"[The Men’s Residence West] is a gift," says Dean, an alumnus of an LSSI substance abuse treatment program. "I cannot thank LSSI enough. They saved my life."

“Our daughter has a chance [for] happiness, a healthful life, and to live up to her potential once again," says a mother, whose daughter lives at Washington Place, one of LSSI’s group homes for adults with Prader-Willi syndrome.

“I have two ladies who come in, and they are truly a blessing,” says Fred, a client of Intouch Home Care. "It’s like having a good friend stop by and help you out."

“A million thanks go out to you,” writes an inmate’s mother who rides the bus with her grandchild through Visits to Mom. “I am the mother of a … person who just once went the wrong way. Each visit [to prison to visit her daughter] lightens my heart."
Foster parents Shaun and Kim Bill adopted Tia and Keenan in May 2001, two special needs children they were fostering through Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI). Keenan and Tia, who are biological brother and sister, came to the Bill family with medical and dental problems, and a history of neglect. Shaun’s dad, Tom Bill, who was himself adopted at age 11, commented, “I witnessed two kids who were literally taken off the streets, who were abused and neglected, become two kids who are loved deeply. … I saw two kids who were willing to reach out and trust one more time in hopes of finding love and a place they could call home.”

Responding to the Gospel, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois brings healing, justice and wholeness to people and communities.
But the story didn’t end with Keenan and Tia. Chris came into the Bills’ home in October 2002 as a foster child, and Sophie arrived a year later. They were adopted in August 2005. All four children have a variety of special needs, having had very difficult beginnings. Now, they all are part of loving, stable family where they have an opportunity for a better, happier life.

LSSI provided the Bills with casework services and counseling services, and continues to be a resource to Kim and Shaun whenever they have questions or concerns. LSSI was also able to provide assistance for pressing medical and dental needs. “We’ve found the support we’ve needed to deal with any challenges that have come,” Kim says. “LSSI has been the key to the success of our family.”

No single story can capture the breadth and quality of services that Lutheran Social Services of Illinois provides for nearly 57,000 people each year who have nowhere else to turn. Every day across our state, thousands of families turn to LSSI: an elderly man who is losing his wife to the ravages of Alzheimer’s, the parents of a child with severe cerebral palsy, a young father struggling to overcome drug addiction, a teenage daughter longing to visit her incarcerated mother.

Many of these families and individuals are grappling with obstacles and challenges we have never faced, with none of the financial resources that we enjoy. Eighty percent of those served through LSSI live at or below the poverty line; more than half make less than $5,000 per year. They are members of our human community, our neighbors, our brothers and sisters. We may never meet them in person, but through Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, we can reach out to them with our help.

Across Our State

Since 1867, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois has followed the mandate of its mission: to respond to the Gospel by bringing healing, justice and wholeness to people and communities. LSSI is the expression of a central mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) — to care for those who are in need, regardless of their religious affiliation or beliefs. The vast majority of those who benefit from LSSI’s services are not Lutheran.

A Lutheran pastor started what would become LSSI by acting on his faith. Responding to an immediate human need, he raised gifts from the faith community to open a home in Andover, Illinois, for children orphaned by a devastating cholera epidemic.

Today, LSSI provides compassionate care through programs at 89 sites across our state that reach people facing hardships at all the stages of life. The programs are organized into five centers of focus that include the following services:

• Children’s Community Services — Adoption and foster care services and pregnancy counseling; support for intact and single-parent families facing crises; Head Start and child care; counseling for abused and neglected children and their parents; and residential treatment for teens with emotional, behavioral or substance abuse problems.

• Behavioral Health Services — A broad array of services that help people and families struggling with addiction and mental illness, along with life transitions and the everyday stresses of life; and services for people with developmental disabilities, including the only homes in Illinois for individuals living with Prader-Willi syndrome (a genetic disorder that results in compulsive eating and mental retardation), as well as individuals with mental illness.

• Prisoner and Family Ministry — Transportation for children to visit incarcerated parents; a story recording program that enables inmates to read to their children on tapes that are sent home to them; inmate training in job skills for the construction industry; and support services for women who are re-entering the community after prison.

• Senior Services — Help for people to allow them to live with dignity in the latter stages of life, including home care, adult day care, retirement communities and affordable housing; respite care for families; elder abuse prevention; and nursing and rehabilitation services.

