Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2018 (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018)
CONTENTS

Mission 3
President’s Letter 4
Outputs 5-7
Senior Services 8
Housing and Community Services 9
Outcomes 11-12
Memory/Honor Names 14
The mission of the Center of Concern is to provide housing solutions, support services and counseling for seniors, disabled and others in need, enabling them to live with dignity and independence.
October 1, 2018

Dear Friends,

With so many older adults without friends or relatives to call upon, the Center has been a saving grace offering hope and resilience. For an older adult facing isolation, chronic illness and a lack of family support, the challenges can be devastating. For families at risk of homelessness, our experienced case managers are a lifeline bringing guidance and support to restore normalcy and prevent further hardships including separation from immediate family members.

In this 40th year of fulfilling the vision and direction set forth by local resident Dee Heinrich, the Center of Concern has had an immeasurable impact in assisting residents and families in need. Through the dedication of countless volunteers, dedicated staff and valued community partners, the Center continues to evolve in meeting the needs of area residents. The Center of Concern’s mission to provide housing solutions, counseling and support services to seniors, the disabled, and others in need enables them to live with dignity and independence. Dee’s passion for offering solutions for seniors as they address challenges related to aging remains with us today as we face greater challenges with longer life expectancy, lack of affordable housing, rising medical costs and separation of family.

While many of Dee’s programs remain in place, new programs have evolved to meet the needs of our community. With an average age of 75, the Senior Companion Program provides volunteer opportunities to the over 55 population to provide companionship, transportation to shopping or medical appointments or teach a new life skill. Our companions enrich their own lives as they reduce isolation for older adults who are often homebound or restricted in mobility. This year our CHORE Program has been expanded almost threefold to serve 350 adults with free housekeeping, seasonal chore and home maintenance assistance. The Chore program also provides income earning opportunities for trained Chore Aids helping older adults overcome isolation and maintain their independence at home.

In 2019, the agency will be taking a leading role with addressing age related illness with the launch of a Memory Café program offering a comfortable place for family caregivers to receive support and guidance as they navigate dementia related illnesses. The Center will also explore opportunities to promote Dementia Friendly communities to circumvent difficulties placed upon them when caring for loved ones. After exceeding program attendance goals, our Lunch with Us program will be expanded by offering additional activities related to brain health, Bingocize (combining recreation and balance training) and matchmaking activities. The agency will be taking a lead role in assessing community needs and partnering with area libraries to provide a welcoming environment for families seeking information and support. We will seek new partnerships to build awareness of services and pursue marketing opportunities to ensure the long term success of programs.

The Center will continue to be a beacon of light and hope as it serves residents and builds upon Dee’s hopes and wishes. We acknowledge the considerable work of Dee and all those who followed her as we continue our life affirming mission.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Capitani, President
Board of Directors
OUTPUTS
Services by Programs

![Bar chart showing services by programs for FY 2016, FY 2017, and FY 2018. The chart includes categories for Older Adults, Housing, Community, and All.]
Volunteers
Make it happen! The value of volunteer hours.
Gertrude is a long-time client of the Center, who recently was hospitalized for a urinary tract infection after she called police believing she saw people in her yard. This is a common change in mental status due to an underlying medical condition in elderly persons. A good police officer got an ambulance to get her to treatment at an area hospital. The hospital tried to bill her for several extra days of “observation” but she complained to her insurance company when she received a bill for some $30K and they got the hospital to back off the fraudulent claim and thanked Gertrude for notifying them. Next the hospital sent her to rehabilitation at an area nursing home which kept her for over two months while billing insurance again and providing very little “rehabilitation”; in fact, she was deteriorating due to poor diet and debilitation from lying in bed most of the day. A social worker called us at the Center and left a message that they didn’t think she could manage at home, what did we think? This worker left a message saying to “ask the client,” and followed up with a visit to see that she could make transfers on her own from bed to wheelchair. Gertrude “sprung” herself then from the care center and returned home where she cooks for herself and enjoys her life and says “if I am to die, I want it to be at home,” and maneuvers around in her wheelchair, getting just a shopper and CHORE service from us. She exhibits resilience and resistance against well-meaning medical staff who sometimes want to overprotect people and act as if being old were a disease in itself! Maybe her strength comes from being an immigrant and enduring a time when people from her country were not wanted as our country had fought one war with Germany and was about to enter another. She doesn’t fold under pressure nor does she become depressed and give up. She is an example for us as we age.

