



INTACT FAMILY SERVICES

Helping Parents Bring their A-Game

Anyone who is a parent can identify with the stresses inherent with the role and that a network of support is essential to ease the intrinsic challenges of raising children. Two programs at Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI), Intact Family Services and Intact Family Recovery, provide vital support to parents who have few people to turn to at a crucial time when their children are at risk for abuse or neglect. The voluntary programs are important safety nets for vulnerable families, many grappling with challenges like domestic violence or trauma that are exacerbated by poverty and lack of basic needs, such as food and housing.

Part of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and administered by nonprofits like LSSI, the programs help families reported to DCFS for suspected abuse or neglect. Part of the program's success hinges on LSSI caseworkers building trust with families. "We strive to provide the same level of service we would want if the client were a member of our own family," said Intact Senior Supervisor Julie Hanson, LCSW.

PHOTO: MIKE WATSON

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Inspired

We welcome this in every way and everywhere with utmost gratitude.

—ACTS 24:3

Responding to the Gospel, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois brings healing, justice, and wholeness to people and communities.

 Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

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FAITH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH,
GLEN ELLYN

Congregation's Generosity Supports LSSI Program for At-Risk Foster Children

Social ministry thrives at Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Glen Ellyn congregation works with a local food pantry, participates in community organizing, and supports a group of Myanmar refugees who call the suburb home. Now they've added Steps To Life, an LSSI program to help at-risk children in foster care, to their roster of good works.

"The people here really capture the vision that God has intentions for the world. It is our calling to enact those intentions," said Faith pastor Rev. Jim Honig. "God's work gets done in the world through God's people."

Fueled by an anonymous donor this past Advent season, Faith rallied support for LSSI's Steps to Life program. The anonymous donor offered to match the congregation's gift, up to \$2,500, to help underwrite the program's cost for the year.

Foster Parent Ron Guhl and LSSI Associate Director Ruth Jajko gave testimony about LSSI to congregants. Members of the Congregation gave \$1,700 on the first Sunday. By the end of Advent, Faith had raised \$5,600 – \$8,100 total with the challenge match – far surpassing any gift made in their history.

Thanks to everyone at Faith for the tremendous support for Steps to Life and LSSI's foster care programs. If your congregation would be interested in a similar program fundraiser, please contact us.

PHOTO: ROB AUSTIN

HOMeward BOUND

Starting a New Life

Formerly incarcerated individuals – returning citizens – often have difficulty finding the simplest forms of security when released from prison. Everyday amenities such as housing, employment, and even toiletries are not readily available for them.

To address these challenges, LSSI's Prisoner and Family Ministry created the Homeward Bound program in 2011 to help returning citizens find housing and adapt back to life outside of prison.



Richard Sellers lives in one of five LSSI Homeward Bound homes.

Spurred by a generous donation, Homeward Bound now owns five homes—two are currently being remodeled—that house nine clients. One of the homes is dedicated especially for veterans, with another house in Cairo slated to serve as a second veteran's home.

While living in the homes, returning citizens are taught skills to obtain employment through LSSI's Employment Skills School, attain sustainability and self-sufficiency, and learn the importance of becoming a contributing member of society. Residents are expected to pay rent—roughly a third of their income—and the average stay is approximately one year.

"LSSI gave me a place to live when I had nowhere to go," said resident Timothy Trandel. "They offered me opportunities to be a better man and father."

To learn more about Homeward Bound and its expansion, visit LSSI.org.

PHOTO: DENNY DONALDSON

STEWARDSHIP: LSSI is accredited by the Better Business Bureau and is a Silver Shield holder with the GuideStar Exchange. This is achieved by a deep and rigorous review of all of our policies, our financial documents, and our reputation for doing business with integrity and transparency.

10¢ of every dollar LSSI spends goes towards administrative costs.

The remaining 90¢ is used to provide services to those in need.

“LSSI helped me regain my life. LSSI has been there for me.”

—Melissa Allen, Returning Citizen



Intouch Home Care: Since 1981, LSSI has been offering home care services for seniors in need of assistance to help them safely remain in their homes as long as possible.

98% of survey respondents credit Intouch Home Care with helping them to stay in their home.

Estate Planning Resolutions

People often include creating or updating an estate plan as part of their New Year's resolutions. A will is an easy and effective way for people, after they are gone, to provide for their family while assuring assets are distributed to charities that are meaningful to them.

For those who wish to make a bequest to LSSI, the following language can help when working with an attorney on a will:

“I give, bequeath and devise \$_____ of my estate/trust to Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI).”

A bequest also can be made as a percentage of one's estate and can be directed to a specific LSSI ministry.

The Cornerstone Society recognizes individuals and families who have made a gift to LSSI through their estate plans. For more information, visit LSSI.org.

