

“Ending Homelessness in the Fox Valley”

COTS, Inc.

Newsletter – October 2009

“I am so grateful and blessed to have COTS as a part of my life”

by Alyssa Seeland – Former Resident

A few months ago, I was asked to write a little about what COTS means to me and how the program has helped me. Unfortunately, I did not get around it until now – which in a way proves my success even more. Today is my 2-year anniversary from using drugs and alcohol – COTS has played a tremendous role in my sobriety. I really cannot explain how much they have influenced me for the better, but here is some of how they have helped me.

On April 8, 2007, I was in a treatment facility in Appleton, WI. I managed to leave the facility and obtain heroin, my drug of choice. I had struggled for 5 years with different drugs and for three long years with heroin specifically. It had brought me to my knees many times – and too many other people around me. On this particular day, it was Easter, my roommate was gone, and I would be left alone for the day. I began using at 10 in the morning. I do not remember much after that until 10:30 that night waking up in a hospital with doctors being grateful I was alive. I was told later, that I was found not breathing by my roommate and a friend. Two of my counselors came over, performed CPR, and saved my life. God was with me on that day – and put some key people in my life.

Because of the severity of this overdose – I was then sent off to my fifth inpatient treatment in 2 years, this one would be at Winnebago Mental Health. After spending 30 long days at that facility, I was transferred to an emergency shelter with an optimistic view on life and a hope to start living at COTS. I moved into COTS in June of 2007, eager to be out of treatment and free to begin transitioning back into society.

When I first moved in – I did not have a job, and was eager to start working. When I found a job at West Business Services, I felt a new confidence that I could really excel. Because of the tremendous amount of support I got from the other women and Tracie, that is when my move up, really began. I proved to be a great asset at work, moving to #1 in sales within the first month I was there – something I never thought that would happen.

I continued to work with a sponsor on my recovery and went to 4-5 NA Meetings per week. COTS gave me the support and the

assistance that I needed so desperately at that point in my life, while still allowing me to have some freedom. After living at COTS for 6 months, I moved out with my boyfriend and I knew that I had all of the tools I needed to begin a healthy and happy life.

In July, I gave birth to my first child – and my life has just been getting better. I have an amazing relationship with my family – much of which had been damaged through all of my lies and deceit when I was using. Many broken hearts are beginning to mend, including my own. I have allowed myself to continue to heal and grow throughout an amazing process. I also went back to school, which had been a goal of mine for the past 3 years and because of treatment and using off and on, I could never string enough time together to even start. Tracie was encouraging me to look into classes and more schooling because she knew that it would be something that would benefit my life even more. She had assisted me with gathering together college information and offered to help even further. Because she helped me to get the ball rolling – even though I did not go back for a year, I knew what I needed to do in order to go back.

I am so grateful and blessed to have COTS as a part of my life. They provided me with a safe haven and an amazing amount of tools to live a happy, healthy, and productive life. With help from many people and many programs, including COTS – I was able to regain my life, and not just live clean and sober, but truly love living each and every day. ♣



A Word from our Room Sponsor

Possibilities.

At CMD Corporation, the future and success of our organization depends on the passionate pursuit of technology. It is our goal, our drive and our vision to pursue possibilities. By doing so, we create unique equipment solutions for plastic film and flexible packaging converters around the world.

We are also members of the Fox Cities community. We live here, we work here, and we care what happens here. It is for this reason that we are proud sponsors of the COTS organization. Like CMD, COTS also nurtures possibilities, particularly the possibility of every individual to succeed, to grow and to contribute.

We salute the COTS organization, their staff and volunteers, for the tireless work they do for struggling individuals. As a COTS sponsor, we believe that by helping people rise, our community soars.



-- Steve Sakai
CMD President

UPCOMING EVENTS!

Watch our website for updated information.

Feb.21 – Mar. 2, 2010 Help for the Homeless 2010 Drive
Join us by hosting a collection box at your organization

March, 2010 Encore, The Concert for COTS
Date not yet confirmed. Watch website for details.

May 1st, 2010 Human Race – Come Walk for COTS
Collect sponsors and walk with us, for COTS

From the Directors Desk ...

