



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

NEWS RELEASE

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LSSI Celebrates National Adoption Month; Offers Support Groups for Prospective and Adoptive Parents

November is National Adoption Month. Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) is working to raise awareness about adoption, adoptive families and children waiting to be adopted, as well as to support parents before and after adoptions occur.

Last year, LSSI helped 277 children find adoptive homes, including 216 who were adopted from foster care. The remaining 61 children were adopted through LSSI's infant, international or special needs adoption programs. "We celebrate all of these families and the commitment they have made to ensure that their children grow up in a safe and loving home," says Ruth Jajko, statewide director of Adoption Services at LSSI, which is a member of the Lutheran Adoption Network (www.lanadopt.org).

"All children deserve the stability of a loving, caring family," says Jajko. "When that cannot be achieved within the birth family, adoption is a wonderful alternative."

To help couples and individuals who are seeking to grow their families through adoption, LSSI offers support before and after adoptions. "Support groups for families waiting to adopt and those who have already adopted area available through LSSI offices around the state," says Jajko.

Both adoptive parents and those waiting to adopt may attend the meetings, which generally meet once a month or quarterly in the case of the Chicago group. "There's an educational part of the meeting," says Monica Johnson, statewide coordinator of LSSI's Post-Adoptive Services. "At each meeting, the facilitator presents a topic that relates to adoption or raising a child. The second part of the meeting is supportive; the parents and parents-to-be can chat, network and share information.

"This gives the waiting parents the opportunity to hear information from people who have gone through the process and are now raising their child," Johnson adds. She notes that parents involved in all types of adoption – infant, special needs, international, DCFS (Department of Children and Family Services) and non-DCFS – are welcome to attend the meetings.

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LSSI also is enhancing the training provided to families before they adopt through the use of a new curriculum, “Promises and Possibilities.” This training, written through a collaboration of the Lutheran Adoption Network, covers the developmental, cultural, social, emotional and medical needs of children adopted from around the world. All parents seeking to adopt a child are asked to complete this training during the preparation process.

After attending the training, one prospective adoptive parent said, “I know what to expect and hopefully can better respond to situations that I wouldn’t otherwise contemplate, and [the training] will make me more aware of adoption from a child’s perspective and the importance of preserving cultural heritage.”

Families who adopt children through LSSI have access to a wide range of post-adoption services. In all adoptions, LSSI prepares and supports adoptive families, birth parents and children through the adoption process and afterward.

For more information on how to adopt a child, call LSSI’s Adoption Services toll-free at 1-888-671-0300; or visit www.AdoptionIllinois.org. To learn more about the adoption support groups, contact Monica Johnson at 309/786-6400.

Founded in 1867, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) is a statewide, not-for-profit social service agency of the three Illinois synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. LSSI is an Illinois Licensed Child Welfare Agency (license no. 013005).

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