• Affordable Housing — LSSI offers housing opportunities throughout the state for persons 62 years of age or older, and for persons who are disabled, improving the lives of individuals and strengthening communities through comfortable, attractive and safe living environments.

LSSI helps people — of all ages, races, incomes and religions — address important needs and make essential changes in their lives.
A common thread running through LSSI’s programs is an emphasis on fostering self-sufficiency. LSSI focuses on empowering those who receive its services to live better, healthier and more independent lives.

Among many social service organizations in Illinois, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois offers the broadest array of statewide services. For example, it is the largest provider of foster care services in the state, caring for 10 percent of all foster children in the Illinois child welfare system. LSSI’s programs reach 25 Illinois prisons and jails. LSSI is also well-known for its mental health programs and substance abuse treatment services. The quality of its programs has been recognized with the highest possible rating from the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services and with awards from organizations such as the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and Mutual of America.

Yet, the most compelling validation of the quality of services that LSSI provides is noted by the people who have received them. Lisa, who completed LSSI’s Intact Family Recovery program, says that besides the birth of her children, the program was one of the best things that has ever happened to her. “The program completely saved my life,” says Lisa, who is focused on maintaining her sobriety and making life better for herself and her children.

The mother of a severely handicapped adult child who resides at an LSSI care facility says, “Our son needs specialized care around the clock. I can sleep at night, knowing that so many people are giving him not just care, but tender, loving care.”

It is for thousands of families like these, and for thousands more who need services, that Lutheran Social Services of Illinois needs the support of philanthropic gifts. Without the support of gifts, the future for “the least among us” may be endangered by a lack of funding.

Waiting for a Lifeline

The numbers of our state’s poorest citizens who need help have been increasing steadily for several years and are likely to continue growing. According to the Illinois Poverty Summit, the number of Illinois residents living in poverty increased by more than 342,000 from 2000 through 2006 — from 10 percent of the state’s population to more than 12 percent.

According to data collected by the Summit, 85 of the state’s 101 counties reported increases in poverty from 2006 to 2007. Today, more than 500,000 children are counted among the 1.5 million Illinois residents who live in poverty. That growth has resulted in longer waiting lists for scarce social services, including many offered by LSSI. And the impact of poverty and unemployment on families reveals itself in other ways as well. For example, LSSI’s foster care caseload in southern Illinois has increased by 159 percent over two years, largely due to the methamphetamine crisis in the region. And in northern Illinois, the need for home care services for seniors has increased by 11 percent in the last year — and this need will continue to grow as the population ages.
For more than a generation, the state of Illinois has called upon Lutheran Social Services of Illinois to deliver many human services on its behalf. Over the past decade, however, the state has dealt with a succession of budget shortfalls by holding its rate of reimbursement to far less than the rate of inflation, and by postponing payments. This has significantly impacted Lutheran Social Services of Illinois’ ability not only to serve, but to develop important new ways of serving people in need.

The majority of LSSI’s revenue (70 percent) comes from government contracts to provide services to people in need. The remaining funding for LSSI’s services comes from private pay dollars, ELCA synods and congregations, the United Way, and a variety of contributors. However, as state funding has been chronically and significantly inadequate, LSSI must raise more voluntary support — upwards of 10 percent of its budget — to serve all those who come to us for help.

And yet, LSSI remains one of the most effective social service organizations anywhere, operating with overhead costs of only 10 percent, and making its service dollars go further by enlisting the help of hundreds of volunteers.

While poverty increases and state support falls further behind, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois is planning to better meet the needs of our neighbors. Guided by a strategic plan and compelled by its mandate, LSSI intends to expand crucial services to those who are waiting for a lifeline.

Over the next few years, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois will seek philanthropic partners to:

- Enhance and expand our nursing home services.
- Expand high-demand services, such as specialized foster care and programs of Prisoner and Family Ministry.
- Broaden the geographic area where LSSI offers mental health and substance abuse treatment services.

**Gifts Change Lives**

“I don’t know of many people who are not despondent over things that need to be fixed in society,” says Susan Olsen, an LSSI Cornerstone Foundation trustee. (The Cornerstone Foundation is the endowment fund for LSSI.)

