How We've Grown!

2016 was a special year for OCO as we celebrated the agency's 50th anniversary. When President Lyndon Johnson announced his War on Poverty and the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was passed little did anyone realize the tremendous impact it would have on Oswego County.

From its humble beginnings in 1966, OCO has grown to become a vital resource for Oswego County. Today, OCO operates more than 50 programs that touch the lives of 20,000 individuals and families annually. As one of the top ten employers, OCO plays a major role in the county's economic health as well.

OCO has grown, thanks to a great vision that overcame many challenges along the way. I believe there are 3 key factors for OCO's success and longevity.

**OCO has stayed true to its original mission.** While the words have changed over the years, OCO programs have remained focused on preventing or breaking the cycle of long-term, generational poverty and the strong grip that situational poverty can have on someone's life. We've been helping people to build the skills, knowledge, ability, and the BELIEF IN THEMSELVES, that they can live differently.

**OCO has great partners.** We collaborate with other non-profits, schools, businesses, government and those we serve to develop solutions for what is best and right for the community and families. And our most important partners are those we serve. We work side by side with individuals and families, assisting them in achieving what they want to achieve. Our role is to help them get where they want to be in a safe and productive way.

**OCO has amazing employees and volunteers.** This is most important of all. Their can-do attitude, dedication and commitment to OCO’s mission is inspiring. Every day they - literally and figuratively - save lives. OCO selfless staff and volunteers give of themselves, their time, and their talent to care for the disabled, hungry, abused, homeless, and sick.

This is OCO! And, as we transition into the next 50 years, I trust that it will continue to be OCO: That the agency stays committed to its history, foundation, and mission; that it continues to value the strength of partnerships and develops new, creative partnerships to help achieve its mission; and, most importantly, that we continue to employ caring, committed hard-working employees and volunteers who believe in the value of those we serve and see people as strong and capable who have a right to, and deserve, a better life. This will CONTINUE to be OCO.
Our Mission

“OCO inspires partnerships and provides services that empower people, support communities and change lives.”

Our Vision

“It is the vision of OCO to be a leader in providing easy access to, and high impact, services that ensure people have resources to meet their basic needs, housing, transportation, health care and skills for employment and self-sufficiency. These high impact services are achieved as a result of OCO’s outstanding organizational capacity and operational excellence evidenced by its diverse fund development strategies, efficient systems, high standards, professional and dedicated employees, and effective collaborations with community partners.”
Community Services

Mission: To assist people in achieving their goals through diverse and comprehensive programs that provide outreach, crisis intervention, transportation, education & personal development.

Crisis & Development
315-342-7532
Assisting people in gaining safety, self-sufficiency and personal growth through preventative and outreach services, intervention for those facing violence or housing issues, and care management to help address education, job readiness, life skills, health care & independent living.

Education Services
315-598-4711
Providing classroom and community-based educational programs and services including Head Start Pre-K, extended-day and after-school programs for middle schoolers, and adult literacy, and day care. Family and community involvement is encouraged, and supports are provided.

Transportation Services
315-598-4713
Connecting Oswego County residents to needed services through weekday public transport along fixed & flexible routes, non-emergency medical transportation, Call-N-Ride for the elderly and those with special needs, and a curb-to-curb 24-hour reservation service.

Crisis & Development's Health Education program received a grant to purchase a Mobile HIV testing van, launched in fall 2016.

Public, medical, and scheduled-on-demand Transportation Services keep residents connected to jobs, services and community activities.

Children from toddler - 12 years enjoy hands-on learning and activity all year long; Education Services are offered for older youth, teens and adults as well.
Health & Nutrition Services

Mission: To promote and provide quality, accessible services that maximize resources and partnerships to enhance nutrition, health & wellness.

Health Services  
315-598-4715
Promoting health and wellness through reproductive health, enrollment in health insurance, cancer screenings, services to migrant & seasonal farmworkers, and supplemental food & nutrition for women, infants and children.

