"And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

—HEBREWS 10:24-25

LSSI Foster Parents: Important Advocates for Families

Mentorship and helping children have always come easily to Dr. Evisha Ford Sills and her husband Robert Sills. Becoming foster parents was something the pair discussed early on in their relationship.

Shortly after they were married, Evisha and Robert began the process to become foster parents. They first attended an informational meeting at LSSI’s Augustana Open Arms office in Chicago, and then worked to obtain their foster parent license. The entire process can take about three months.

“Everything moved so quickly,” said Ford Sills. “We began the licensing process in January, and by March Josiah came to us. Eleven months later Ryan* was born, and Nolan came along not too long after that.”

The Sills’ experience has been unique in more ways than one. Having three boys join a family in such a short period of time is quite unusual, especially as they all came to the Sills immediately after they were born.

They’ve encouraged everyone involved in their experience to grow from it. A critical aspect of foster

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)
Central Illinois resident Dr. Mary Frisk Loken has always taken a grassroots approach in her 60-plus years of dedication to LSSI. She has served all over the organization—on the board, as a member of the Women’s Network, a Cornerstone Trustee, and a Cornerstone Society Member.

Loken, a Ph.D.-trained educator and member of Peace Lutheran Church in Springfield, vowed to visit a program in every section of the organization when she was President of the Board of Trustees in the mid-1980s. She was a consultant for several of LSSI’s children's programs including Augustana Home, which served children with multiple disabilities.

“When thinking about LSSI, the theme of ‘God’s work, Our hands’ comes to mind,” Loken said. “I was proud of serving with a hands-on model, gaining response and input.”

**“When thinking about LSSI, the theme of ‘God’s work, Our hands’ comes to mind.”**

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**IMMANUEL MANOR RESIDENCES, DANVILLE**

**Nurturing Community**

The holidays are filled with memories of home, many of which are tied to the best treats and sweets made with friends and family. This past holiday, residents of Immanuel Manor, a LSSI senior housing residence in Danville, shared the joy of the season by baking cookies and giving them to community members.

Residents came together on a wintery afternoon in December to swap recipes, mix batter, and be merry. They created a plethora of treats, including sugar, chocolate chip, and toffee cookies.

Cookies in tow, the group then visited Danville first responders—police, fire and the ambulance companies—to show their appreciation for their commitment to the community.

“It’s so good to have our residents out in the community,” said Brenda Mourer, Immanuel’s Social Service Coordinator. “The Danville area does so much for them. This was a great way to give back.”

The day also brought about great stories and fond memories of Christmases past, with residents remembering how they baked with their children or even as children themselves.

Mourer enjoys events that allow residents to show appreciation to the community but also strengthen the community they have amongst themselves at Immanuel.

“Immanuel residents enjoy opportunities to visit and build community,” Mourer said. “Baking for our first responders helped get everyone together and socialize.”

Immanuel Manor is one of 20 affordable housing developments owned or operated by LSSI in Illinois. For more information, visit LSSI.org.

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**GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH, DOWNERS GROVE**

**Committed to Social Justice**

When asked why she and members of her congregation, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, support LSSI, Marianne King has more than one answer. First, she starts with the church’s faithfulness.

“The congregation’s commitment to social justice is Gospel-based,” said King, who is also a member of LSSI’s Women’s Network, as are several other women from Gloria Dei. “LSSI responds to that need and serves the neediest citizens in the state. That’s why we choose to celebrate and support LSSI.”

LSSI has received financial support from Gloria Dei’s endowment fund, and members have supported a variety of programs. Support from Lutheran congregations across Illinois have been integral to LSSI’s 150 year history.
For most of you, 2018 probably began among family or friends, maybe even in your own home; a place where we feel a sense of permanence and fulfillment.

LSSI not only begins a new year, we begin a new chapter following our 150-year anniversary. Home and community play an important role moving forward.

LSSI moves from not just serving individuals but to helping them construct their lives; from treating a person’s symptoms to helping them heal; from addressing not just compartments of a person’s life but to viewing our work from a whole person perspective.

This is already happening, of course, but will have a greater focus as we move ahead. You see it within the stories profiled here: residents of our senior housing in Danville fostering their own fellowship as they support first responders at Christmas; Evisha and Robert Sills not only promoting foster parenting as they nurture children in their care, but finding ways to support those children’s biological mothers as well.

Our future will approach the whole person in ways that result in their lives becoming generative, meaning they in turn have the dignity of contributing to their home, community, neighborhood, and family.

Our Lutheran tradition of welcoming the stranger, creating community, and helping people construct new lives continues to steadfastly guide us. Thank you for your support that allows us to continue our mission and chart a course toward the next 150 years.

In Faith,

Mark A. Stutrud
President and Chief Executive Officer
THE CORNERSTONE SOCIETY

A Lifetime Commitment and Legacy

Mary Loken (see article on page 2) has a long history of commitment to clients and staff at LSSI. She stays active on the Cornerstone Foundation Board and committed a planned gift as a member of the Cornerstone Society.

The Cornerstone Society was founded as a way of thanking friends who have made plans to support LSSI’s mission through a planned gift. For more information on how you can become a member of the Cornerstone Society, please contact David Novak, Vice President of Advancement at 847.635.4671 or online at LSSI.giftplans.org.

Thank you for your generosity this past holiday in making the season so much brighter for the families that we serve. Because of your compassion, over 1,000 children and their families received gifts, coats and/or winter boots this Christmas. The response from churches and businesses was overwhelming. These families wouldn’t have been able to provide such items for their children if it had not been for you.

We know that at the holidays the need is great, and we also know that there are many places for you to give. That is why we are thankful that you chose to support Lutheran Social Services of Illinois; this small act of kindness has made a long-lasting impact not only to our clients, but on the staff as well.

For more information, contact Mariah Heinz at 847.635.4656 or Mariah.Heinz@LSSI.org.

Events

Please mark your new 2018 calendars with the following important dates and check LSSI.org for more details.

Tuesday, April 6
Compassion on Tap
Revolution Brewing
2323 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago

Sunday, April 22
Good Shepherd Sunday

Saturday, April 28
Spring Fling presented by The Women’s Network
Westin Chicago Northwest, Itasca

Tuesday, May 8
Lutheran Day, Springfield

Saturday, October 6
37th Annual Amicus Certus Celebration
Honoring ABC Chief Meteorologist Ginger Zee
Union League Club, Chicago

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For more information on becoming a foster parent, visit LSSI.org.

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