Executive Director: Todd Sutton

At our Annual Report to the community on Sept. 18, a former resident talked about his "homelessness." Charlie had been a successful businessman and an accomplished martial artist. However, due to a debilitating medical condition, he lost the use of his leg and struggled to generate income sufficient to maintain housing. He came into the COTS program, worked on treating his depression, and eventually made the extremely difficult decision to have his leg amputated. Today, Charlie continues to strive toward independence. He volunteers at multiple local non-profits, he serves on a board as a homelessness advocate, and he instructs and inspires others who live at area shelters. Charlie's story reveals that anyone can encounter a need and that with support and perseverance, one can overcome a dire situation.

His story would not be possible without you. Your support allows Charlie the opportunity to succeed.

At COTS, we are pleased with our success. And yet, we know that we have much more work to do.

The need for affordable housing has grown significantly. There are waiting lists at every housing agency in the area. COTS men's program has operated with a waiting list since June 2008 – an unprecedented length of time. The number of people turned away due to a lack of bed availability at the Emergency Shelter has doubled from 2008 to 2009. Between local housing authorities and the Housing Partnership there are over 900 applicants waiting for affordable housing.

The numbers are astounding. As you consider these numbers, we encourage you to remember Charlie. Every number represents a real person who is facing significant personal challenges. We cannot lose sight of that fact.

It takes an entire community to address these issues. We are grateful for your support as we guide people like Charlie along the path toward independence and self-sufficiency.

We thank you again for your support of our mission. We promise to continue to use your gifts wisely.

COTS Welcomes Two New Staff Members



Jessica Stern recently accepted the position of Case Manager at COTS. Having grown up in New London, she attended the University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh majoring in Human Services and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 2005.

She began her career working at the Emergency Shelter of Fox Valley and became a House Supervisor. Though she enjoyed her work there, she decided to assume more responsibility by applying at COTS for the Case Manager position. Noting that her work is very rewarding, Jessica continues to work at the Emergency Shelter part time, even though she has a full schedule working at COTS. Being a Case Manager affords her the opportunity to help meet the real world concerns of those she serves and helps them to build a better and more sustainable future. She looks forward to meeting new people and establishing a network that can help meet the needs of others.

Trisha recently accepted the position of Women's Program Manager at COTS. Her passion is for helping the underprivileged and those less fortunate. In 2006, Trisha received her Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, and in 2009 received her Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, specializing in Child Welfare. Trisha has experience in mission work in Guatemala and joined AmeriCorps, a national volunteer organization where she was stationed in Washington D.C. at a medical homeless facility. In her free time, Trisha enjoys traveling around the world, hiking, biking, volunteering and spending time with family and friends.



Wish List

LARGER ITEMS

- Commercial size Refrigerator & Stove
- Microwaves
- Warming trays / NESCO's
- Serving platters
- Dinnerware & Flatware
- Vacuum Cleaners (6)
- Kitchen appliances

GENERAL ITEMS

- Seasonal Decorations
- Hygiene Products
- Gift Certificates – Bus passes, grocery, etc.
- Bedding & furnishings (Twin beds)
- Cleaning Supplies
- Office products / supplies
- Food (Canned goods, non perishables
and fresh seasonal foods)

For more Information:

Contact Kathryn Philibeck on 920-734-3609 Ext.404

or visit our website www.appletoncots.org

Volunteer Opportunities

- Collect seasonal decoration donations from the community for COTS facilities
- Decorate facilities during the holiday season
- Donation of three Christmas Trees
- Prepare, cook and serve meals to residents for National Holidays.
- Assist and/or organize fundraising events
- Teach a class
- On-call person for random donation pick-ups

Call Kathryn Philibeck to find out more.

Thank you!

Thank you to our cherished In-kind Donors

April thru September 2009

Robert and Lois Chabalowski; Ray and Becky Froehlich; Goodwill; Grand Meridian; Impact Printing; Anita Kapp; Kellogg's Snacks; Mills Fleet Farm; NEW Printing; William and Doris Olson; Beth Roe; St. Bernard Parish; St. Mary Parish—Human Concerns Committee; William Stone; Bev Trier; Victor Allens Coffee; Festival Foods; FVTC Hospitality and Culinary Club; St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church; St. Bethany Lutheran Church and numerous Anonymous Donors.

Room Sponsorship makes a difference



Thank you to all the organizations and individuals who continue to support COTS mission of Ending Homelessness in the Fox Valley.