Nutrition Services  
315-598-4712
Supporting health and maintaining the independence and quality of life for county residents by providing meals and recreation for seniors through home delivery and regional dining & activity centers, and after-school & summer food programs for school-aged children 18 & under.

Top left: Valentine’s Day celebration at one of our Dining & Activity Centers
Top right: A few of our Reproductive Health Centers staff
Lower left: Human Pink Ribbon events held every October to raise breast cancer awareness
Lower right: WIC helps women, infants and children improve health through better nutrition.
Residential Services

Mission: To promote the highest level of self-sufficiency by providing transitional and permanent housing, with person-centered supportive services.

Developmental Disability Services

Housing, respite program and day programs for adults with a developmental disability.

Behavioral Health

315-598-4710

Housing for those with mental illness and those in recovery from chemical addiction, as well as providing permanent supportive housing for the homeless.

Top left: Respite House provides a safe and fun environment while family members are away

Top right: Day Hab activities are enjoyed by program participants.

Bottom right: Volunteers put on an annual holiday dinner to bring program participants together.

One of our homes
Prevention: Outreach services to educate, inform & support individuals who are vulnerable
- 13,517 connected to needed services as a result of prevention services
- 15,563 educated on risks/services related to health, safety & homelessness

Crisis Intervention: Help in a crisis or emergency situation that poses risk to life, health, and safety
- 1,444 gained safe and stable housing
- 1,897 in crisis received support through an OCO hotline
- 2,534 received emergency food, clothing, shelter, housing, safety & legal aid
- 4,338 decreased vulnerability through safety planning

Individual & Family Development: Improving skills that support goals for better living
- 59 unemployed people obtained employment
- 1,207 increased skills for education, jobs, social/emotional development & life
- 1,330 improved health and physical development
- 1,362 families improved parenting skills and family functioning
- 2,085 assisted toward self-sufficiency
- 4,105 vulnerable people stabilized lives and maintained independent living

Education: Services for preschoolers & families, youth & adults that include classroom instruction, after-school/drop-in programs & one-on-one tutoring
- 17 completed high school or GED and obtained diploma or certificate
- 35 adults increased literacy skills
- 244 children who participated in preschool activities were developmentally ready to enter the next educational level
- 358 children and youth increased academic and life skills

Health: Access and/or referral to care providers & programs that meet needs
- 6,549 uninsured were assisted in obtaining health insurance
- 11,766 obtained health care for themselves/family member to maintain stability

Housing: Helping the homeless & those at imminent risk for homelessness, and those transitioning from supportive living programs, to obtain safe, affordable long-term housing
- 97 experiencing long-term homelessness or a developmental disability received permanent supportive housing
- 181 experiencing homelessness, family disruption, chemical dependency, or a decrease in mental health received transitional living services; 101 of those moved on to safe, affordable housing

Nutrition: Access to healthy meals/support for good nutrition practices
- 7,084 infants, children, youth and adults experienced improved health and physical development due to adequate nutrition

Transportation: Affordable, accessible, and safe transportation that connects people to needed services
- 4,692 transported to nutritional/food, education, health care & wellness activities
- 184,258 passenger trips connected people to needed services across the county

NOTE: Numbers in BLUE represent increases over previous year

"I was having lunch in Oswego and wearing my OCO fleece. It sparked a conversation. The waitress lives in Fulton and several of her children went through the Head Start program. She shared that her daughter had such success as a result, is now in 7th grade taking AP courses and carries a 95+ average. What a fantastic conversation and yet another proud moment to be a Board member. Whenever I wear my OCO fleece, I am stopped by someone who shares a positive impact story."

- Deana Michaels
Board Secretary
OPTIONS bridges the cultural gap

We received a referral for a woman who was pregnant and spoke only Arabic. OPTIONS was able to provide an interpreter, and through three-way phone call was able to make sure that the consumer had everything that she needed before the baby was born, and to make sure she was aware of local resources available to her in the community.

