



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 10, 2010

**CONTACT:** Jo Ann Dollard

847/390-1446

## **LSSI Receives \$40,000 Grant from ELCA for Foster Children's Program in Aurora**

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) recently received a \$40,000 grant from the Lutheran Services for Children Endowment Fund at the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) Foundation to act as "seed money" for a Steps to Life pilot program for foster children 5 to 10 years old who live in the Aurora area. LSSI, a social services agency based in Des Plaines, offers programs and services throughout the state, including the Rockford area.

Steps to Life, which is privately funded, will provide economically disadvantaged, high-risk foster children with group activities, educational sessions and weekly meetings designed to help them deal with issues and social problems in their homes, schools and communities. Steps to Life will seek to provide support to young children as they grow into the next phase of their lives and become teenagers. LSSI is the only agency offering such a specialized service to young children in foster care.

The program in Aurora will be modeled after the successful Steps to Life program in Chicago, Peoria and Champaign, which assists adolescents in their transition to adulthood. In that program, youth meet weekly and participate in a program with a life-skills curriculum based on motivational principles such as inspiration, perseverance, competence, responsibility and integrity. This program has resulted in decreased behavioral problems and increased family stability, and it is expected that a program geared for younger children will have similar positive results.

The ELCA Foundation exists to sustain and grow ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Through its nationwide network, the foundation supports and strengthens the ministry of congregations, agencies and institutions through financial education, resources, support and investment management services.

For more information on the Steps to Life program, contact Bill Franklin, associate executive director of LSSI's Children's Community Services, at 815/284-7796, ext. 2113.

- more -

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 (ELCA), as well as an agency of the United Way. LSSI serves people of all faiths through an array of services at 83 program sites across Illinois. For more information, call 847/635-4600 or visit [www.LSSI.org](http://www.LSSI.org).

###