



**CREATE OPPORTUNITIES.
REBUILD LIVES.**

1607 W. Howard Street
Third Floor
Chicago, IL 60626

773.465.5770
www.how-inc.org

*HOW empowers women,
children and families to break
the cycle of poverty and
homelessness.*



Up To Date

Winter 2018

In This Edition:

Home for the Holidays

Candy's happy ending could not have happened without you

HOW Client Meets Senator Dick Durbin

Desmond shares his story of advocacy

Volunteer Spotlight

Alvin Courts - volunteer super star helping HOW clients thrive



Home for the Holidays

Former HOW client celebrates another holiday season of joy

Like so many of us, Sandy is overwhelmed by the length of her holiday to-do list. "I haven't started shopping yet," she exclaims, "this time last year I was almost half-way done!"

A former HOW client, Candy grew up on the Northwest side of Chicago surrounded by violence and instability. Being exposed to drugs and alcohol at an early age, Candy struggled with addiction and homelessness and after many years on the street was incarcerated.

Upon release, Candy was reunited with her kids. At HOW, she discovered a stable home, and with the support of her case manager and unyielding drive to succeed, Candy thrived earning her GED, and securing her first-ever job at the age of 37 years-old.

Now, Candy continues to excel; she owns her own beautiful home and works as a Residential Program Coordinator for the YMCA where she is part of the Emerging Leaders program and is setting her sites on one day becoming a Program Director.

At the Falcon residence the holiday season is a big deal, "Every year my fiance and I host everyone, our kids, grandkids, siblings, nieces and nephews; it's crazy" she shares. Together the group enjoys a spectacular homemade meal made by Candy (who cooks traditional Puerto-Rican) and her fiance. At midnight on Christmas Eve every member of the family gathers downstairs to open gifts, "It's so much fun," she laughs, "but it's also loud and chaotic."



Candy and her fiance at HOW's 35th Anniversary Benefit

For Candy and her family, the holidays weren't always as care-free. She recalls her first Christmas living in a HOW apartment with her children, "I didn't have a lot of money and HOW came through big for me and my family. They provided gifts and really made us feel like we were not forgotten."

As Candy starts working through her massive holiday to-do list, she still remembers the days when it was focused less on gifts and decorations and more on surviving. "HOW gave us an apartment but they made it a home and made sure we had what we needed, and I'll always be grateful for that."

This year add "Donating to HOW" on your to-do list to ensure a happy holiday season and beyond for all HOW clients.

Another Year Comes to an End

Thank you for making it special.

As 2019 knocks on the door and we look forward to a new year full of opportunity, we want to take a moment to reflect on the organization's successes over 2018. **Even in our 35th year, HOW is still experiencing many firsts as we expand our programming, reach new clients, and grow as an organization**

With your help, we've had another record-setting year working with over 1155 clients, constructing our first-ever building from the ground up, and moving over 200 people into housing (thus far); we also expanded services with new programming and staff. We were thrilled to celebrate our 35th anniversary and raise over \$150,000.

The astounding success of these events would not have been possible without the overwhelming support of our donors, sponsors, volunteers, and advocates. Your support and contributions sustain HOW's programs and services to ensure our clients achieve housing stability and economic independence.

As an organization, the end of the year is spent running around to ensure the holidays are filled with joy for our clients but as we reflect on another year gone, it's important to let you know we truly could not have done it without you.



Thank you for your generosity.

A Meeting to Remember

HOW client shares his story with Senator Dick Durbin



Desmound and Senator Dick Durbin

During the season's first snowfall, Desmound sat in the warmth of his HOW apartment and took a deep breath. At this time last year he was homeless and staying in a shelter not knowing if he would ever have a place to call home.

In January 2018 Desmound came to HOW after qualifying for housing through the University of Illinois at Chicago's partnership with the Better Health Through Housing collaboration. **When HOW Case Manager Jamin Fox first handed him keys Desmound shared, "I think I started crying. I couldn't believe this was happening...that someone was actually trying to help."**

Since moving in, Desmound and Jamin have worked together closely and recently went to UIC to have a meeting about homelessness with Illinois' Senator Dick Durbin. During the meeting, Desmound shared his experience of homelessness and conveyed his gratitude for HOW and other programs that helped him get back on his feet. "It was a genuine conversation," said Desmound, "the Senator seemed to be really listening; I told him if it weren't for HOW, I wouldn't be here to have this conversation."

A current tenant and advocate for housing, Desmound is looking forward to the holiday season, "I'm going to keep pushing, and counting my blessings."

Volunteer Superstar Alvin Courts

Using his free time to make a difference



Alvin during one of his volunteer shifts sorting donated clothing.

After retiring from 45 years of working as an electrician, Alvin Courts began volunteering with HOW over a year and a half ago. **A Roger's Park native of 38 years, he enjoys working in his own neighborhood, "It's nice to feel like I'm helping out; it's what I should be doing,"**

Alvin's volunteer duties have expanded greatly since he started with HOW, and he now runs the bi-weekly fruits and vegetables pick-up, assists with in-kind clothing selection, and shuttles diapers from Evanston's Bundled Blessings to HOW's office. Alvin enjoys interacting with clients and is known to show extra care, helping each person gets the right article of clothing, or ingredients for a delicious meal.

A very humble man, he doesn't like to make a fuss about his work with HOW, "I think it's what you're supposed to do. If you have the time and the resources it just makes sense to give back," he shares.

Recently he expanded the impact of his work by getting his church (Roger's Park Baptist Church) involved in HOW's annual school supply drive. Walking around HOW's northside office, Alvin is a local celebrity, dishing out greetings and cheer to staff and clients alike. **His commitment to HOW is inspiring to many, but to Alvin it still doesn't seem like enough. "Once I'm in, I'm all in, but there is always more to be done."**

Looking to volunteer like Alvin? See open volunteer opportunities at how-inc.org/get-involved.

A Special Note of Thanks

We appreciate your generosity this holiday season!



With so much to be grateful for we'd like to send an extra dose of gratitude to those who are making the holiday extra bright for HOW clients!

- Ann Scott Montgomery
- Colorful Holiday
- Echoes of Chicago
- Evanston Women's Club
- HOW's Associate Board
- Praha
- ...and the many wonderful individuals and families donating gifts to HOW
- St. Rep. Kelley Cassidy
- Reva & David Logan Foundation
- U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services
- Wintrust Bank