“An individual can feel overwhelmed by all the unmet needs of people they would like to help. They want an organization they can trust to do good work for them and get results.

“People can trust LSSI,” Olsen says, “to deliver services for them at low cost, to be good stewards of their gifts and to translate their gifts into action.”

In spite of lagging state support and the corrosive spread of poverty in Illinois, there is hope for people in need. You can see your gifts to LSSI put to work meeting needs and rebuilding lives. With unprecedented support from farsighted donors, LSSI can greatly extend its

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**LSSI OUTCOMES**

- 81% of people reached by Behavioral Health Services demonstrate improved functioning in their daily lives.
- Children in LSSI Head Start programs exceed the Head Start National Average scores for improvement in skills.
- 71% of seniors reached by Intouch Home Care Services maintain independent lives at home.
- 4,209 children served by Prisoner and Family Ministry maintain contact with an incarcerated parent.
scope and the benefits of its work, helping more people to self-sufficiency, self-respect and well-being. Donors will see their gifts change lives through any of three applications:

• Meeting needs today through the immediate application of their entire gift.
• Investing for the future through an endowment gift that will assure that services are provided for the long term.
• Funding to build residential centers and other facilities where LSSI staff and volunteers can render care in nurturing environments.

These pages present data that demonstrate the profound impact that Lutheran Social Services of Illinois has on people’s lives. But the real impact can be seen in the hope expressed by people like Tyrone, who turned to LSSI’s detoxification program in Chicago, located at its Kenmore Center.

"After 10 years in prison, I thought I was ready to stand on my own in the world," Tyrone says. "A week after release, drugs brought me to the end of the world. I was ready to commit suicide."

Friends and relatives got Tyrone to Kenmore. After days of detoxification and counseling, he was ready to commit to a program of recovery. "I had given up, but people here made me feel like my life was worth something," he says. "I believe I can make it now with the help of God and this program."
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) provides safe, affordable and attractive housing for seniors and adults with disabilities throughout the state. Each of LSSI’s 19 housing sites is unique and has its own niche in the community where it is located. Under guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), rent is usually based on 30 percent of residents’ monthly income. In some of these communities, LSSI offers supportive living services to enable seniors and others to live in their own homes for as long as possible.

“I have lived at Meadow Ridge for over 10 years and find it very enjoyable to be here,” says Dorothy Ross. “We have a caring staff. I have a good social life with the other residents. It is so nice to be able to just walk down the hall to the laundry room, beauty shop, or upstairs to the library. Life has been easier [for me] at Meadow Ridge.”

Programs include:

- **Housing management** — offers apartments that feature a full kitchen, carpeting (bedroom and living room), individually controlled heat/air conditioning, resident emergency call system, cable access, on-site management and other amenities.

- **Social service coordination** — provides advocacy to aid residents in obtaining services and/or decisions that are favorable to them; enrollment in entitlement programs, insurance programs and other financial benefit programs; home management services to assist residents in maintaining their households; and homemaker services to assist residents in cleaning their apartments and to aid them in living as productive as possible.

- **Supportive living services** — offers wheelchair-accessible apartments with a large bathrooms and a kitchen with easy access to appliances; three meals daily plus snacks; laundry, housekeeping, assistance with personal care, medication monitoring, assistance with arranging transportation to medical appointments, social programming and activities, and a designated case manager.

Program Results:

- In FY07, LSSI provided safe, affordable housing services to 1,468 low-income seniors and people with disabilities — and their spouses and other family members — in 14 communities in Illinois.

- In FY07, LSSI social service coordinators at its housing facilities assisted 769 residents in enrolling in entitlement programs — such as healthcare, energy assistance and telephone discount programs — and virtually all residents were successfully enrolled. In addition, advocacy services were provided on behalf of 415 residents who had problems with benefit programs — such as Medicare’s Part D prescription drug coverage — and nearly all experienced a successful resolution.
• Social service coordinators assisted 258 residents in implementing strategies to manage their personal and financial affairs, and assisted 135 residents in applying for homemaker services.

“Immanuel Senior Residences is a lovely place to live,” says Florine Wallace, a resident of Immanuel Senior Housing in Danville. “My apartment is clean, safe, and the residents and staff are friendly.”
Through Behavioral Health Services, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) offers counseling, mental health and substance abuse treatment services, and services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Caring, trained and licensed professionals give guidance and support to children, adolescents, adults and families at outpatient and residential programs.

