



“Let us therefore no longer pass judgement on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling-block or hindrance in the way of another.” ROMANS 14:13

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

Every Family Matters: Community Based Youth Services

Sixteen-year-old Robert* might have run away from his home in Carroll County had it not been for the resources of LSSI's Comprehensive Community Based Youth Services (CCBYS) program in Nachusa.

CCBYS staff work with at-risk youth ages 11-17 in Carroll, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside Counties to prevent their involvement with the police, courts, or the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. CCBYS provides counseling services for youth, which could include their families, as well as crisis services. Particularly because the program is free and serves a rural area where resources are limited, services are accessible and impactful.

“We set youth up with services they need,” said Ashly Regalado, Program Supervisor. Regalado is part of a four-person team who work with the area youth referred to the program, follow up on referrals, and respond to crisis calls. Some of the team’s youth clients are mandated for the services, while others are referred to them through community partnerships, including schools.

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Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

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Outreach Connects Community

For individuals in need of programs provided through LSSI's Behavioral Health Services, outreach and education are key.

Community events and health fairs can be the first point of contact for LSSI's clients. "Health fairs, a flyer at a library, or networking with other community organizations all help direct clients to LSSI programs," said Tanya Fisher, LSSI Outreach & Education Coordinator. Such events are often a first point of contact for someone needing services.

"Outreach brings people together and finds strategies to address the whole person. It also helps LSSI improve programming," Fisher added.

In 2022, LSSI was one of many Chicago organizations benefitting from Healthy Chicago Equity Zones grants. The Healthy Chicago plan calls on the city and a variety of human service providers to support community organizations as they take the lead on strategies that address the root causes of health inequities, including structural racism.

Through outreach efforts on its own and in collaboration with other organizations and initiatives like the Chicago Equity Zones, Fisher has seen people referred to needed services they might not otherwise know how to access. "It makes me feel good to know that there is that level of care in our community," she said.



Pictured above: LSSI's Behavioral Health Services staff participated with other human services organizations at an Overdose Prevention Day event at LSSI's Addiction Treatment Center-Chicago.

Pr. Kelly Nieman Anderson Joins LSSI



Congregations and community groups support Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) programs and advocate for the organization and those it serves. To build upon these relationships and create meaningful outreach, Rev. Kelly Nieman Anderson joined LSSI as Manager of Church and Community Engagement as part of the Advancement Team.

Since starting at LSSI in January, Pr. Kelly was a guest preacher at several churches, visited LSSI programs, and led an Ash Wednesday Prayer Service at LSSI's Des Plaines office and its Fox Trail Home in Aurora that serves adults with developmental disabilities.

She holds a bachelor's degree in secondary education from Concordia University, Ann Arbor, Michigan and a Masters of Divinity degree from Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. Most recently, she was a congregational pastor at Christ the King, Living Hope, and Resurrection Lutheran Churches in the Milwaukee area.

"My greatest passion is connecting more people to God's vision of healing, justice, and wholeness for the world—and LSSI lives out that vision every day," said Pr. Kelly. "I am so excited to invite even more people to learn about LSSI's programs and participate in our ministry across the state."

Pr. Kelly Nieman Anderson, Manager of Church and Community Engagement

A MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

•Our Mission in Action



EDGEBROOK LUTHERAN CHURCH, CHICAGO



Neighborly Outreach

Edgebrook Lutheran Church, Chicago, has a reputation for being passionate about outreach, and the residents of LSSI's homes for adults with developmental disabilities have been on the receiving end of that outreach.

For over a decade, church members have "adopted" the residents of two LSSI homes in Chicago for people with developmental disabilities.

The relationship started with a giving tree at Christmas for residents to receive presents. The support grew beyond Christmas and has included Easter baskets for residents, church picnics, and Thanksgiving dinners. Then the congregation tackled a home improvement project! Residents of one of the homes saw their kitchen

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Pictured above: Folake Durodola, far left, Program Director, and Taija Ford, far right, Direct Service Provider with Artesian House residents in the kitchen remodeled by members of Edgebrook Lutheran Church.

