

Supportive services like Visits to Mom and The Storybook Project help keep families connected during a parent's incarceration. Often they are an incarcerated person's first exposure to LSSI.

## The Storybook Project

LSSI volunteers bring books into the correctional facility and help parents record stories and messages for their child. The book and a CD of the recording is sent to the child as a gift from the parent.

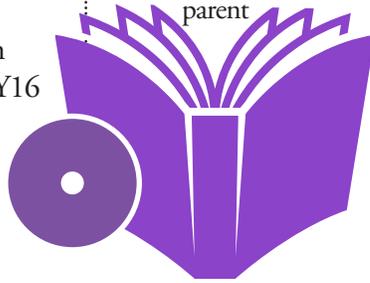
**18** Correctional Facilities served

**463** volunteers provided **1,463** hours of service

**2,395** kids participated in Storybook for the first time in FY16

**6,130**

total children received a book and CD from their incarcerated parent



## Visits to Mom

LSSI provides free transportation for children from the Chicago area to visit the incarcerated parent.

**5**

Visits occurred in FY16

**114**

children visited with their incarcerated parents

**74**

incarcerated parents were able to engage with their children



Once a person is released from custody, he or she can choose which organization will help them with the re-entry process. Many choose LSSI because of the positive experiences they had with the Visits to Mom and Storybook programs.

## Employment Skills School (ESS)

This is a 23-day, computer-based program designed specifically for returning citizens. ESS has a teacher student ratio of 1:3 and covers all aspects of employment training, from resume writing to interview skills.

**70** active clients participated in ESS in FY16

**91%** of students received job referrals while participating in ESS

**28%** of students left ESS due to finding employment

## Green Re-entry Opportunities (GRO)

Working with churches and community organizations, returning citizens plant, maintain, and harvest community gardens. The harvest helps to feed their families and other families in need through local feeding programs.

**2,333** lbs. of food were donated to local community food pantries and kitchens



## Bicycles to Work

Used, donated bicycles are refurbished by returning citizens who then use them to get to work. Any bicycles that are not needed by returning citizens are donated to other organizations.

**109** clients were enrolled in FY16

**87** bikes were distributed

To learn more about LSSI and our Prisoner and Family Ministry programs visit [LSSI.org](http://LSSI.org).



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

TRANSFORMING LIVES FOR 150 YEARS

**150** YEARS  
1867-2017



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, SPRINGFIELD

## Nurturing Human Connections

Stewardship and helping those in need has always been vital to the 145-year history of St. John's Lutheran Church in Springfield.

St. John's congregants feel a connection to LSSI's work.

"There is a long history of nurturing inside of the church and to try to then reach the needs of the outside world," said Lead Pastor Rev. Greg Busboom. "We really try to live our ministry, and our congregation sees LSSI as an extension and reflection of that ministry."

*"Sometimes I walk out of [the prison] and just say 'thank you' to the Lord for the opportunity to serve."*

The nurturing begins early—the church has an active children, youth, and family ministry. They have also been a part of LSSI's Storybook ministry since the program's inception in 1997. St. John's has fundraised, donated books, and sent congregants to local prisons to record inmates reading stories that are then sent to their children.

"We love to see the human connections," Rev. Busboom said. "Seeing how deeply the fathers love their children—to be able to facilitate that human connection between parents and children—all have powerful stories about the connections they have made or seen through the Storybook Project."

**"What we try to do on the inside is help solidify the bond they have [with their children]. And we can't do it alone."**

—SHELITH HANSBRO  
WARDEN, DECATUR CORRECTIONAL CENTER

EMPLOYMENT SKILLS SCHOOL

## Discovering Skills and Fostering Self-Esteem

Men and women released from prison often leave with little more than the clothes on their backs, but with the added pressure to rebuild their lives from scratch. A key component to starting over is finding a job.

Employment Skills School, part of LSSI's Prisoner and Family Ministry, is a good first step for parolees, or returning citizens, to hone their job search skills and discover talents they might not know they even have.

"When I got out, I am on my own. I didn't know how to do the references, how you go about getting your school transcripts," said 26-year-old returning citizen Lugene. "When they ask about job skills, I don't know how to be specific, what to say to get the job."

Employment Skills School lasts six weeks. Upon completing the program, students leave with a flash drive containing their personal employment portfolio, including: resume and a list of references; certificates/certifications; job information sheet; interview worksheets; and sample cover

letter and interview thank-you letter.

"LSSI really does care," said Lugene, who hopes to parlay his skills learned in the prison kitchen into a job in a restaurant. "You not only hear it, but you learn it."

