

## **The Counseling Center of the North Shore selects Thomas Applegate as its next Executive Director**

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The [Counseling Center of the North Shore](#) (CCNS), a nonprofit mental health center in Winnetka, IL, welcomes the appointment of Thomas Applegate as its new Executive Director, effective October 14, 2024. This milestone follows a successful partnership with nonprofit executive search firm [KEES](#). Applegate, who grew up in Winnetka, will guide the organization in fulfilling its mission to support individuals through life's challenges and transitions while also steering its future direction. Additionally, Applegate will lead and manage the organization with a dual focus on external areas including resource development, community engagement, and partnerships, along with internal responsibilities of fiscal management and team leadership.

Before joining CCNS, Applegate was the North River Commission Executive Director in Chicago. Over his nine years in this role, he achieved a significant increase in funding, which drove growth in community services and partnerships. He collaborated with hundreds of civic associations, businesses, and institutions to enhance the quality of life for all stakeholders in Albany Park. Earlier in his career, Applegate served as the Executive Director of Hostelling International Chicago, where he advocated for the nonprofit hostel's interests and built strong relationships within an international network of hostels, effectively engaging with public, corporate, media, and governmental entities.

"I am thrilled to join CCNS as its next Executive Director because I believe access to mental health treatment is essential for the well-being of individuals and communities," said Thomas. "Both my personal and professional experiences have strengthened my commitment to this mission, and I look forward to leading CCNS in making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve."

CCNS selected and retained KEES, a nonprofit executive search firm specializing in executive searches for top nonprofit executive positions such as Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director, and President roles, as its executive search partner in 2024. A comprehensive search was launched, and Applegate was ultimately selected from a passionate, diverse, and talented pool of finalists. CCNS's search efforts were led by a Search Committee including Board President David Grant and Committee Members Robert Baker (President, V.J. Killian Co.), Marnie Schmisek (Assistant Director of Donor

Relations and Stewardship, Loyola University Chicago), and Elizabeth Taylor (Market President, North Shore Community Bank & Trust – Winnetka).

“Thomas is an excellent choice for CCNS,” said the Board President David Grant. “His experiences and skills align closely with our key performance areas of Leadership, Management, and Partnership Building. We are excited to collaborate with him and leverage our collective community and organizational insights to shape and evaluate our priorities. As a native of Winnetka, Thomas has a deep connection to the community, and we look forward to seeing him use that shared pride to tell CCNS’s story and build meaningful relationships.”

Applegate holds a Juris Doctor from Indiana University in Bloomington, IN, and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in Urbana, IL. He is also a graduate of New Trier High School in Winnetka, IL.

“Thomas’ strong qualifications and collaborative spirit will lead CCNS to success,” said KEES President and CEO Heather Eddy. “His energetic and strategic approach, along with his executive experience, enables him to engage effectively with staff, volunteers, and community partners. Additionally, his background in retail operations and marketing will be an invaluable asset that will enhance CCNS’s impact. Congratulations to the entire board and team at CCNS on this appointment!”

### **About Counseling Center of the North Shore**

The Counseling Center of the North Shore (CCNS), based in Winnetka, IL, is a nonprofit mental health center with a mission of helping people through life’s challenges and transitions by providing access to counseling, therapy, and community education. With a commitment to fostering emotional well-being and mental health resilience, the Center serves clients of all ages and backgrounds, ensuring that everyone receives the support they need to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives. Among the enduring projects that CCNS has maintained through the years is the Winnetka Thrift Shop whose proceeds extend the reach of the Counseling Center’s mission. The Winnetka Thrift Shop is a cherished community institution dedicated to providing quality, gently used clothing, household items, and unique treasures at affordable prices. To learn more about CCNS, its mission and services, please visit their website [www.ccns.org](http://www.ccns.org).

### **About KEES**

KEES (formerly Alford Executive Search) is a nonprofit executive search firm that builds diverse teams and dynamic leaders in the nonprofit and public sectors. A woman owned and operated firm, KEES offers a full array of nonprofit consulting services, including executive search, leadership development, interim staffing, and HR support. For more information, please visit [www.kees2success.com](http://www.kees2success.com).

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KEES Media Contact:  
Jamie Sheffler, [jsheffler@kees2success.com](mailto:jsheffler@kees2success.com)

Counseling Center of the North Shore Media Contact:  
Thomas Applegate, Executive Director, [thomasapplegate@ccns.org](mailto:thomasapplegate@ccns.org)