“Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.” —1 JOHN 3:18

School-Based Counseling Gives Students a “Step Up”

Depression, anxiety, family problems, peer pressure...
Karah Kohler, Director of Children’s Mental Health Programs at Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI), recites a long list of issues children and teens give as reasons for mental health counseling. These issues—and a lack of timely interventions to help—inspired Kohler and her team to create the Step-Up School-Based Counseling Program four years ago.

Working in collaboration with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the program has grown from being in six schools at its start to 20 as of this school year. Last year, the Step-Up Program served 230 youth between the ages of 5 and 19 at CPS elementary and high schools.

“Step-Up School-Based Counseling started out as a need in our community,” said Kohler. “The children in our care were forced to access crisis services. So we looked internally and asked, ‘How can we serve these kids better before they hit the point of crisis?’ When your kid is experiencing depression or anxiety, you can’t wait six to eight months to get them services.”

Jackie Bobinski, LSSI School-Based Counselor

“I want to keep the conversation going.”

Inspired

ABC News Chief Meteorologist Ginger Zee Receives True Friend Award

More than 200 people were present to see ABC News Chief Meteorologist Ginger Zee receive LSSI’s True Friend Award at the 37th Amicus Certus Celebration on Oct. 6, 2018 at the Union League Club of Chicago.

Zee was honored for her efforts to create awareness for depression and mental illness. She chronicled her own struggle with depression in her poignant and humorous memoir, Natural Disaster: I Cover Them, I am One.

In accepting the award, Zee shared photos and details of her career that put her at the center of some of most devastating natural disasters including floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes all the while dealing with depression. She said she gained tremendous perspective covering weather phenomenon, notably that, “Life is too short to worry about the small things” and that “Clouds don’t last forever.”

Zee sought inpatient treatment for depression just 10 days before starting her dream job with ABC News. Zee said that writing about her experience was a way to reach those, like her, who live with depression.

“Depression and mental illness don’t discriminate,” Zee said. “I want to keep the conversation going.”

Combined Federal Campaign: Show Some Love!

Are you a federal employee, contractor, or retiree? If so, you can give to LSSI through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). It’s as easy as filling out your giving form with LSSI’s CFC code 59343 and a portion of your paycheck will be distributed to LSSI throughout the year.

For more information, contact Jillian Madden, Director of Corporate and Foundation Giving, Jillian.Madden@LSSI.org or 847.635.4589.

ABC News Chief Meteorologist
Ginger Zee Receives True Friend Award

Ginger Zee and LSSI CEO Mark Stutrud

Alison Howie

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God’s work. Ourselves.

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

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

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847.635.4600 • LSSI.ORG • COMMUNICATIONS@LSSI.ORG
Independent Tastes Delicious

Something delicious is happening in Chicago’s southwest suburb of Homer Glen—it’s the Handfuls of Hope kettle corn enterprise at LSSI’s Shady Oaks Developmental Training Center. The Center provides vocational and social skills training to adults with developmental disabilities. The program’s clients include members of the community and the 32 residents of the adjacent Shady Oaks Homes, which offer housing for adults with developmental disabilities.

Handfuls of Hope Kettle Corn is popped and packaged on-site and sold to benefit the program and its participants. The kettle corn enterprise provides them with job training and opportunities to earn an income from their work. LSSI continues to look for opportunities to broaden the sales potential of the kettle corn.

“We encourage independence, and the kettle corn enterprise provides clients with a meaningful way to make, package, and sell the product,” said Daniel Asencio, Shady Oaks Program Director.

“I’m learning the machinery,” said Chris Blogg, who lives at Shady Oaks. “Thanks to kettle corn, we’ll be able to make our own money and be more independent.”

Handfuls of Hope Kettle Corn is available for purchase. It can be used for a church fundraiser or sold at craft fairs or farmer’s markets. Handfuls of Hope Kettle Corn can also be purchased in various quantities for a corporate or holiday gift.

