
269 Homeless to Housed

48 Employed

200,000+ Plates of Food Served

311 Birth Certificates & State ID

2,920 Visits to the “Free Store”

22,500 Bags of Groceries

Celebrate with us!
Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends:

Another year has flown by and the staff at Cornerstone have had a front row seat to so many victories and successes! We get to witness the relief on people’s faces when they finally secure keys to their home once again, or for some, for the first time ever. We experience firsthand the joy of someone getting a job because they know that is a major step in securing their housing. Being able to secure birth certificates and IDs helps each person feel like they exist and are important in this world.

We witness the strength and tenacity of our residents time and time again and wonder how we would do if we were experiencing homelessness ourselves. We look forward to this year of 2017 with even higher hopes and greater anticipation of the many families and individuals we will meet, hearing their stories, and helping them move forward with their goals.

Our mission at CCO is to help people recover from the hardships of homelessness with dignity while helping them restore their God-given worth and self-esteem.

Sincerely,

Sandra Ramsey, Executive Director
269 Homeless to Housed!

Finding Home

“Thank you, Cornerstone, for all your help! Not only for the help of shelter and housing but for life in general. Thank you and keep up the good work!”
– Lisa, maintained employment and found housing while sheltered at CCO.

Every single person who moves from homelessness to housing is a cause for celebration. We rejoice with every one of our residents who are able to turn a key and enter their home, whether it is a mom or dad with children, single senior citizen, couple with children, three-generational family, or young adult. “Finding home’ is the next step in a new phase of life.

Often the path to housing is full of barriers and delays but we are grateful to our case management team who help everyone sheltered at CCO navigate the complexities of finding a safe place to live.

In 2016, 269 people who stayed in one of CCO’s shelters or was helped through our outreach program moved from homelessness to housing. It was a record-breaking year!
Improving Through Employment

“Never ever give up. No matter how bad things are. I came to Chicago and I didn’t know anybody. I found shelter at Cornerstone and never gave up. If you’re homeless right now, don’t give up!”
– Katie, obtained employment and housing while sheltered at CCO

In 2016, 48 CCO shelter guests found employment! The effort and determination needed to secure a job while homeless cannot be overstated. We are proud of each and every person who obtained employment. CCO was privileged to help with training, transportation, and uniform costs for many who were in the process of job training or who found work.

Some outstanding shelter guests were given employment at CCO. Of CCO’s 50 employees, 30 have experienced homelessness and have moved from homelessness to housing through one of CCO’s shelter programs. We are proud to say 60% of CCO’s employees have ‘lived experience’ and can bring these insights, compassion, and understanding to their work. They fill critical roles such as case managers, security guards, maintenance staff, chefs, janitorial workers, programs assistants, and evening staff.
Fighting Hunger Through Nutrition

Each plate of food served in the CCO dining room help to bring nutrition, energy, and well-being to the children, adults, and senior citizens who dine with us. Nutrient-rich, balanced meals are central to CCO’s services.

To many of us, food is such a routine and expected provision that we forget it’s importance. But for those who are hungry, it is no small matter. Consistent, nutritious meals help to stabilize moods and focus attention on important tasks. It can help break people free of a survival mentality.

In 2016, over 200,000 meals are served in the CCO dining room. We are grateful to provide this core service.
331 Birth Certificates & State ID’s

Essential Identification

Often something as simple as identification can stand in the way of job training, education, employment, and housing. CCO case managers work hard to get essential identification so that goals can be met. As a result, families and single adults are brought one step closer to stability and “finding home.”

In 2016, 331 Birth Certificates and State ID’s were obtained by those sheltered at CCO. Many people entering CCO have no identification or income. Staff work with shelter guests to secure ID so that they can access housing lists, job training, schooling, medical assistance, and more. Without identification, it is impossible to move forward to secure housing.
2,920 Visits to the Free Store

Free Clothing and Household Items

“A lot of people who visit the Free Store come from dire circumstances. They often don’t have enough clothes, maybe just a few things in a bag. Or they come to CCO with nothing. We’ve had lots of fire victims, people fleeing bad situations, or folks living on the streets, who only have what they could carry. They are welcome to come and get what they need.”
– Harmony Canfield, Free Store Supervisor

Donated clothes and household items are displayed in the CCO Free Store. Once there, shelter guests and our neighbors are able to choose clothing essentials. The Free Store is truly a vital service to our shelter guests who arrive at CCO with no money or income. It is a blessing to families, single adults, and our neighbors in need.
Food Sharing

“We do it because we see the need. There are a lot of low-income and needy, elderly people in the Uptown area. There is a lot of food in America and hungry people who need it. We have a great supply of good food and we are blessed to share it.”
– Chris Ramsey, CCO Food Pantry Supervisor

Every Wednesday over 150 people gather in the CCO dining room to “shop” for nutritious food. Canned vegetables, meat, pasta, grains, nuts, boxed food, and more, a wide variety of groceries are offered each week and over 25% consist of nutritious, fresh fruits and vegetables. The majority of CCO food pantry patrons are senior citizens. The bags of groceries they take home provides the financial relief needed to pay rent, obtain important prescription medications, or other necessities, on a fixed income.

In 2016, 22,500 bags of groceries went to hungry Chicagoans through the CCO Food Pantry program. We are grateful to play a part in the fight against hunger in Uptown.
Finding Home
“Thank you Cornerstone & Naomi House, for all of your help! Not only for the help of shelter and housing but for life in general. Thank you and keep up the good work!
- Lisa, maintained employment and found housing while sheltered at CCO.

Improving through Employment
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Bags of Groceries
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- Harmony Canfield, Free Store Supervisor

Thank you for joining us in celebrating a few of CCO’s wonderful successes from 2016! In 2017, we hope you continue to be a part of the fabulous things happening in the lives of those experiencing homelessness. Please consider making a generous donation today!

You can find the full 2016 CCO Annual Report at www.ccolife.org/2016report

Join CCO in offering daily necessities and vital services to homeless families and individuals. We rely on the support of volunteers and donors to provide for those in need. Please donate today! Thank you!
Accidental omissions do happen, and we apologize if you were missed. Let us know and we’ll make a correction!
Norm Kaeseberg
Karina Kalamaria
William Kamberis
Mr. Jim Kena
Katherine Kent
Lene Kiel Wescom
Kristi Kijowski
Josephine Kishkunas
Timothy Klassen
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Betty Wray
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Congregational United Church of Christ
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North Shore Baptist Church
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Foundation
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Winnetka Covenant Women
Beach Breeze Vacation Rentals
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Indiana University Student Organization
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Benevity Community Impact Fund
Bridgeview Bank Group
Everybody's Coffee
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R.H. Larson Family Foundation
Thomas Franczyk Trusts
Glenview Community Church
CBRE Foundation
Holy Apostle Greek Orthodox Church
Oracle America, Inc.
Bethany Lutheran Church
Salem Lutheran Church
First Baptist Church
First United Methodist Church
St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
Power One Supply, Inc.
First United Methodist Church of Elmhurst
New Friendly Towers
Dedicated Connections, Inc
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Walmart
Commonwealth Edison Co.
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Schwab Charitable
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Schaumburg Covenant Women