Valuing Kindness and Dignity

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first issue of *Inspired*, the bi-monthly newsletter of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI). This publication's title may be familiar to you, as it was the name of our quarterly magazine. We've changed the frequency and format to keep you even more up-to-date on the people, issues, and events important to LSSI.

Last year, LSSI served 73,000 people, from infants to seniors—that's one in every 176 residents of Illinois! Together, we have the great privilege of serving others throughout their lifespan. Your support inspires us—and enables us—to live out our mission to bring healing, justice, and wholeness to people and communities across Illinois.

LSSI Intact Family Services caseworker Kayla DuBouis exemplifies LSSI's mission. “It makes a big difference to have a worker who takes the time to get to know and understand our families and treat them with respect instead of judgment,” she shared. “Just on a human level, some of our families don't have a lot of people in their lives who treat them with kindness and dignity and take the time to really listen to them. That's a really rewarding part of our job, to show our clients that there are people who are caring and genuinely want to help them.”

Whether it is an LSSI employee, a congregation, or a client we serve, this newsletter illustrates the passion and commitment these individuals have in their work, their ministry, and their desire to bring positive change in our world.

In Faith,

Mark A. Stutrud
Chief Executive Officer



PHOTO: ALLEN BOURGEOIS

EVENTS...

Wednesday, April 14, 2015

Lutheran Day (Springfield)

Join Lutherans from across the state in study, prayer, and action for greater justice and compassion in Illinois. For more information, contact Joy Medrano at 847.635.4653 or Joy.Medrano@LSSI.org.

Sunday, April 26, 2015

Good Shepherd Sunday

For more information on how your church can participate, contact Susan Greeley at 847.635.4617 or Susan.Greeley@LSSI.org.

Saturday, May 2, 2015

Forget-Me-Not Spring Fling

The Westin Chicago Northwest, 400 Park Boulevard, Itasca Boutiques open at 9:30 a.m.

Tickets: \$75 each, Students \$45

Grab a friend or two and join the Women's Network of LSSI at this new tradition featuring boutique shopping, luncheon, and a special one-woman performance of *Act Your Age!*, written and performed by Beth Urech.

For more information, call Ed Newton at 847.635.4656 or email Edward.Newton@LSSI.org.

SAVE the DATE: Saturday, Nov. 21, 2015

34th Annual Amicus Certus Celebration

Union League Club, Chicago

Mark A. Stutrud, Chief Executive Officer

Maryann L. Aimone, Vice President, Advancement and Executive Director, The Cornerstone Foundation

Donna L. Barber, Vice President, Human Resources

David M.A. Jensen, President/Chief Operating Officer

Gerald E. Noonan, Vice President, Chief Financial Officer

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EX OFFICIO

The Rev. Wayne N. Miller, Bishop,

Metropolitan Chicago Synod,

ELCA

The Rev. S. John Roth, Bishop,

Central/Southern Synod, ELCA

The Rev. Gary M. Wollersheim

Bishop, Northern Illinois Synod,

ELCA



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois does not discriminate in admission to programs or employment in compliance with the law.



Serving All Generations of Veterans

LEGACY CORPS VOLUNTEER MELISSA PETKOVIC



Melissa Petkovic visits Jack, a Korean War veteran, every week. "He acts like he's 65, when he's actually 85," Petkovic said. "He is a very successful businessman, so I read his bills and help him with contracts."

Petkovic's work with Jack is through LSSI's Legacy Corps, which provides respite for veterans and military families. She is a veteran herself, having served in Japan, Kosovo, and Hungary from 2001-2006.

After earning degrees in political science and education, Petkovic realized her passion was working with veterans as a social worker. She is completing a Master's degree in older adult studies and volunteering with Legacy Corps.

Petkovic began working with new veterans to help them gain employment. She saw first-hand the importance of these services. "We're giving hope to a lot of people," Petkovic said.

Petkovic's ultimate goal is to work with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. For now, she continues learning about older vets like Jack, while keeping her mind on the younger generation as well.

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Intact Family Services provides parents with needed support while looking out for the safety of children. Parents receive case management services and referrals to a variety of community-based resources, as well as guidance from individual caseworkers, all while keeping the family together, thus minimizing trauma for children. "I tell parents, 'We're going to get you on your A-game,'" said Rebecca Koeppen, MA, LPC, Child Welfare Specialist, Intact Family Services. "Our program helps families to be the best parents they can be."

Ashley Rule, an Intact client and mom to five, has benefitted from Koeppen's support. With her husband working full time, Rule acknowledged the stress inherent in parenting. "Parenting is not easy," she said. "To have the support that Rebecca and Intact provide is amazing."

Intact Recovery Services provides similar support in households where infants have been exposed to drugs in utero or where abuse/neglect is suspected due to drug use.

"I am in awe of things parents are working toward to give their children a better life," said Kayla DuBois, MSW, Child Welfare Specialist, Intact Recovery. "Some people are breaking generations of dysfunctional behaviors."