HEAD START connects well with families

I attended the Literacy Event featuring "Pete the Cat" at the Oswego Head Start. My daughter is a huge fan of Pete the Cat and insisted we go. I am so glad we went. My daughter is very shy and so many of the staff members made a special point to talk with her and discuss Pete; it made her feel special.
FAMILY CASE MANAGEMENT: 'I have a sense of normalcy...'
I was trying to maintain life with no resources or support. I was really stressed out, I was scared. I was worried about my children, All I could think about was surviving. Since I have been involved with (Family Case Management), everything about my life is different. I have a sense of normalcy ... my kids are adjusted and happy and I also feel like I have grown as a person.

- Pennie A.

Retired couple volunteers in NUTRITION SERVICES KITCHEN
Frank & Linda work the morning shift Wednesdays at the Mexico Kitchen. "It makes us feel good that we have the opportunity to give back to the community," Linda said. OCO delivers 4,700 meals weekly to homebound seniors.

Frank & Linda making cookies
Oswego County Opportunities has a tripartite Board structure, which means one-third of its members shall be representative of the low-income population, either as low-income persons themselves or by individuals who are representative of the low-income sector; one-third shall be representative of the community; and one-third shall be composed of or appointed by elected officials in the county.

 Officers
President: Connie Coscento
Vice President: Holly Carpenter
Secretary: Deana Michaels
Treasurer: Ron Darrow
Past President: Joseph Caruana

 Public Officials / Designees
Terry Bennett
Holly Carpenter
Joseph Caruana
Connie Coscento
Ron Darrow
Judy Lester
Deana Michaels

 Low Income & Elected Representatives
Karen Paterniti
Cate Perkins
Lese Simard
Gidget Stevens
Olivia VanSanford
Carri Waloven
John Zanewychn

 Community Service Representatives
Jeff Coakley
William Lynch
Deana Masucica
Yvonne Petrella
Ted Sivers
Employees of Oswego County Federal Credit Union were honored for distinguished volunteer service at OCO’s annual consumer holiday dinner. From left: Brian Cummings, OCFCU vice president of branch operations; Aimee Gierum, vice president of lending; OCO Executive Director Diane Cooper-Currier; Oswego County Federal Credit Union Chief Executive Officer Bill Carhart; Mary Greeney, OCFCU vice president, lending; and Connie Cosernoto, OCO Board of Directors President.

Angel Gueroro was honored for distinguished volunteer service with OCO’s Head Start program. From left: OCO Executive Director Diane Cooper-Currier; Director of Education Services Beth Kazel; Gueroro; Head Start teacher Lauren Taverni; and OCO Board of Directors President Connie Cosernoto.

Brooke Capara, who could not attend the annual meeting, was honored for distinguished volunteer service donating time and gifts for OCO program consumers in need.

The 2015 Howard B. Wilcox Volunteer of the Year Award went to Robert “Bob” Branshaw, pharmacist at Wayne Drugs in Oswego. From left: Ellen Holst, OCO Sr. Director of Health and Nutrition Services; Mr. Branshaw; Elaine Briggs, OCO Financial Assistant; Patrick Waite, OCO Deputy Executive Director; Jo-Lyn Phillips, OCO Human Resources Generalist; and Stephanie Budd, OCO Human Resources Assistant.

The 2015 Amelia Whelahan Leadership Award was presented to Margaret “Meg” Henderson, coordinator of OCO Literacy Volunteers. From left: Henderson; Education Services Director Beth Kazel, Executive Director Diane Cooper-Currier, and OCO Board of Directors President Connie Cosernoto.
Planned Giving

Service on OCO’s 50th anniversary planning committee inspired Pamela Caraccioli to make a planned giving pledge. “OCO is on the front line when it comes to addressing poverty issues and providing services to the underserved. I discovered how vital a resource OCO is and thought long and hard about what Oswego County would look like should these programs go away," she said. “Pam decided to do a planned gift that would allow her to complete her donation over a number of years. It’s a wonderful way for community members to support programs that reflect their beliefs and values and ensure the future of those programs without giving a large outright gift,” said OCO Development Coordinator Margaret Barclay. “They are pleasantly surprised when they realize how far their gift can go regardless of the size.”

