Dear Friends,

The Will County Center for Community Concerns (WCCCC) has now been serving the Will County community for 30 years – three decades of caring for our community and of helping Will County residents in need escape poverty and become self-sufficient.

As Executive Director of WCCCC, I see first-hand the positive impact our agency has in the Will County community. Our agency helps many vulnerable people who may have nowhere else to turn. We weatherize homes to reduce utility bills, aid in utility bill payments, and rehabilitate homes which are not code compliant; all in an effort to create safe and comfortable living environments. WCCCC housing counselors offer foreclosure prevention, financial literacy classes, and provide other services for low-income people to purchase and/or maintain their homes. We also aid in homeless prevention, serve the chronically homeless, and assist other customers in emergency situations.

I want to thank our donors, our elected officials, our Board of Directors, our volunteers, and all of our community partners for your support. As you read the stories in this annual report of those WCCCC has assisted, remember that the time, resources, and expertise that you have provided to our agency has helped improve the lives of our clients and the Will County community.

Kris

Kris White,  
Executive Director
Over the years that I have been involved in the Will County Center for Community Concerns, I have seen WCCCC change and grow – expanding the services provided to the community and evolving to meet the needs of Will County residents – but the core goals and values of the agency have not changed.

As we reflect back on the past 30 years, and on 2016 in particular, the stories of our clients and the difference that WCCCC has made in their lives demonstrates the enormous impact we have made in Will County. In 2016, WCCCC provided 14,410 services to income-eligible households, changing their lives for the better.

As Board Chair, I would like to express my appreciation to all those who have helped make WCCCC so successful over the past 30 years. We look forward to 30 more years of helping those in need in our community.

Linda Pote,
Board Chair
2016 DONORS

COMPANIES
A.J. Dralle, Inc.
BB Construction Enterprise, Inc.
Berlinsky Scrap Corp
Bob Martin Auto Sales
Caring Hands by Kris
D’Arcy Automobiles
Des Rochers Backyard Pool, Inc.
Exquisite Carpet Care
First Midwest Bank
Fleckenstein Bakery
Gary S. Mueller & Assoc. LTD
Hampton Inn Joliet
Harrah’s Joliet Casino & Hotel
Harris & Harris, LTD
Howard Wright State Farm Insurance
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Joliet Tent Company
Joliet/Will County Project Pride
Kinzler Janitorial Services, LLC
LincolnWay Community Bank
M & M Bank
Michael’s Pizza
Midland States Bank
Nicor Gas
Old Plank Trail Community Bank
Parliament Builders
Plasti-Pak
Priority Staffing, Ltd.
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Rich’s Yamaha, Inc.
SERVPRO
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Three Rivers Association of Realtors
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TownePlace Suites Marriot
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Will County Housing Development Corp

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Aileen S. Andrew Foundation
BPOE #296
Ecolab Foundation
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George M. Eisenberg Foundation for Charities
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Heritage Corridor CAR
Joliet Kiwanis
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Louis Joliet DAR
Max Goldenberg Foundation
Mokena Mayor’s Charity Foundation
Ozinga Foundation
St. Margaret Mary Church
St. Mary Parish
The Home Depot Foundation
Tony DeRosa Foundation
United Way of Will County
INDIVIDUALS
Ron & Laurie Alberico
Michelle & Brad Allen
Jackie & Von Ray Barnes
Representative Mark Batinick
Reverend Dindo Billote
Paul Boetto
Reverend Dr. Lester & Beverly Brown
Paul Brown
Roger Claar
John & Deborah Cicero
Michele Des Rochers
Michael Dillon
James Dralle
Frank Fleischer
Elizabeth Franklin
Nancy & Fabio Franchi
Eli Geiss
Linda Gonciarz
Glen & Bonnie Ginder
Don & Cindy Gould
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Michael Hennessy
Jerry Keirnan
Gregory & Donna Jacobs
Ruth Kinzler
Ed & Sheryl Jaquays
Mary Lancaster
Cornell Lurry
Mary & Jim Maragos
James Martin
Geralyn & Richard May
Dave McClintock
Kelly Melone
Ken & Colleen Miller
Gary Mueller
Linda & Walter Pote
Kristine Ragusa
Peter & Janet Ragusa
Scott Reich
Santiago Rivoir
Mark & Anit Schneidewind
Karen Sorberro
Bob Soto
Dustin Trizzino
Mark Turk
Shawn & Amy Walsh
Tim Williams
Kris & Les White
Samuel Wyke
Howard Wright
Arne & Jeanie Young
Rita & James Zelko

