

# PROJECT COPE

## CONGREGATION + OFFENDER PARTNERSHIP ENTERPRISE

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W I N T E R 1 9 9 0

### PROJECT COPE RECEIVES GRANT

The following good news (with check!) was received by Project COPE last November:

#### FOUR-STAR ACCOLADES!

Of all the congregations involved in Project COPE, Bonhomme Presbyterian Church of Chesterfield shines as an exemplary four-star participant:

- ★ Their COPE committee is engaged in their third partnership with an ex-offender.
- ★ Their Community and World Service Commission has contributed regularly and most generously to COPE's operating budget in addition to funding their own COPE partnership efforts.
- ★ One of their members has provided faithful leadership as an officer of COPE's Board of Directors.
- ★ Several other members of the congregation have contributed personally and generously to help meet COPE's budget needs.

Such commitment is what makes Project COPE work, and Bonhomme is to be highly commended for outstanding service and leadership. Thank you, Bonhomme!

Two other congregations similarly blessed Project COPE with four-fold participation during 1989. Special thanks and commendations go also to St. Joseph Catholic Church of Clayton and First Congregational Church of Webster Groves.

*"We are pleased to inform you that the employees of McDonnell Douglas through their Employees' Community Fund are contributing \$5000 for operating expenses. We wish you success with your fund-raising activities and commend you for the fine services you provide the community."*

Three cheers for the employees of McDonnell Douglas! Their generosity and good faith are tremendously helpful in assuring the continuation of Project COPE's support for ex-offenders.

Surely there are more such employee charitable funds around town. Surely some of you, our readers, are connected to similar programs at your places of work. If so, please contact the COPE office with information on how we might apply for financial assistance.

#### HELP! HELP! HELP!

Project COPE cannot survive and serve the community without the dedicated participation and financial support of many more congregations and individuals in the St. Louis area.

A six-hour program of orientation and training (which can be scheduled as one, two or three sessions) is available at no cost or obligation to anyone interested in considering Project COPE participation. Call the COPE office for more information and scheduling.



Rhonda and her children enjoy a Christmas party at the home of one of the members of her partnership group from Immanuel Lutheran Church.

\* \* \* \* WAITING \* \* \* \* WORKING \* \* \* \* HOPING \* \* \* \*

Anita is a 34-year-old mother of five children who has already served eight years in prison. As one of about 30 inmates on COPE's waiting list, she is hoping that some congregation in St. Louis will join Project COPE and choose her for partnership before she is released on parole next year. Meanwhile she shares this poem of encouragement.

*WHEN YOU FEEL ALONE*

*When you feel all alone, think of me  
and I'll be there.*

*When you feel that life is too hard to bear  
and your burdens are more than a few,  
look around. I'll help carry the load  
for you, and I'll listen.*

*When you feel that no one cares,  
remember I love you.*

Anita Conway

Three other inmates on COPE's waiting list recently received academic honors at the Farmington Correctional Center. Edward and Marcus earned their G.E.D.'s. Robert was awarded his A.A. degree from Mineral Area College. Congratulations!





Not yet matched with a partnership group, Terrill describes life at St. Mary's Honor Center to potential partners at a holiday reception.

One day after her release from prison, Holly shares a happy moment with members of her partnership group from Second Presbyterian Church.



ENRICHMENT WORKSHOP . . . "ISSUES IN CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY"

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20

9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Lunch will be provided

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ST. LOUIS

Westminster at Taylor

(parking lot west of church)

Bob Warbin is a member of the Society of Friends COPE Committee. He teaches undergraduate courses in psychology, counseling and chemical dependency at several local colleges. He has treated chemically dependent persons for the past 12 years and has directed two chemical dependency treatment programs.

Chemical dependency is a complex disorder that seriously affects all aspects of a person's life. This workshop will explore the central nature of chemical dependency, how to recognize it, how it is treated and how individuals must change their lives in order to maintain lifelong sobriety. Bob Warbin and Delbert Boone will provide basic information that should lead to fruitful discussion of the problems facing COPE committees when chemical dependency is a factor in their partnerships.

Delbert Boone is a recovering alcoholic and drug addict who served four prison terms before turning his life around. During the past ten years since that turning point he has won local and national recognition as a developer and leader of chemical dependency treatment programs.

TOGETHER WE CAN COPE!

Many years ago I picked up a button with a picture of Susan B. Anthony on it. I really liked that button, because I admired how she understood what was right and then quietly and with great persistence worked for it. I wore the button a lot, but at first I had a hard time answering when people would question the motto on it: "**Failure is impossible.**" How can that be true, when obviously people are always trying to do things, and not quite making it? At last I came to an explanation that made sense: you haven't failed if you haven't quit trying. That thought has helped me a lot in my work, and I'm grateful to Susan B. for bringing it to me.

This is the time of year when many of us are looking back on broken New Year's resolutions, often putting ourselves down for not being strong enough to carry through on a decision that seemed very simple back on December 31st. I don't make New Year's resolutions, but I did make a commitment back in October that had me downing myself long before the year's end. Though recognizing that this commitment would require a lot of energy, patience and rearrangement of my life, I had thought that I could pull it off serenely and cheerfully. In fact, if there were such a thing as Quaker sainthood, I would have been mentally standing in line. Well, we all know where spiritual pride lands us -- on the cushiony area at the bottom of the spine! It didn't take me long to recognize that I'm not Mother Theresa; and then I sat there, jolted and feeling crummy about myself.

Susan B. to the rescue! When I finally was able to think about it, I realized that failure **is** impossible, unless we do two things: quit trying, and fail to learn from our missed attempts. We need to learn that missed attempts are inevitable, but forgiveness is possible. We need to learn that there's more than one way to do a thing; and if we missed with our first method, we can choose a different method next time. We also need to learn that love is available, even when we've forgotten everything else and are sitting there, jolted and feeling crummy. These are all lessons we can hear or read about, but we need a missed attempt in order to really learn them.

So if you've broken a resolution -- if you drank or smoked after saying you weren't going to, if you spoke harshly to someone after promising you wouldn't, if you sat around reading or watching TV when you'd resolved you were going to exercise -- remember what Susan B. said. Learn what you can from your missed attempt. And, if it's really the right goal for you, and this is the right time to try, . . . go for it! **Failure is impossible.**

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