Pictured above, l-r, are OCO Executive Director Diane Cooper-Currier, Pamela Caraccioli, and Development Director Margaret Barclay.

Anonymous
AAUW
Alfred & Donna Allen
Mark & Stacy Alvord
Americar
Atom & Falecia Avery
AXA
Paula Baker
Barclay Damon, LLP
George Barclay
Harry Barclay
Will & Margaret Barclay
Diane Barnes
Beacon Hotel
Nancy Bellow
Terry Bennett
Big John Sales
Eric Bresee
Burke’s Home Center
Debora & Jim Burnell
Burritt Motors
Jeanne Byrne –
   In Memory of Linda Mills
Byrne Dairy – Syracuse
Pamela Caraccioli
Holly Carpenter
Joe & Irene Caruana
Mary Cay
Carol Chorley & Ed Polly –
   In Memory of Linda Mills
James Clifford
CNY Community Foundation Inc.
Gretchen & Jeff Coakley
Cold Springs Golf Course
Compass Federal Credit Union
Connie Cosemento

Dale & Diane Currier
Chuck & Betsy Copps
Ron Darrow
John DeRouzie
Mary Donovan
Eastern Shore Associates
James Eby
Eric Ehrhardt
Elms Golf Course
Emerald Crest Golf Club
Exelon
Mike Falise
Kathy Fenlon
Maria Fibiger
Fidelis
Foster Funeral Home
Fulton Management Services
Fulton Savings Bank
Betty Maute – Fulton Sunrise Rotary
Adam Gagas
Chris Gagas
Margaret Niland Glass
Glider Oil Co. Inc.
Greater Syracuse Association of Realtors, Inc.
Great Outdoors RV Superstore
Grossman St. Amour
Habitat for Humanity
Terrence Hammill
Chuck Handley
Margaret Henderson
Ellen Holst
Sarah Irland
Mike Johnson
Kane Consulting
Beth Kazel
Richard & Rose Kemmis –
   In Honor of Dr. Arena
KeyBank
Kinney Drugs Foundation
Kiwanis Club of Oswego
Lake City Police Club
Frances Lanigan
Judy Lester
Nancy Linn

For information on planned giving & pledge options, contact Barclay at 315-598-4717 ext. 1082, or at mbarclay@oco.org

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Thank You Very Much!

Lioness Club of Central Square
Lycoming United Methodist Church
Bill Lynch
Bruce & Ellen Manwaring
Deana Masuicca
Dennis McCarthy
Phyllis Megeed
Deana Michaels
Dave Mirabito
Mitchell’s Speedway Press
Modern Miss, Karen Borek
Nancy Morton –  
In Memory of Linda Mills
National Grid
Nelson Law Firm
Northeast Regional Council of Carpenters
Novelis
NRG Energy
Pafumi Fire Extinguisher
Rosemary Occhino-Pilawa
Patty O’Connor
POMCO
Office for the Aging
OneGroup
Oneida Nation Foundation
Oswego Country Club –  
Ladies 9-Hole Tournament
Oswego County Bookkeeping
Oswego County District Attorney’s Office
Oswego County Department of Social Services
Oswego County Federal Credit Union
Oswego Health
Pathfinder Bank
Patrick & Deborah Pelkey –  
In Memory of Tim Frawley
Yvonne Petrella
Jamie Poyneer
Renzi Food Service
Sandy & Jan Resnick
Rochester Cornerstone
Roofing Trade Services-Fulton
Joe & Amy Roszak
Rotary Club
Rudy’s Lakeside
Ann Schenk
Cindy & Brian Seeber –  
In Memory of Kevin Kazel
Constance Seiter
Seiter Law Firm
Richard S. Shineman Foundation -  
Kathy Barker
Floris Palmer
Thomas Schneider
Barbara Shineman
Spear USA
Steven Scott
Ted Sivers
Barbara & Morris Sorbello
Corte Spencer & Muriel Clark
Mike Stafford
Staples Foundation
Shane Stepien
Stone Creek Golf Course
Subaru of America, Inc.
Sunoco
The House Works
Rita Tickle
Time Warner Cable
Business Class
Todd Turner – MOWAA
Tops Friendly Market
Town of Schroeppep
Trinity United Methodist Church
Ultimate Software
United Way of Oswego County
Universal Metal Works
Valley Locksmith
Scott & Carol VanGorder
Village of Phoenix
Volney Elementary
Volney Multiplex
Patrick & Carol Waite
Carri Waloven
Greg Waloven
James Wassenaar
John Zanewych
Zonta Club –  
Kathleen MacPherson
Zonta Club of Oswego