MUNICIPALITIES
City of Crest Hill
Homer Township
Jackson Township
Lockport Township
Manhattan Township
Monee Township
Plainfield Township
Village of Bolingbrook
Village of Homer Glen
Village of Mokena
Village of Rockdale
Village of Symerton
Will Township
The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) provides core funding to local agencies to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and to empower low-income families to become self-sufficient. The Will County Center for Community Concerns’ CSBG funds help provide programs and services designed specifically to meet the needs of the Will County community. Certified Family and Community Development Specialists provide intensive case management to promote self-sufficiency in the family.

The following CSBG programs are available to WCCCC customers:

- **Back to School**: School supplies for children in need. In 2016, WCCCC helped 60 children have the supplies they needed to succeed in school.

- **Certified Renters/Fair Housing**: Provides education to low-income renters on fair housing rights, money management, budgeting, tenant responsibilities, etc. In 2016, WCCCC helped 228 individuals learn their rights and responsibilities as tenants and learn to budget properly for their rent.

- **Dental Assistance for Veterans**: Veterans can receive assistance up to $500 for dental care that will help prevent future health issues. In 2016, WCCCC helped nine veterans improve their dental health.

- **Economic Development/Work Readiness**: WCCCC staff work with customers to recruit and enroll them into work-readiness programs, employment counseling and career coaching, and permanent employment placement. Throughout 2016, WCCCC helped 51 individuals become ready to work.

- **Employment Support**: Assistance obtaining or maintaining employment by helping with childcare costs, transportation expenses, and work supplies. During the year, WCCCC helped seven individuals keep their job by helping with childcare costs or transportation expenses.

- **Emergency Assistance**: Assistance with overdue water bills and rent payments. In 2016, WCCCC helped 248 individuals keep their water on or their rent paid.

- **Financial Literacy**: Education program to help individuals learn about budgeting, money management, insurance needs, identity theft, credit repair, etc. In 2016, 32 individuals participated in this program.
• **Homeless Services and Homeless Prevention:** If an individual or family is on the streets or residing in an emergency shelter, transitional housing program, permanent supportive housing program, or rapid rehousing program, they may be eligible for assistance. This program ideally works to fill the “gaps” to help individuals and families overcome barriers to exiting homelessness. In 2016, WCCCC helped keep 10 individuals and their families from becoming homeless.

• **Homeless Case Management:** Services may include identification, employment, education, health and other related expenses for which resources are otherwise unavailable in the community.

• **Mortgage Assistance:** Assists with mortgage payments, mortgage modifications, and/or property taxes. Throughout 2016, WCCCC helped 21 people and their families pay their mortgage or property tax to ensure they would not lose their homes.

• **Nutrition Programs:** Funds are available for meals for seniors, holiday food boxes for families with children, and provides food boxes to other income-eligible customers. In 2016, WCCCC provided food for 354 individuals in need.

• **Prescription Drug Assistance:** Provides vouchers for prescription medications. In 2016, WCCCC helped 18 people get their necessary medications.

• **Scholarship Program:** WCCCC is able to offer scholarships up to $1,000 toward tuition, books, and supplies. WCCCC helped seven people further their education in 2016.

• **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA):** The agency has specially trained staff in order to offer free tax preparation and e-file services for households with income of less than $50,000 per year. For the 2016 tax season, WCCC helped 209 individuals and families prepare and submit their taxes accurately and on time.

• **Information & Referral:** WCCCC offers information and referrals to customers for other agencies and services within our community. Throughout 2016, WCCCC provided information and referrals for assistance to **over 3,260** Will County residents.
The Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP) is designed to help income-eligible Will County residents increase the energy efficiency of their homes, reducing their heating and cooling bills and increasing the comfort of their homes. Through IHWAP, participants receive heating system inspections (including repair or replacement of the furnace, if necessary), caulking, insulation of exterior walls and attic areas, weather stripping, and other energy conservation measures, such as replacement of old refrigerators with new energy efficient models. The Weatherization program is available to both homeowners and renters.

In 2016, WCCCC assisted 86 households through this program at a total cost of $688,360.05. It helped to keep their homes warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer and reduced their utility bills by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes.