SENIOR SERVICES

Case Management: Provided by experienced staff who conduct assessments in clients’ homes in order to evaluate their needs, arrange for services to meet those needs, and monitor their situations.
Friendly Visitors: Regular home visits to lonely/isolated older adults to improve their well being.
Intergenerational Programs: Engages older adults with younger generations for mutual benefit.
Referral to Resources: Experienced staff provide residents with valuable, unbiased referrals to resources to address short and long term needs of older adults in the community.
Senior ASK: Effective and unbiased answers by phone or online that provide valuable insights, solutions, and information gathered from our long history of serving the needs of area residents.
Senior (CHORE) Housekeeping: Assistance with light household cleaning and maintenance projects
Senior Companionship: Matches older adults who are homebound or in living facilities with stipend volunteers.
Senior Lunch: Lunch program provides a daily meal on weekdays to promote the health and well-being of older adults with a nutritional meal and informative and educational programs.
Shopping Service: Help for the homebound and disabled persons with grocery shopping
Successful Aging Workshops: Education workshops for older adults and caregivers
Telephone Reassurance: Telephone calls at specified times to assure that older adults are safe and well
Sarah came to the Center Concern by referral from another agency. The agency had to refer Sarah due to the agency's inability to service the Des Plaines area with rent assistance, which is what Sarah needed.

While at work having a seemingly normal day, Sarah received a phone call from a detective asking her to come to a police station. When Sarah begged for an explanation of why, the detective told her the horrible news that her daughter, also a mother to a daughter, was gunned down while visiting friends in another city. At that very moment, Sarah's whole world was collapsed and so did she.

Sarah had to take a leave of absence from her job to plan her daughter's funeral and she also became the legal guardian of her grandchild, who is in elementary school. Sarah covered the funeral and burial costs which she ultimately became behind in all of her monthly bills, the largest of those being rent.

Sarah came to the Center of Concern with all of her vital records and documented proof of her hardship and expenses. The Center of Concern was able to assist her by granting her assistance for past due rent.

Sarah was most gracious and was able to return to work and also receive bereavement counseling for her and her granddaughter.

Sarah was serviced by the Center of Concern with professionalism, empathy, accountability and genuine concern.

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**HOUSING SERVICES**

Housing Services Case Management: Provided by experienced staff who conduct assessments to evaluate needs, arrange for services to meet those needs, and monitor situations.

Homelessness Prevention: Financial assistance (rent/utility) and counseling to families who are homeless or facing eviction.

Referral to Resources: Experienced staff provides residents with valuable, unbiased referrals to resources to address short and long term needs adults in the community.

Transitional/Rapid Re-Housing: Housing with supportive services to help homeless individuals and families reach self-sufficiency within two years.

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Alzheimer’s Support Group: Assists caregivers in learning effective strategies for managing difficult behavior and coping with the stress of their responsibilities as a caregiver.

Employment Counseling: Assists job seekers of all ages to develop resumes, improve interviewing skills, and job search techniques.

Financial and Money Management Counseling: Debt and money counseling addresses financial concerns, and helps to develop a plan for living financially secure.

Income Tax Assistance: Available throughout the year: Income tax questions, preparation of basic tax returns.

Legal Counseling: Powers of Attorney, Wills, and general legal advice.

Medicare, Insurance and Senior Health Insurance Counseling (SHIP): Provides assistance with Medicare, Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP), insurance options, and aids in selecting Medicare Supplement, Medicare Prescription and Long-Term Care policies.

Senior Humanities: Older adults’ discussion group

Energy Assistance Program: The energy assistance program is a program designed to educate seniors on smart grid data and technology to manage energy use mainly through a series of lunch-time programs
“The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves.”

- Helen Keller
OUTCOMES
HIGHLIGHTS

2,289 PEOPLE SERVED THIS YEAR

23,746 Specific Individual Services Provided

$180K GENEROUS Individual total DONATIONS

Gender % 82% F 18% M
Income

Diverse Income Support

- Donations: 18%
- Foundations: 12%
- Grants: 39%
- Events: 6%
- In-Kind: 25%
Gifts in Memory

Giovani Abbate, Krista Annetti, Christ & Helen Blanas, Richard Bohannan, John and Patricia Brennan, Masako Caswell, Lois Cline, James Cushing, Mr. and Mrs. Leo Czybulinski, Patsy Ericksen, Trudy Ferschl, Morris Gzesh, Dorothea Heinrich, Dan Helminiak, Lloyd Hoover, Gertrude Jaffe, George & Ruth Kosaka, Steve Lacni, Mary & Nick Malinski, Margret Moore, Joseph Ociepka, Elisa, August, & Antonette Parett, Dean Patras, James Schurder, Father Thomas Schwab, Dorothy Shea, Jean Stafford, George Starzyk, Eric Strauts, William and Marilyn Sweeney, Grace Vinopal, Barbara Welch, and Bill & Geneva Zillmer

Gifts in Honor

Sue Beaumont  Peg Brzezinski  Myrna Fogarty
Susan Grish  John Maag  Susan Pinsler
Mary Schurder