



“Building for COP’s future..... Sowing the seeds of caring, harvesting hope for all”

Vision/Need

A new centrally located building is required for Isle of Wight Christian Outreach Program (COP) to grow as an organization so it can better serve those in need in Isle of Wight County (IOWC). The new facility will have the infrastructure (plumbing & HVAC), space to create program efficiencies, meeting rooms, a classroom and space to increase services that will positively impact those in need in new and different ways.

Mission

The purpose of COP is to help the poor, needy, unfortunate and sick in IOWC. A secondary purpose is to assist and encourage the youth in IOWC to develop life skills and positive values.

History

IOW Christian Outreach began 22 years ago. In 1991, Christ Episcopal Church, and Good Shepherd Catholic Church sold tickets for a “Souper Saturday” – a meal of soup, ham biscuits and desserts, with all proceeds going to the Isle of Wight Social Services Fuel Assistance Program which had been depleted for that winter. Later that same year, other churches were invited to join them for another “Souper Saturday”. Eight churches responded with all proceeds going to the Fuel Assistance Program. This has become a wonderful annual community event sponsored by the COP. After the second Souper Saturday, members of those participating churches met to discuss needs of the county that were not being met by other organizations. It was decided that the senior citizens in IOWC would be COP’s main focus along with youth-in-need. The name “Isle of Wight Christian Outreach Program” was chosen and COP became a 501(c)(3) in 1993. Home repair was the most urgently needed unmet service.

Living COP’s Mission

COP’s first housing project was definitely a “faith” project. A group of volunteers with a small amount of donated money came together to repair a home that had many needs. By the end of the day, floors had been torn out and replaced, tile put down, and the house was painted to the delight of a very grateful senior citizen. A very tired but satisfied group of volunteers wanting to make a difference had achieved their goal. Since that beginning, COP has grown to 10 programs that provide a wide range of assistance. COP continues to be an all-volunteer organization, many representing over 40 Isle of Wight churches. COP is also supported by benefactors and community events that have provided invaluable assistance to thousands of individuals in the county since 1991. Every dollar donated returns \$5.47 in goods and services.

Future

Thanks to the generous support of the IOWC Board of Supervisors long-term lease agreement with COP was finalized for the former 6,000 sf Health Department building at 402 Grace Street in Smithfield. This building will provide a centralized location and visible ‘home’ presence to provide services needed by county residents. The necessary renovations and relocation require \$600,000 in capital funds. This facility is essential for COP operations to increase distribution efficiency and to meet the growing demand for our services – now and in the future.

Please consider supporting this Vision.