Dear Friends,

"Responding to the Gospel, LSSI brings healing, justice, and wholeness to people and communities."

This is the mission of LSSI. I am always struck by how embedded it is in the work we do with 42,000 children, adults, and seniors across Illinois. And as you read through this newsletter, I think you'll see our mission in action through the programs we have profiled.

Helping people in our communities learn about and access our services is key to our work. For some people, this might make the difference between knowing a service exists for them or equipping another human service provider with referral information to one of our programs. These connections have a critical impact, such as reuniting a boy with his family (as detailed in our cover story) or giving a person valuable information on how to access mental health counseling, as seen in the work of our behavioral services outreach coordinator.

Creating awareness for our programs and connecting with people and congregations who want to help support LSSI's work is also crucial. I am excited to introduce Rev. Kelly Nieman Anderson as our new Manager of Church and Community Engagement.

LSSI was formed 155 years ago in response to a need in the community. A century and a half later, the needs of our neighbors across Illinois remain key to our mission.

Peace and Prayers,

David P. Novak, JD

Vice President for Advancement



LSSI Receives Federal Funding to Launch Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois was among the first Chicago organizations to receive federal funding to launch a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) to better serve the mental health and substance use needs of Chicago's Northwest Side neighborhoods.

The grant was awarded in September 2022.

CCBHC is a special designation for clinics providing comprehensive mental health and substance use services. LSSI's Portage Cragin Counseling Center, 4840 W. Byron St., Chicago, will become one of 450 CCBHC clinics nationwide.

"Through community partnerships and program expansion, LSSI will build on its existing crisis, mental health, and substance use treatment services to fulfill CCBHC requirements," said Frank Harris, LCSW, CADC,

Executive Director, Behavioral Health Services.

"Case management, mental health care for veterans, peer supports, family support and counselor services, outpatient mental health and substance use services, integrated healthcare, and crisis services are all part of the CCBHC model designed to break down silos between mental health, substance use, and medical care."

The CCBHC model requires crisis services that are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and a continuum of care for patients to easily access next treatment steps. These clinics have shown to dramatically improve access to mental health and substance use treatment while strengthening care networks and partnerships among organizations to better serve those in need.

Events

Sunday, April 30, 2023

GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY

LSSI invites Illinois congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to celebrate their shared ministry with LSSI on April 30 or any Sunday during the Easter season.

Visit LSSI.org/GSS to learn more and download or request resources. For more information, contact Susan.Greeley@LSSI.org or 847.635.4617.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, October 7, 2023

TRUE FRIEND CELEBRATION UNION LEAGUE CLUB OF CHICAGO

Planning is underway! For more information, contact Mariah.Heinz@LSSI.org or 847.635.4656.

[EVERY FAMILY MATTERS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1]

Crisis intervention calls are made through local law enforcement.

Youth served by the program could be individuals who are on probation through the courts. Others could be dealing with family crisis and conflict, and CCBYS staff can either help a situation from escalating or be there in a crisis.

Each encounter varies, but an example of how CCBYS staff intervene could be when a youth has run away from home, or perhaps because of family conflict, the youth's family does not want them in the home.

"We want to meet youth where they're at, in the least restrictive environment," Regalado said. In that same way, staff helps the parents. She said that both parents and youth have expressed that it's the first time they feel like they've been heard after they meet with CCBYS staff. It's an important first step toward strengthening family communication dynamics.

*Name changed to protect confidentiality.

[CHURCH PROFILE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3]

completely remodeled and new flooring installed. All materials and work were provided by congregation members. In addition to personal gifts for residents, last Christmas the church provided an air fryer and a 45-cup coffee maker for both homes.

"Edgebrook Lutheran Church has really taken us under their wings, and we are so grateful," said Folake Durodola, Program Director at Artesian and Palmer Square Homes.