“The hospital saved my life after a suicide attempt, but LSSI counseling helped me [to] heal,” says one of the [West/Northwest Suburban] counseling center’s clients. “I can’t believe how much I have changed and how much better I handle my life since I have been coming to LSSI. I don’t know what I’d do without regular visits to my therapist. The caring support I receive keeps me going and gives me courage and the tools to make so many positive changes.”

Programs include:

- **Community-based counseling** — individual, family and group counseling for people dealing with a variety of problems, including marital and parenting issues, anxiety, depression, stress and abuse. Specialized therapy for children and adolescents who are experiencing emotional and behavioral problems is also available.

- **Substance abuse treatment** — Detox (non-medical environment); outpatient/intensive outpatient substance abuse services; HIV early intervention; Project SAFE (outpatient and intensive outpatient services for women with children); inpatient/residential substance abuse treatment; halfway houses/extended aftercare; and recovery homes.

- **Mental health programs** — outpatient, counseling, psychiatric evaluation and medication monitoring; Project Impact, which provides emergency assessment, evaluation and referral to treatment for persons with mental illness who are in crisis; case management services, short- and long-term; psychosocial rehabilitation, an outpatient program for people with chronic mental illness; Ayuda Latina, case management services for Spanish-speaking individuals; Project H.O.P.E. (Health, Opportunities, Planning, Empowerment), which focuses on helping youth with serious emotional problems make the transition to adulthood; and group homes for persons with mental illness.

- **Developmental disabilities services** — respite care for families caring for children or adults with developmental disabilities; group homes, including three specifically for adults with Prader-Willi syndrome; intermittent CILA (Community Integrated Living Arrangement) Services; and intermediate care facilities for adults with mental disabilities who need medical stabilization services.

**Program Results:**

- Project Impact serves people who are having a mental health crisis by connecting them with appropriate mental health services. Of the approximately 250 people a month — and 3,000 people a year — screened through this program, only 11 percent needed to be hospitalized at state psychiatric facilities. As a result, Project Impact helps to reduce overcrowding and re-hospitalizations at Chicago Read Mental Health Center. Thirty-nine percent of
the people screened were approved for admission to private facilities, while about half of those screened were referred to appropriate mental health and community services, inpatient and outpatient care, shelters and detox centers.

• LSSI’s substance abuse treatment programs assist people who are seeking to attain and maintain sobriety. In FY07, LSSI served 5,191 primary clients. Of those, 1,349 were served by LSSI’s Detox program, which often offers a first opportunity to engage clients in treatment. Detox also helps to prepare the person for the next level of recovery. LSSI also serves 2,686 outpatient clients, including those referred by the courts for DUI (driving while intoxicated) arrests. In addition, 711 clients were served in LSSI’s residential program, as well as an additional 445 clients who were residents in LSSI halfway houses.

• In FY07, through its community-based counseling programs, LSSI served 838 children, adolescents and adults, who were dealing with a variety of problems, including marital and parenting issues, anxiety, depression, stress and abuse. As a result of the group and individual counseling services, approximately 81 percent of clients experienced improvement in their ability to function in their daily lives. Another 15 percent of clients were able to maintain their current level of functioning in their daily lives.

“This program turned my life around for the better,” says Bill, who now lives at LSSI’s Fox Hill Group Home in Aurora and earlier, at Washington Place in Beardstown. “I have a new outlook — knowing my limitations, yet trying to ‘go for the gold.’ It helps to get over the weight problem and realize who we really are — to look past [Prader-Willi syndrome] and look for what’s inside.”
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) offers a variety of services for families with incarcerated loved ones and for inmates at 27 prisons and jails in Illinois. LSSI also provides services for previously incarcerated individuals who are returning to Illinois communities.

“Whenever I was feeling down or feeling alone or abandoned, I could pop that tape in and listen to my mother's voice telling me how much she loves me and how she was thinking of me,” writes the daughter of an inmate who participates in the Storybook Project. “I could never call my mom, so the tape was the next best thing.”

