to local pools, the zoo, or water parks.

Yet, summer holds a different meaning for some of our neighbors. They are worrying about how to fill the summertime gap that happens without school breakfast and lunch programs. During the summer months when children are home, Together We Cope purchases significantly greater quantities of lunch and breakfast foods from the Greater Chicago Food Depository to help families through this season. As a member agency, we pay only ten cents a pound for staples such as cereal, canned milk, peanut butter, jelly, canned soup and vegetables, pasta, or macaroni and cheese.

This means a gift from you to help us "bridge the summertime gap" goes a long way! As you know, our clients are most often hard-working single parents, families managing a life-altering illness, or grandparents on fixed incomes who are raising grandchildren. Your gift of only \$20 will help ease their burden. You may donate now at our website or look for our appeal letter later this month.