



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

NEWS RELEASE

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LSSI Names Aigner, Hallberg as Presidents Emeriti

On June 15, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) honored two of its past presidents — the Rev. Frederick Aigner, Ph.D., (Arlington Heights) and the Rev. Donald M. Hallberg (Itasca) — at a special celebration at Marriott’s Hickory Ridge Conference Center in Lisle.

The two leaders were formally recognized as Presidents Emeriti of LSSI, honoring their work with the statewide human services agency. “Both have helped shape the vision of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, which is expressed so beautifully in our agency’s mission statement: ‘Responding to the Gospel, LSSI brings healing, justice and wholeness to people and communities.’ Know that we will keep your vision alive at LSSI as we move into the future. And your presence in the community will continue to reflect the vision and values that LSSI has stood for during the past 143 years,” said Eric Draut (Arlington Heights), chair of the agency’s Board of Directors, who presented both men with special crosses designed from the agency’s logo, an interlocking cross.

Hallberg led LSSI for 16 years, from 1980 through 1996, and Aigner was president from 1997 until early 2009. Under Hallberg’s leadership, LSSI made important advances, including expanding into the southern part of the state in 1998, starting the Cornerstone Foundation to endow the agency’s estate gifts to secure its long-term future, and opening the agency’s first Intouch Home Care Services office in Moline to serve seniors in their homes.

During his career at LSSI, Aigner worked to reaffirm the agency’s emphasis on “creating shalom” or God’s vision of well-being for the world, special funding initiatives and, in conjunction with the state’s three ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) Synods, launched Lutheran Advocacy-Illinois to promote just and compassionate public policies that strengthen the state and its people.

In his acceptance comments, Aigner spoke of the importance of LSSI’s services, saying, “I know of no expression of the church that is any finer, that carries the cross in the world like this. This comes into my life as an affirmation.”

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Hallberg said, “I was honored to be in the midst of the LSSI family to receive, along with Pastor Fred Aigner, the title of President Emeritus of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. I accept this honor on behalf of my LSSI colleagues, with whom I worked, and who took seriously the mission of LSSI to be the church bringing the cup of water, housing the homeless, bringing justice to all.”

The evening event was emceed by the Rev. Paul J. Olson, pastor of St. John’s Lutheran Church in Springfield. The Rev. Dr. Denver Bitner, LSSI’s current president, also spoke at the celebration.

“I stand on some mighty tall shoulders,” Bitner said. “What a wonderful foundation these two men have built and with so many others working with them. Every parade needs a bandmaster who makes that happen. You two have made good music.”

Founded in October 1867, LSSI is a statewide, not-for-profit social service agency of the three Illinois synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. LSSI serves people through an array of services at approximately 83 sites across Illinois.

For more information on LSSI, visit www.LSSI.org or its Facebook page.

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