For more information about Handfuls of Hope, contact Daniel.Asencio@LSSI.org, call 708.743.2315 or visit LSSI.org.

Volunteer Profile: Pastor Brian Wise

Pr. Brian Wise is an athlete and a giver. When he began training for a triathlon, he wanted to find a human service organization with which to partner to raise funds and awareness. LSSI was the first that came to mind.

“I have had the honor to experience LSSI’s support for several different communities over the years,” said Wise, the Associate Pastor at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, Naperville. “I’ve always been so proud that this is an expression of our church and faith.”

Pr. Wise took a special interest in LSSI’s Mobile Crisis team. He created a personal online fundraising page through LSSI to help provide services and care for people in the Quad Cities and throughout Illinois.

“Struggling with mental health through the Mobile Crisis Team, I knew that this would have a positive impact on our community and that it would save lives,” he said. “LSSI’s personalized online giving pages and the Compassion on Tap event have connected my church and friends to causes that are near and dear to my heart. I look forward to seeing how LSSI will continue to reflect God’s love through caring ministries like this!”

Want to create a personalized fundraising page to benefit an LSSI program?
Contact Mariah Heinz at 847.635.4656 or Mariah.Heinz@LSSI.org.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Moline

A History of Partnership with LSSI

Trinity Lutheran Church, Moline, is a congregation making an impact. For years the church has partnered with LSSI to help provide services and care for people in the Quad Cities and throughout Illinois.

Along with church’s collective impact, there is also a history of individual service. Church members have served in leadership capacities on various LSSI boards and teams over the years. Currently church member Karen Dowsett serves on the LSSI Board of Trustees while Tom Ribbeck is a trustee of LSSI’s Cornerstone Foundation.

“Trinity has had a long history of partnership with LSSI,” said Trinity Pastor Rev. Lawrence Conway III. “In addition to financial support, Trinity started the Intouch program in Moline that later became a part of LSSI.”

The church continues to support LSSI and its programs. The congregation recently began hosting LSSI’s regional office for foster care services in their building, which allows LSSI to spend more resources serving children.

“We are very grateful for the opportunity to partner with Trinity Lutheran to provide services to children and families in the Quad Cities,” said Ruth Jajko, LSSI’s Vice President of Children’s Community Services. “With stagnant funding from the state, we have to be creative in holding the line on expenses. Renting workspace is a big expense. The partnership with Trinity Lutheran allows us to provide safe, comfortable workspace for staff, while also being good stewards of our limited resources.”

Greater Positive Impact

We are grateful for your support that builds our capacity to serve the whole person by helping not only to build lives but encourage individuals to reach their potential in contributing to their communities.

In Faith,

Mark A. Stutrud
President and Chief Executive Officer

A Letter from the CEO

Dear Friends,

This is the time of the year that is traditionally known as the season of giving—it also marks the 151st anniversary of LSSI’s founding, so I am doubly grateful!

LSSI has faced many turning points in our history. We are at one now as we ask the question, “How can we have greater positive impact in the lives of others?” The answer, we’ve found, is viewing our work with the whole person—we must strive to view people in their wholeness.

Turning points like these present both opportunities and challenges! Through technology and research innovations, we have more information relating to care and service than ever before, and we must use this information to promote the dignity of each individual we serve—the whole person.

In caring for the whole person, we must go beyond the good work of providing safety, shelter, food, and clothing. When we strive to view the whole person, just as God does, we clearly see more that we can do to surround people with supports to build and enhance life!

Our whole person approach can be seen in the programs profiled here. Handfuls of Hope reaches beyond providing a place to live for adults with developmental disabilities—it’s offers employment and income opportunities. Our School-Based Counseling Program meets children in their own schools—to provide critical mental health counseling, essential to their academic success.

We are grateful for your support that builds our capacity to serve the whole person by helping not only to build lives but encourage individuals to reach their potential in contributing to their communities.

In Faith,

Mark A. Stutrud
President and Chief Executive Officer