As much as half of the energy used in a home goes to heating and cooling. Air leakage transfers heat into and out of a home and is one of the greatest causes of energy waste in a home, accounting for an estimated 25% to 40% of the energy used for heating and cooling in a typical house. Improving the energy efficiency of a residence can reduce the energy demand and may drastically decrease utility bills.

Housing Counseling

WCCCC has been a HUD-approved Housing Counseling Agency since 1993. WCCCC’s housing counselors meet with individuals and families to determine the best course of action and means of assistance for their circumstances. Households who are considering the purchase of a home have the option of participating in a class offered in a group setting.

The Housing Counseling Program provides counseling and education to homeowners and prospective homeowners on topics such as budgeting, property maintenance, insurance, landlord/tenant relations, mortgage default and delinquency, and other family and life skills.

In 2016, a total of 178 households received the following no-cost services:

- Loss Mitigation Counseling
- Pre-Purchase Counseling
- Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (Reverse Mortgage) Counseling
- Homebuyers Education Class
- Fair Housing Workshop
- Hardest Hit Fund
In 2014, WCCCC was awarded a $3 million grant through the National Foreclosure Settlement Award to mitigate the effects that the foreclosure crisis has had on Will County.

Through this program, WCCCC, the team lead in a partnership with the County of Will and the City of Joliet, acquires and demolishes or rehabilitates and resells foreclosed and vacant housing units in targeted areas of Will County. In addition to rehabbing and reselling homes, funds are used to identify and demolish blighted residential properties within the Joliet city limits.

In order to be eligible, potential buyers of properties through this program must be at or below 80% of the area median income as defined by HUD. To date, 27 homes have been purchased, rehabbed, and resold through this grant, including nine homes in 2016.

WCCCC staff assess each property prior to its rehabilitation and staff complete a final inspection of the work before turning the home over to its new owner. This grant also allows WCCCC to provide pre-purchase counseling to the new homeowners, as well as foreclosure prevention counseling and education.

The grant also has provisions for non-homebuyer activities such as emergency housing assistance, including first and last month’s rent, security deposits, and utility assistance.

The Foreclosure Settlement Program helps stabilize housing and has a positive impact on many households within our community.

**Holiday Food Baskets**

Each December, WCCCC’s Holiday Basket Program assists low-income families in Will County with children under the age of 17. WCCCC hosts participating families for an evening of holiday celebration where staff and volunteers greet guests, offer refreshments provided by local businesses, and provide each family with a generously filled food box that includes a frozen turkey, pantry staples, and all the fixings for a holiday meal. Each child also receives a visit with Santa Claus and an age-appropriate toy, a new winter coat, and hats and gloves. In 2016, this program provided a holiday meal to 125 families as well as toys and winter attire for 313 children.
“Because I went through the LIHEAP program, I was able to sign up for help through the Weatherization program, which I thought was a very smooth process. The people were very friendly and very helpful. You couldn’t ask for a better situation. I can tell it has made a big difference. At night, I used to have to set my thermostat at 78, sleep under two blankets, and also use a space heater. After WCCCC helped, I no longer use a space heater and my thermostat is set at 71 or 72, and I am comfortable with only one blanket. This program is phenomenal. The people I have met have been informative, helpful, and friendly. I used to work with a weatherization and housing program in Kankakee County. Although I was hoping never to have to use it, I am so glad it was there when I needed it. It has been a lifesaver.”

Jeffrey, WCCC Client
Energy costs can greatly stress the household budget and force families to decide between what bills to pay and what to do without. The Low-Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is designed to help low-income households pay their energy bills. Assistance is provided as a one-time direct payment to the utility provider. Reconnection assistance and furnace replacement is also available to households in need.

In 2016, 7,073 households received utility assistance through LIHEAP totaling $3,767,091. WCCCC also replaced the furnaces for 20 low-income households and the boiler for one low-income household, ensuring these families had heat in the winter while lowering their utility bills, and eliminating fire and carbon monoxide hazards. WCCCC also cleaned and tuned two furnace units which improved the operation and efficiency of these units.

ComEd Special Hardship Program

The ComEd Special Hardship Program helps income eligible families with certain special hardships. Special hardships include, and may not be limited to, medical bills, military service, disability, senior hardships, family crisis, property damage, loss of employment or income, or being the victim of a crime.

In 2016, 849 households were assisted through this program. A total of $398,322.74 in financial assistance was provided.

