



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT:** Jo Ann Dollard  
847/390-1446  
Carol VanderMey  
847/635-4604

## **Sept. 24 Josh Sycks Memorial Golf Classic to Raise Funds for LSSI's Substance Abuse Treatment Program in Elgin**

On Monday, September 24, the fourth annual Josh Sycks Memorial Golf Classic will tee off at the Orchard Valley Country Club in Aurora, in memory of a young man who died of a heroin overdose before he could get treatment. The event will benefit the residential substance abuse treatment program at the Behavioral Health Center in Elgin, a program of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI).

After their son Josh died from a heroin overdose, Randy and Sue Sycks of Geneva were determined to find a way to help other substance abusers obtain what Josh could not – a safe, secure place for treatment and rehabilitation. They wanted to find a way to help others avoid their son's fate.

"If we can spare another parent – or six parents – this anguish, we have achieved our goal," says Sue Sycks. "This problem is not going away, and help is even harder to find for this disease. This disease doesn't have any boundaries or social levels to follow; it can hit each and everyone of us in some way. We are grateful to our friends and business associates that [through this event] we are able to at least do something to ease the pain for some."

Over the past three years, the charity golf outing has raised a total of \$90,000. The cost of funding one bed at the treatment center is \$65,000 a year, so each year the outing has made it possible to fund a bed for approximately half a year – and that's six people a year who are able get the help they need.

LSSI's Elgin-based program, known for its successful residential treatment services, is the "second step" (after detox) for people who wish to come to terms with their addiction. After completing four-week residential treatment, individuals either return home, if it is an environment

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that is supportive to their recovery, or go to live at a halfway house or recovery home. The Elgin Center also offers a men’s halfway house on its premises.

“There is absolutely more need [for facilities like this one],” says Al Meginniss, director of the Elgin Center. He notes that for the past 15 years, programs such as this one have been disappearing. At the same time, the need for residential treatment centers has grown, fueled by the increasing use of drugs, particularly heroin.

In Illinois, an estimated 975,000 persons, age 18 and older, are directly affected by alcohol or another drug problem. Funding is available for only 8 percent of these persons. But treatment works. In a survey of clients who had been out of treatment a minimum of six months, LSSI found that 55 percent of its outpatient clients continued to be alcohol- and drug-free.

Today, a limited number of organizations provide residential treatment facilities. At one time, hospitals had their own treatment facilities, but in the 1980s, insurers decided they would no longer pay for treatment, and hospitals closed those units. Now, treatment centers are primarily funded by the state and Medicaid.

The fee for one person to play at the golf outing is \$250, which includes 18 holes of golf with cart; beverages, lunch and dinner; a gift and prizes; locker room privileges; and a live and silent auction. Non-golfing guests may attend the dinner and auction for \$50. For more information, contact Ed Newton at 847/635-4656, or at [Edward.Newton@LSSI.org](mailto: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 (ELCA), as well as an agency of the United Way. LSSI serves people through an array of services at 89 program sites across Illinois. For more information, visit [www.LSSI.org](http://www.LSSI.org).

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