Programs include:

• **Connections** — re-entry services for previously incarcerated women making the transition back to the Chicago community; Visits to Mom, which provides transportation for Chicago children of incarcerated mothers and their caregivers and families to every prison in Illinois that houses women; Relatives As Parents Program (RAPP), a support group for caregivers who meet while children are visiting in the prison in connection with the Visits to Moms program; and Saturday Surprises, a once-a-month program for children of incarcerated parents, ages 6-11, that provides field trips and a dining experience with volunteers.

• **Building Homes: Rebuilding Lives** — a statewide collaboration between the Illinois Department of Corrections, federal correctional facilities, Habitat for Humanity and other not-for-profit organizations, that enables adult and juvenile prison inmates to create housing components for homes for low-income families; provides information about community resources to incarcerated persons; and helps formerly incarcerated persons connect with agencies that provide re-entry services.

• **Thursday Ministry** — works with churches to provide a devotion and craft day for prisoners at the Dixon Correctional Center; provides pastoral care at the Pekin Federal Camp for Women.

• **Storybook Project** — a statewide program that enables incarcerated parents to select books for their children and read the books onto audiotapes, which are then sent — along with the books — to the children.

• **Justice Education** — provides LSSI staff members to teach classes entitled “Restorative Justice and Ministry to those Incarcerated and their Families” at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa.

Program Results:

• The Building Homes: Rebuilding Lives program enhances the vocational programs at 17 correctional facilities in Illinois. In FY07, 748 men and 18 women participated in the program, which resulted in new homes for 74 low-income families. In addition, three men were sponsored at Habitat work sites upon re-entry, and two are now employed.
• In FY07, 821 children visited 336 incarcerated parents at six prisons, and the 441 relative caregivers who accompanied these children also had the opportunity for face-to-face contact with their loved ones. More than 200 caregivers attended the RAPP (Relatives As Parents Program) support groups provided at Dwight and Lincoln prisons. And 111 volunteers helped to strengthen family connections by transporting children and caregivers to prisons for visits.

• In FY07, volunteers assisted 2,934 incarcerated parents at 13 jails and prisons in reading and recording new books for their children on tapes, which were then sent to the children. As a result, 4,209 children received a new book and heard their incarcerated parents’ voices reading to them.

“My sister has told me [since my release] how proud she is of me. She knows that I am a go-getter. I am not going back to my old ways. It might take me a little more time to get where I want to go, but I want to do things right this time,” says Trina, who was served by Connections Re-entry program in Chicago.
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) meets the changing needs of older adults by offering a full continuum of services throughout Illinois. Community services are aimed at helping older adults maintain their well-being and independence in the community. In addition, LSSI offers other living options through its two market-based retirement communities.

“If I had ever imagined five years ago that I could be so lucky as to have you all as my grandfather’s caregivers, I would have been amazed,” writes Karrie Sim to the management at St. Matthew Center for Health, in Park Ridge. “The care here from nursing to social services, activities to [CNAs] has been more than I could have ever hoped for. … My children have grown up here – with all of you giving them examples of how important it is to treat our aging loved ones with respect and dignity. … It is with great pride I would recommend St. Matthew’s to anyone seeking a wonderful place for their loved ones.”

Programs include:

- **Senior Nursing Services** — offers 24-hour-a-day nursing services to older adults, providing care to meet their physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs; specialized Alzheimer’s/Dementia units; intermediate/skilled nursing care; assisted living; independent living; and outpatient and short-term rehabilitation (for individuals of all ages).

- **Senior Community Services** — Community Care Program; Choices for Care program; Case Management; Senior Protective Services; Intouch Adult Day Services; Intouch Home Care services; and Legacy Corps, which provides respite to caregivers of seniors and other loved ones who require constant care.

- **Retirement Communities** — offers retirement living in two communities: rental apartments at Forsberg Christian Retirement Community in Moline; and condominium, duplex and some single residences at Peterson Meadows Retirement Community in Rockford.

Program Results:

- In FY07, Intouch Home Care Services were provided to 1,272 clients, and by the end of that year, 71 percent of them were able to maintain their independence and continue living in their own homes in Chicago, Rockford and the greater Peoria area. The purpose of Intouch Home Care Services is to prevent the premature placement of seniors in nursing homes. Individuals are assisted in the activities of daily living, such as housekeeping, laundering clothes and meal preparation.