Emergency Food and Shelter Program

The Emergency Food and Shelter Program is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and distributed through local United Way offices. The program assists with feeding, sheltering, and providing critical resources to qualified households.

In 2016, assistance totaling $30,069 was provided to 216 households.
“There was a church group that was going to help me work on my house, help with painting and that kind of thing. When they saw my house, they said I needed too much work and they couldn’t come. My name was passed along to Will County Center for Community Concerns, and Raz from WCCCC contacted me. Raz came and went through the house and told me how bad of shape it was in.

My foundation was cracked, the floors were caving in, the plumbing was terrible, the hot water tank was in bad shape, and the electric was terrible. The main support beam of the house, which is 100 years old, was rotting out. The house was bowed in, and they told me it was going to fall in during the next couple of years if I didn’t get it fixed. The work was so extensive and so costly – I am on disability and could never afford to fix it.

I took care of my two brothers until they passed in 2003 and in 2011 and I took care of my father until he passed three years ago. I wondered when someone would take care of me, if God would do something good for me. I guess this is it. This was a blessing. I thank God every day for that phone call. The Lord was looking out for me, that is all I can say. Raz and WCCCC were looking out for me too.”

Vickey, WCCCC Client
WCCCC’s Home Repair Program provides necessary home repairs at no cost to income-eligible homeowners. An estimated 95% of low-income homeowners are unable to adequately repair and maintain their homes. Simple home repairs are unaffordable, yet repairs left undone can lead to unsafe living environments, code violations, and evictions. WCCCC’s Home Repair Program addresses this need and helps residents turn around their substandard housing conditions, comply with building codes, and remain in their homes, thus avoiding homelessness. This program is entirely funded through generous donations provided by grant funds, foundations, businesses, civic groups, and individuals.

Typical repairs include window replacements, furnace or water heater repairs or replacements, roof repair, gutter repair, replacement of gas shut off valves and gas pipes, and more.

In 2016, 14 homes were repaired at a total cost of $53,194.82, and nearly 150 homes have been repaired since the program was created in 2002, ensuring low-income homeowners and their families are able to remain in their homes, avoid homelessness, and live in a home that is safe and functional.

“AT TIMES OUR OWN LIGHT GOES OUT AND IS REKINDLED BY A SPARK FROM ANOTHER PERSON. EACH OF US HAS CAUSE TO THINK WITH DEEP GRATITUDE OF THOSE WHO HAVE HELPED LIGHT THE FLAME WITHIN US.”

ALBERT SCHWEITZER
Joyce became homeless when her first husband died. Michael had been homeless for a few years already and took Joyce under his wing. He said, “The homeless community knew me. As long as she was with me, no one was going to bother her.” They got by with a sign asking passersby for whatever they could spare. Michael said, “I have a bit of a background and have found it very difficult since I got out to find employment. When that stuff pops up, no one wants to help you. I was skeptical of WCCCC at first, because I am used to the world not really caring about us.” When Joyce got sick and had to be in the hospital, they decided to change their lives and came back to the WCCCC office for case management and help. WCCCC started by providing hotel assistance. “What really triggered it for me was when they assisted us in paying for that hotel room. I thought maybe there was something to this,” Michael said. WCCCC helped Michael and Joyce with housing, energy assistance, and with a St. Vincent voucher for household items. “When we first moved into our apartment, it was surreal to me. We didn’t have anything,” Michael said. Joyce commented, “We do laundry now. I vacuum and plant flowers outside. WCCCC changed everything for us.” Michael continued, “Now we have to pick up the slack ourselves and maintain it long term. That is what I am working on. I am so glad WCCCC exists. Without it, I don’t know where we would be right now. When you live your life hour by hour just trying to get by, you don’t know when you are going to eat next or where you will find your next shirt. WCCCC changed all that.”

Joyce & Michael, WCCCC Clients
WCCCC’s Homeless Services Program is designed to fill gaps in services for Will County’s homeless population. Our program offers case management, bus passes, clothing, prescription assistance, gas cards, food vouchers, employment training, and assistance with fees related to education, obtaining birth certificates, driver’s licenses, and ID cards. Last year, WCCCC served 682 individuals at a total cost of $47,502.83 through this program. WCCCC also assists households at imminent risk of becoming homeless by providing rental assistance, security deposits, and relocation/stabilization services for attaining permanent housing through our Emergency Solutions Grant Program.

In 2016, WCCCC helped 552 individuals and their families avoid homelessness by providing $194,435.85 in assistance.

