



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 9, 2007

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LSSI to Honor Dr. Peter Benson at 26th Annual Amicus Certus ('True Friend') Gala

On November 3, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) will honor Dr. Peter Benson, president of the Minneapolis-based Search Institute, at the 26th Annual Amicus Certus Gala. The event is hosted by the Women's Network of LSSI and will be held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Chicago. WGN broadcaster Orion Samuelson, 1996 Amicus Certus ("True Friend") honoree, will serve as master of ceremonies.

The Amicus Certus Award is given to individuals or organizations that have made significant contributions to the human community. One of the world's leading authorities on positive human development, Bensen is being recognized for weaving together rigorous scholarship with a passionate commitment to influencing society to be more attentive to children and adolescents.

"We are honored to present our Amicus Certus Award to Dr. Peter Benson, who has devoted himself to being a 'true friend' to children and adolescents through his studies," says the Rev. Dr. Frederick Aigner, LSSI president. "From the very beginning, LSSI has been dedicated to supporting and enriching the lives of children, and we are pleased to honor an individual who has focused his work on this important area."

Former Amicus Certus honorees include the late Paul Simon, U.S. Senator from Illinois; Anne M. Burke, Chicago Special Olympics founder; Rotary International; The Retirement Research Foundation; and The Erickson Institute. Last year, LSSI honored men's head basketball coaches Bruce Weber and Homer Drew of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and Valparaiso University in Indiana, respectively.

Amicus Certus Gala tickets are \$300 per person or \$3,000 for a table for 10, and may be obtained by advance reservation. Sponsorships are also available. Proceeds from this year's event will benefit LSSI's Telepsychiatry Program, which enables LSSI to provide psychiatric services to clients via videoconferencing technology. Using videoconferencing equipment, Dr. Chris Fichtner, a psychiatrist,

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is able to “meet” with adolescent clients at Nachusa (Ill.) Lutheran Home from a conference room in LSSI’s Des Plaines office. The program has been so successful in its first year that the agency is looking at the possibility of expanding the service into other rural areas in Illinois. Dr. Fichtner, who worked with LSSI to help establish and now expand the program, will be speaking at the Gala.

“Telemedicine gives us an opportunity to reach out to areas where there is an unmet need in mental health services,” explains Fichtner, who also consults with caseworkers at Nachusa about the status of clients’ medication and related issues.

For more information about the Amicus Certus Gala or to make reservations, contact Ed Newton at 847/635-4656, or Edward.Newton@LSSI.org.

Founded in 1867, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois is a statewide, not-for-profit social service agency of the three Illinois synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. LSSI’s services include foster care, adoption, pregnancy counseling, Head Start, child care services, services for at-risk families, residential services for youth, counseling, mental health, substance abuse treatment, residential programs for adults with developmental disabilities, housing and services for older adults and individuals with disabilities, nursing care and rehabilitation, and programs for prisoners and their families. For more information, visit www.LSSI.org.

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