As the women residents at the Healthy Start Recovery Home gather for a peer-led self-help group, their camaraderie fills the room. This type of support is crucial for individuals determined to maintain a sober lifestyle.

A program of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) located within the Kenmore Center on Chicago’s north side, the Healthy Start Recovery Home assists men and women who are actively seeking to obtain or maintain a drug- and alcohol-free lifestyle. The women’s housing opened in April; the men’s in July. Residents can stay up to a year and typically come from a 28-day treatment program, a detox program, or have relapsed in their sobriety.

“Our Healthy Start Recovery Home is important to our clients’ sobriety because they need a safe living environment where they can integrate back into society,” said Program Director Frank Harris, who noted that the need is great for these services. “They can ‘practice’ living sober at the recovery home, and it helps them stay engaged in treatment.”

Photo: Recovery Home roommates LaTessa and Jessica.

(Continued on Page 4)
Quilts have a cherished history across the United States. Robert Stone, a child welfare specialist in LSSI’s Rock Island office, had a creative idea to use quilts to help children in foster care share their legacy.

“The goal of the quilting project is three-fold,” Stone explained. “Create awareness, interest potential foster parents, and provide empathy for the situations many children in foster care experience.”

Stone partnered with the Foster Care Alliance, a group of five Quad Cities organizations, including LSSI, that provide foster care services. Children in foster care served by these groups decorated a quilt square illustrating their experiences and emotions. Some squares show colorful drawings with the child’s name. Others feature a decorated saying, such as “Don’t limit your challenges, challenge your limits.”

The final result—three quilts pieced together by local quilting guilds now being displayed throughout the Quad Cities.

“Foster children are in the community, at the public schools,” Stone said. “Many individuals who see the quilt will be able to think of a child in foster care they know and hopefully empathize with them.”

The quilts can be found throughout the Quad Cities for the remainder of the year. For more information on how to view the quilts, or about the project, visit LSSI.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Putnam Museum, Davenport, Iowa</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr. Center, Rock Island, Illinois</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Family Museum, Bettendorf, Iowa</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>Black Hawk College/Festival of Trees, Moline, Illinois</td>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Quad City Botanical Center, Rock Island, Illinois</td>
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Roaming Quilts
by Robert Stone

Can you hear my patchwork song
Asking you where I belong?
Finding pieces torn and thrown,
Living fabric to be sewn.

A family comes by joy’s design,
Tell me please where is mine?
Through paint and color I will cope,
Waiting with a child’s hope.

By caring hands my world is pieced,
Each stitch and tuck and love released,
Bringing purpose to my voice,
My misplaced life was not my choice.

Comfort me in wrap of love,
Shelter me from storm above,
Until I know a stable home,
I will sing on quilts that roam.

All children deserve a loving family, and a safe place to call home. Through its foster care program, LSSI strives to ensure that there are licensed and dependable caregivers for children in foster care. For more information on foster care services, visit LSSI.org.
Dear Friends:

LSSI recently began its fiscal year on July 1, and it was a relief to know that after two years, our budget calendar coincided with the passage of a state budget in Illinois after a two-year impasse.

Having a budget does not mean we’ll be able to re-implement all of the programs that LSSI closed as a result of the budget impasse—what’s done is done. But, there might be opportunities for growing some of our services in areas where we had to cut back, and that’s encouraging.

The budget impasse necessitated a restructuring at LSSI more than a year and a half ago, a move that while painful, helped us gain a more stable financial footing. In that time, we have been able to expand some of our mental health services in Chicago, and we were selected by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services as a pilot organization for therapeutic foster care. We also examined new ways to deliver services, resulting in the opening of our Healthy Start Recovery Home that is profiled in our cover story.

Throughout our 150-year history, committed volunteers have been crucial during challenging times. Also featured in this newsletter is long-time volunteer, Eric Draut, who has helped us navigate through some of those times.

October 31 marks LSSI’s official 150th birthday. It’s not often organizations reach such a milestone. Thanks to the faith and support of donors, volunteers, and our talented staff, we have much to celebrate!

In Faith,

Mark A. Stutrud
President and Chief Executive Officer

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**Always Moving Forward**

**A LETTER FROM THE CEO**

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**EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH, CARBONDALE**

**Faithful Commitment to LSSI**

It is amazing how one congregation can have such an impact on the life of LSSI’s ministry. Epiphany Lutheran Church, Carbondale, is one such church. Its members provide passionate support to a vast number of LSSI’s ministries.

This support comes in many forms. Members of Epiphany have provided support for children and family programs in the area, are an integral volunteer contingent for LSSI’s Prisoner and Family Ministry, and have served as members of the Women’s Network and Cornerstone Foundation. In addition, congregation members support LSSI through philanthropic gifts.

Epiphany’s generosity of time and talent is exemplary, according to David Novak, LSSI’s Vice President of Advancement.

“I am grateful for their generosity we see every year with much needed annual support,” said Novak. “I am uplifted by Epiphany friends who have served LSSI’s Cornerstone Foundation and have remembered LSSI in their estate plans. Their prayers and encouragement fill my heart.”

Marcia Anderson is one of Epiphany’s congregants who found a passion in support of LSSI’s Prisoner and Family Ministry. A former librarian and professor at Southern Illinois University, Anderson helped develop and now teaches a curriculum to train returning citizens in essential employment skills. As a result, multiple congregation members volunteer with the program.

“In so many ways, Epiphany helps LSSI respond to the Gospel,” Novak said. “Quite simply, LSSI is a better place thanks to Epiphany’s faithful commitment to our ministry.”

Photo: Epiphany member Marcia Anderson with a graduate of LSSI’s Employment Skill School.
VOLUNTEER PROFILE: ERIC DRAUT

Called to Serve LSSI

Eric Draut’s service to LSSI was honored this past spring with a position that fits his commitment—Chairman Emeritus of LSSI’s Board of Directors.

A member of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, Arlington Heights, Draut was asked to join the board by former LSSI President Pr. Fred Aigner. One year on the finance committee turned into 11 years on the board, including eight years as chairman that concluded in June 2017.

“Eric is a tireless, gifted leader and volunteer who has generously given of himself in over a decade of service to LSSI,” said Mark Stutrud, LSSI President and CEO. “We are most grateful for his concern and love for the neighbor.”

For Draut, serving as Executive Chairman came at an opportune time when LSSI faced a convergence of challenges.

“The state was not paying its bills, we weren’t getting rate increases from the state, and with the general decrease in funding to social service programs by society, we had to make some big changes,” Draut said. “The nicest thing anyone ever said about me was ‘We didn’t know what were supposed to do and then God sent us Eric.’”

Draut sees his volunteer service to LSSI as both a calling by God and a way to use his professional skills to move the organization forward. Illinois recently ended a two-year budget impasse that affected LSSI. Draut was proud of the teamwork by LSSI’s Board and senior management team. “We were able to restructure LSSI’s operations, placing the agency on solid financial ground,” he said.

Draut’s commitment to LSSI hasn’t waivered—he plans to stay involved with the organization, adding, “There are a few projects that I’m involved in where I can help.”

LSSI thanks Eric for all that he has done and will continue to do.

Eric Draut received the 2014 President’s Call to Service Award in recognition of his service to LSSI.