**Will County Continuum of Care**

WCCCC administers the ongoing operation of the Will County Continuum of Care, a network of non-profit agencies, homeless service providers, community representatives, businesses, and elected officials collectively responsible for prioritizing, providing, and preventing gaps in the gamut of services needed to help the area’s homeless. The Continuum of Care is concerned with the broad issues surrounding homelessness in Will County, including education/support services, grants/funding, housing/plan to end homelessness, etc. The Continuum’s vision is to create a seamless, comprehensive system of services that prevents homelessness, supports the emergency and ongoing needs of the homeless, provides the tools necessary to sustain independent living, and leads to permanent self-sufficiency.

WCCCC also administers the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database. The HMIS database allows participating agencies to track the services provided to homeless individuals and families to ensure that they are accessing services as appropriate.

WCCCC, as the administering agency for the Continuum, is responsible for the HUD-mandated annual Point In Time count. On a select date, data on sheltered and unsheltered individuals and households is collected and submitted to HUD. Data is collected from shelters, police departments, municipalities, and social service agencies.

In 2016, the Will County Continuum of Care identified a total of 290 persons (242 sheltered / 48 unsheltered) within Will County who were homeless on January 27, 2016.

WCCCC, on behalf of Continuum member agencies, submits applications to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for funding to provide housing and services to our homeless population in Will County. Last year the Will County Continuum of Care received $3.7 million in funding from HUD to provide emergency shelter, permanent housing, and other services to this population.
Healthy Homes, Healthy Families

The “Healthy Homes/Healthy Families Expo” was held in October of 2016 with many families attending the event. This annual event, held at the Joliet Park District’s Memorial Stadium, provides Will County households with information on services and products that will help keep their families and homes safe and healthy.

WCCCC’s Housing Counselors were on hand at the event to answer general questions relating to housing or evictions, and Homeless Services staff offered information on affordable housing options and homeless prevention programs. General information on each of the programs and services offered by WCCCC was also available to all in attendance.

In addition, representatives of BMO Harris Bank, First Midwest Bank, and Old Plank Trail Community Bank were available to speak to homeowners about foreclosure prevention strategies, the foreclosure mediation process, and answer other questions from current or potential homeowners. Furthermore, the Northern Illinois Food Bank’s Mobile Food Pantry was on site to help augment the food budget of families who qualified for assistance.

Families in Transition

The Families In Transition event, co-hosted each spring by WCCCC and the Will County Regional Office of Education, benefits families with school-aged children who are at risk of homelessness or at risk of losing stable housing. Services provided by local organizations at this event include health screenings, vision screenings, dental cleanings, and haircuts. Local social service agencies are invited to attend and help families find the help they need to stabilize their households. Families also have the opportunity to shop for gently used books and clothing and are provided with hygiene kits full of personal care items.

WCCCC sponsors the attendance of the Northern Illinois Food Bank’s Mobile Food Pantry at this event so that families can receive fresh meats and vegetables, staples, and fresh baked goods.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Expo/Outreach</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/15/16</td>
<td>Kids Fair</td>
<td>Troy Middle School</td>
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<td>Abilities Fair</td>
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<td>11/17/16</td>
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<td>Fairview Community Center</td>
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## Let Numbers Tell the Story

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<td>Tenant Based Rental Assistance</td>
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## 2016 Financial Summary

### UNRESTRICTED REVENUES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Type</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Grant Revenue</td>
<td>$3,591,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Grant Revenue</td>
<td>$1,992,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Grant Revenue</td>
<td>$39,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest and Dividend Income</td>
<td>$864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>$30,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFS Program Income</td>
<td>$1,174,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>$283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Unrestricted Revenues</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,830,002</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense Type</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td>$6,219,029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and General</td>
<td>$524,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,743,184</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets</td>
<td>$88,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets: Beginning of Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>$909,940</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets: End of Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>$996,758</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mission of Will County Center for Community Concerns is to assist and enable low and moderate income individuals to obtain the opportunities needed to prepare themselves for self-sufficiency.

Will County Center for Community Concerns
2455 Glenwood Avenue
Joliet, Illinois 60435
815-722-0722

www.wccccc.net

Office Hours
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday
8:00am to 4:00pm
Wednesday
8:00am to 7:30pm

Applications Taken:
Monday through Friday
8:00am to 3:00pm

Will County Center for Community Concerns