- In FY07, the average gains in ROM (Rehabilitation Outcomes Measure) scores that short-term rehabilitation clients made at LSSI’s two nursing care and rehabilitation facilities nearly doubled, with patients needing moderate assistance with performing the activities of daily living (at the beginning of rehabilitation) to only needing minimal assistance (at the conclusion of rehabilitation).
• For the grant year ending March 2007, LSSI’s Legacy Corps members served 177 respite clients in Boone, Winnebago and McHenry Counties, enabling 124 caregivers to alleviate their stress, attend to their own social needs and renew their energy. In addition, 47 former Legacy Corps/AmeriCorps members continued to volunteer and provide respite and other services in their home towns after their two-year Legacy Corps commitment had ended.

“Having [Intouch Home Care services] is the only way I can stay in my home right now,” says Leatha Shareef. “They clean the house for me and help with the laundry if I need it. Sometimes they cook [too].”
CHILDREN’S COMMUNITY SERVICES

Through Children’s Community Services, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) offers safe and loving homes for children in need through either foster care or adoptive services; supportive services for the families of foster and adoptive children; programs for at-risk families, as well as Head Start and child care for low-income families; and residential treatment for adolescents with emotional, behavioral and/or substance abuse problems.

“[Head Start] is needed in our community to help children to develop,” says Annie Robertson, a parent, grandparent and great grandparent of children who have attended LSSI’s North Austin Head Start. Head Start is needed, Annie says, “to help prepare [children] for kindergarten and first grade. Because we have so many underprivileged children and families, young mothers need a place where it's safe for their children to be.”

Programs include:

- **Adoption services** — infant, international and special needs adoption preparation and support; post-adoption and adoption preservation services; birth mothers support group (Peoria only); and pregnancy counseling.

- **Foster care services** — regular and relative foster care; and specialized foster care for children with special needs who have been abused or neglected and have serious medical, emotional and/or behavioral problems.

- **Family-centered services** — Intact Family case management services for families reported to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for some type of abuse and/or neglect of children; System of Care, which provides placement stabilization services for DCFS wards and foster parents; parent support services for young, single parents (Galesburg and Peoria); counseling services; crisis intervention services for youth; services for youth on probation; intensive outpatient services (group and individual therapy); and educational support services (Rockford and Champaign).

- **Residential services** — Alternatives to Detainment, an alternative to juvenile detention centers; and adolescent inpatient substance abuse treatment.

- **Community child care** — Head Start programs at five neighborhood sites in Chicago for pre-school children of low-income families; and child care for children of working parents.

Program Results:

- In 2007, LSSI served 3,119 clients in its foster care programs, enabling 525 children and adolescents to achieve permanency through reunification with their families, adoption and subsidized guardianship. Permanency, whether it is with a birth family, foster family or relative caregiver, is the goal for all children in foster care. Achieving permanency means that children have a secure, stable family where they can develop, thrive and have a sense of belonging. LSSI consistently reaches benchmarks for permanency outcomes through its foster care services.
• Of the 265 Intact Family cases closed in FY07, 67 percent of the families remained together, with the children remaining in the home. In 9 percent of the cases, the children were placed in foster care, and the remaining children were sent to live with relatives. Families are referred to LSSI by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) because of problems, such as alcohol or drug abuse, domestic violence or neglect. The goal of the program is to keep families – parents and children – together, rather than placing the children in foster homes. To do so, Intact Family Services caseworkers work with families within their homes to try to develop solutions to problematic issues, such as financial or job-related problems, substance abuse, anger management or other parenting issues.

• Children in LSSI’s Head Start programs exceeded the Head Start National Average scores following their first and second years in Head Start, with average scores typically ranging 5-10 percentage points above the national average. The children increased their comprehension of spoken directions, vocabulary, letter recognition and early math skills, which are critical skills to prepare them for kindergarten and first grade. And by helping them to be better prepared to succeed in school, Head Start helps children to take steps toward building a strong future.

“Adoption doesn’t just touch the heart of a person; it touches the soul. … You have to experience it firsthand to know its depth, to know its joy, and to feel, once again, you belong to a family,” says Tom Bill, whose son and daughter-in-law have adopted four special needs foster children.
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