



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

NEWS RELEASE

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LSSI Encourages Community to Recognize Elder Abuse Awareness Day and Wear Purple on June 15th

June 15 is the fifth annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. To help create awareness of elder abuse, the staff of Senior Protective Services, a program of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI), in Sterling will be wearing purple. And the agency is asking members of the community to join its efforts by also wearing purple on this day.

According to LSSI, abuse and neglect of older persons is largely under-recognized and is not commonly talked about. "People aren't aware of the problem, because they don't know how to recognize it," says Emily Taylor, assistant director of Senior Protective Services. "In addition, it is sometimes difficult for first-responders or others to identify abuse. Society needs some sort of proof that these folks need help," Taylor adds.

Unfortunately, no community or country in the world is immune from this costly public health and human rights crisis. In fiscal year 2009, Senior Protective Services investigated 221 suspected elder abuse reports in Carroll, Lee, Ogle and Whiteside Counties. The investigations of suspected elder abuse in this four-county area found that about 31 percent of the victims were male and 69 percent were female. The victims were all 60 years old or older, with the medium age of an elder abuse victim being nearly 79 years old. The investigations also found that more than 80 percent of the reported abusers were relatives of the victims.

As defined by Illinois law, elder abuse consists of the following seven categories: physical, sexual, emotional, confinement, physical neglect, deprivation and financial exploitation.

If you or someone you know aged 60 and older is being abused, please call LSSI at 815/626-7333 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during the week, or call the Illinois Department on Aging's Elder Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-8966 anytime, 24 hours a day. All reports are confidential.

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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 Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, visit www.LSSI.org or LSSI's Facebook page.

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