Children in foster care who have experienced severe trauma or have severe emotional and behavioral needs face many challenges. It’s often hard to find a foster home placement that can meet their needs and sometimes are placed in an institutional setting. Therapeutic Foster Care provides more intensive support for these children so they can thrive in a family home.

LSSI, one of the largest providers of foster care in Illinois, recently was selected by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) as a pilot organization to provide therapeutic foster care services. The pilot is part of a DCFS initiative to place children with histories of severe trauma and emotional/behavioral needs in family homes while avoiding institutional settings.

LSSI’s Therapeutic Foster Care Program will comprise teams of dedicated, innovative, and highly trained clinicians, caseworkers, and specially trained foster parents. These teams will work with individual children ages 6 to 14, during a six to nine month period using intensive treatment to help them develop the skills needed to thrive.

(Continued on Page 4)
In addition to the Therapeutic Foster Care Program profiled on page 1, LSSI provides other programs for children in foster care across Illinois in offices located in Aurora, Champaign, Chicago, Marion, Peoria, Rockford, and Rock Island.

LSSI’s foster care services provide placement and case management for children who have been removed from their birth families due to abuse and/or neglect. LSSI collaborates collectively with birth families to reunite children whenever possible. When it is not, children may achieve permanency through adoption.

Medical specialized foster parents care for children with conditions such as diabetes, shaken baby syndrome, HIV/AIDS, cerebral palsy, or children who are equipment-dependent. In the Chicago area, LSSI also works to provide emergency foster homes when needed.

LSSI provides continual training, licensing, and services for foster families. Foster care services are provided throughout the state.

For more information about LSSI’s foster care services, information about becoming a foster parent, or videos highlighting LSSI’s programs, visit LSSI.org or Youtube.com under “Lutheran Social Services of Illinois.”

Wanting to grow their family, Sheri and Chris Allen of Tremont became foster parents when their children were seven and three. Chris said they knew being foster parents was “a route we’d go down.” It’s a road the couple has navigated for the past 10 years, fostering seven children. Along the way, they adopted twin boys, now six, who were placed in their home during infancy.

December 18 was one of the coldest days of 2016, but much warmth was generated inside LSSI’s Des Plaines office. Fueled with hot chocolate, the Genesis Ministry from Grace Lutheran Church, LaGrange, sorted children’s items donated to LSSI throughout the holiday season.

“Thanks to the volunteers from Grace, we sorted the items efficiently to get them to our young clients,” said Joy Medrano, Director for Volunteer Engagement.

In just two hours, youth and family members sorted 75 bags of children’s items for kids and families involved in foster care, Intact Family Services, and Head Start preschool.

Genesis Ministry coordinator Keith Vedmore describes it as “a mix of teen worship, youth group, and confirmation rolled into one” that works to keep youth ages 12 to 18 engaged and active. Service is a large component. Vedmore notes Genesis serves “here (Grace Church), near (surrounding communities, such as LSSI), and far (yearly mission trips, sponsoring a child).”

“We spend time at the end of worship talking about our opportunity to serve and why it is important,” Vedmore said. “I’d encourage other groups to lend a hand as well.”

To get involved with LSSI, send us a note at Info@LSSI.org or contact Susan Greeley at 847.635.4653.
Dear Friends,

LSSI’s founding 150 years ago is rooted in child welfare—when a cholera epidemic struck families in Andover, Illinois, the community responded by creating the Andover Children’s Home to care for children who lost their parents. A leader in child welfare services, LSSI has expanded services over the years to include adults and seniors. This issue of Inspired focuses on LSSI’s programs in foster care.

LSSI is one of the largest providers of foster care services in Illinois, serving approximately 2,500 children each year who are placed in foster care. In this leadership position, we hope to influence the state of Illinois and its Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in the integrated redesign of child welfare.

How does this work? It’s using LSSI’s experience in the area to influence new or different approaches to services and working collaboratively with the state on programs that can demonstrate promising change.

LSSI’s new Therapeutic Foster Care Program, profiled on page 1, is one example of how we’re working with the state of Illinois to improve services for children in foster care. LSSI was chosen as a pilot organization to provide these evidence-based services as part of a DCFS initiative to place children with histories of severe trauma into single family homes rather than institutional settings.

While much has changed since the Andover Children’s Home opened its doors in 1867, LSSI’s commitment to boys and girls entrusted in our care remains strong. Thank you for your support that allows us to continue our mission.

In Faith,

Mark A. Stutrud
President and Chief Executive Officer
Pedal for a Purpose

Congregations throughout the Central/Southern Illinois Synod will participate in the 5th Annual Pedal for a Purpose, a bike-riding fundraiser held throughout the spring that this year will benefit LSSI. Over the last four years, 77 cyclists have biked more than 1,217 miles to visit 44 congregations and raise over $95,000 to support ministries including LSSI, and several Central/Southern Synod-specific causes, including Lutheran Campus, the Madagascar companion synods, and seminary debt reduction.

The goal of the 2017 Pedal for a Purpose is $50,000 for LSSI’s Prisoner and Family Ministry and Children’s Community Services. There are many creative ways that congregations can participate! An information packet with suggestions and resources to help congregations plan their own “Pedal for a Purpose” event is available at www.csis-elca.org.

Events

Saturday, April 29, 2017
3rd Annual Forget-Me-Not Spring Fling
The Westin Chicago Northwest
400 Park Boulevard, Itasca
Boutiques open at 10 a.m., lunch at noon
Tickets: $75 each, Students $45
Invite a friend or two and join the Women’s Network of LSSI for boutique shopping and lunch. This year’s event will feature a local florist creating beautiful designs, while sharing floral tips and ideas for any occasion. Proceeds benefit Children’s Services at LSSI.

For more information, call Barb Hailey at 847.635.4686 or email Barb.Hailey@LSSI.org.

Sunday, May 7, 2017
Good Shepherd Sunday
On Good Shepherd Sunday, many Illinois congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) celebrate their shared social ministry with LSSI. For more information on how your church can participate, contact Susan Greeley at 847.635.4617 or Susan.Greeley@LSSI.org. Information also is posted on LSSI.org.

Tuesday, May 9, 2017
Lutheran Day, Springfield
For more information visit LutheranDay.org.

SAVE THE DATE Saturday, October 7, 2017
36th Annual Amicus Certus Celebration
Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago

For more information on all of these events, visit LSSI.org.

Pedal for a Purpose

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God’s work. Our hands.
BBB
GuideStar
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois does not discriminate in admission to programs or employment in compliance with the law.

SAVETHEDATE SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2017
36th Annual Amicus Certus Celebration
Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago

For more information on all of these events, visit LSSI.org.