



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 14, 2010

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LSSI Receives Two-Year Grant to Expand Services at Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center

The Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis recently presented Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) with a two-year grant totaling \$66,000 for the Southwest Illinois Prisoner and Family Ministry Project. LSSI, a Des Plaines-based social services agency, offers services for people who are incarcerated and their families through its Prisoner and Family Ministry programs.

“It is an honor to be in partnership with the Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis,” says Jane Otte, executive director of LSSI’s Prisoner and Family Ministry (PFM). “This foundation has enriched the lives of thousands through their philanthropic work in the St. Louis and metro East St. Louis area. They proudly and rightly carry the name of Lutheran and expand the work of the church. I am so pleased that the Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis is at our side to engage the community and to help the families struggling with incarceration.”

The project is working to expand current services to fathers incarcerated at Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center (SWICC). First, the grant will enable volunteers with LSSI’s Storybook Project to make digital recordings on CDs, rather than on audio tapes, of the books that the fathers read for their children. The CDs and books are then sent to the children. The switch to CDs is spurred by surveys of Storybook participants that said that more than 95 percent of their children would be better able to listen to CDs than cassettes because of the difficulty the caregivers have in finding cassette players for their children. As a result, LSSI has already moved to digital recordings at two other sites and plans to do so at SWICC as well.

Second, the grant will help to fund the creation of Storybook Link, a new program designed to improve the parenting and literacy skills of fathers who are incarcerated at SWICC. Storybook Link will be a part of the Illinois Department of Corrections’ Inside Out Dads, which is a 12-week

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course that offers two- to three-hour parenting classes for inmates. Story Link will add a new literary component to that program.

Finally, the grant will also assist in the building of an area network of social service agencies, correctional justice services, churches and other faith-based organizations. This coalition will work to provide community-based services to help released inmates transition to a life outside prison in the Metro East St. Louis area.

Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis is a local funder that “supports efforts to see the Church brought into the lives of hurting people included in the healing life of the Church.”

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. For more information, visit www.LSSI.org.

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