$100,000:  
Susan P. Downey
A retired educator and Oswego native, Sue wanted to give back to her community by supporting the human service work of OCO.

$20,000: G&C Foods
Supporting OCO is part of G&C’s ongoing commitment to its community.

$10,000: Exelon
Exelon’s Gold Level Sponsorship of OCO’s 50th anniversary celebration.

Foundation Donations

$35,550 from  
Richard S. Shineman Foundation
Funding that helped victims of violence, cancer services, youth, and OCO’s general fund.

$5,000: Greater Pulaski Community Fund
Purchased assistive lift equipment for one of OCO’s residences for developmentally disabled adults.
OUTLOOK:
2017 & beyond

OCO continues to break down the many barriers of poverty, with a strong focus on safe, accessible and affordable housing for individuals and families, as well as services that address basic needs, crisis management, education, health and nutrition, chemical dependence, domestic violence, and programs for the developmentally disabled. OCO works with many local and regional partners to empower individuals and families to move from vulnerable and insecure circumstances and become stable and thriving members of our communities. Housing is a critical need for our county. OCO continues to actively cultivate partnerships and seek funding and development opportunities to meet this need and improve the quality of life in our communities. Transportation is another priority, due to the highly rural nature of Oswego County and the lack of access to basic needs for those without a vehicle.

There will be an increased focus on transitional services to assist clients as they move from highly supervised and managed programs or residential settings into a more independent lifestyle. Also, expect more emphasis not on number of people served, but on how well we served those numbers. OCO has wrapped up its 50th anniversary year, and now embraces a bright and future helping people, supporting our communities and changing lives.
OCO celebrated its 50th anniversary with several special events for employees, community leaders and the general public. In January a grant from the Richard S. Shineman Foundation helped assure the Call-N-Ride Transportation Program for the elderly and persons with special needs would continue serving these residents. In March OCO Health Services expanded to six locations by opening a new reproductive health services office in Central Square with office hours on Tuesdays.

OCO’s Head Start program held Family Literacy Night across the county in April, inviting parents and children to connect by reading together. The SAF Program increased awareness about victims of crime in April at its annual tree planting ceremony, held this year in Granby.

IMPACT, a 3-year grant program led by OCO which focuses on prevention of obesity, heart disease and stroke, joined forces with the Fulton Footpaths group in June to get people moving and celebrate the opening of the Canalview Bridge Walk. A donation in September by the Greater Pulaski Endowment Fund helped a home install a new assistive lift system for developmentally disabled adults.

In November OCO’s Health Education Program launched its new Mobile HIV Testing Van, thanks to a partnership with the Fulton School District and Cayuga Community College. December saw collection by OCO Nutrition Services of more than 500 Blizzard Bags filled with non-perishable meal and snack items that were distributed to home-bound senior citizens to use in an emergency; there were even some bags created for pets. And OCO was selected by the City of Oswego to facilitate its Anti-Poverty Initiative.

As 2016 drew to a close, the agency was honored by a $100,000 donation from Oswego native Sue Downey, who wanted to give back to her childhood community by supporting OCO’s human service work.

Now you know ... it's OCO!