

Lincoln Manor neighbors Sam Oymaian (left) and Bonnie Banning with Banning's dog, Cooper.



"If somebody cares about you, it's possible that you'll care about others. You are special, and so is your neighbor."

— FRED ROGERS, AKA MR. ROGERS

1,403 Good Neighbors in LSSI Senior Housing

"Everybody has a good heart, and you can see the care of neighbors for each other, and the management could not be better." That's Sam Oymaian's summation of living for nine years at Lincoln Manor in Rochelle, one of 20 affordable senior housing sites managed by Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI).

LSSI's affordable housing offers apartment-style housing for low-income older adults, 62 years or older. Some locations offer apartments for adults 18+ with physical disabilities. Owned and/or managed by LSSI, the buildings provide comfortable and affordable living environments and are funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Most apartments feature an open floor plan with a full kitchen, large bathroom, cable access, and LifeLine Emergency call system.

Senior Housing locations include Aurora, Batavia, Chicago, Crystal Lake, Danville, Decatur, DeKalb, Dolton,

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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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Social Service Coordinators Enhance Residents' Quality of Life

Jason Lucas, Social Service Coordinator at Immanuel Senior Residences, Danville, coordinates and provides support services for who need assistance with federal, state, and local benefits, such as Medicare or Social Security, and other services such as healthcare and transportation for shopping.

Like the Social Service Coordinators at LSSI's 19 other affordable senior housing apartments, he also links residents to local resources, such as the University of Illinois Extension Healthy Eating Program for residents at the Danville location.

Social Service Coordinators also organize a variety of activities that enable residents to socialize and build friendships among their neighbors. The residents are eager to take part, as well as provide suggestions for future activities and events.

After eight years in law enforcement, Lucas changed course to fulfill his career goal.

"I have always had a passion for helping others and it is a pleasure to interact with the residents," Lucas said.

"The level of support I receive from fellow staff and upper management at Immanuel Senior Residences is tremendous! I love the connection with the residents, whether it is assisting them in their time of need or just socializing."



Immanuel Manor Social Service Coordinator Jason Lucas with resident Bonnie.

Fostering Community Among Senior Housing Residents



Bethany the Comfort Dog visits with a resident at Immanuel Senior Residences, Danville.

Residents of Deer Creek Manor and Immanuel Senior Residences, LSSI's senior apartments in Danville, get the "VIP treatment" every day. From monthly visits from Bethany the Comfort Dog, to serenades from a barbershop choir, there's never a dull moment.

"I enjoy when Bethany visits because she reminds me of a dog I had, a German Shepherd," said Mary Berglund, a resident of Deer Creek Manor. "I like to watch how she gets along with everyone, and it is comforting to pet her."

Euchre club, resident-led Bible studies, movie matinees, and bingo are some of the activities offered at LSSI's 20 senior housing sites across Illinois.

"We offer a community that combines affordable, comfortable living with the companionship of friends," said Susan DeMoss, Property Manager for Immanuel and Deer Creek Manor.

The sites also partner with local organizations, such as the University of Illinois Extension Office, which provides healthy-eating programming, and cooking lessons to residents. Social Service Coordinators create a monthly newsletter and event calendar to help residents keep up with all the activities, including the recent addition of tai chi, a slow, controlled form of Chinese calisthenics and meditation.

"Social opportunities in our housing programs put the heart and soul into our mission," said DeMoss. "It is life and living well-shared."



Jeremiah Royster, Director of Home Care Operations and Growth

Helping Seniors and Loved Ones Navigate Home Care

LSSI recently welcomed Jeremiah Royster as Director of Home Care Operations and Growth.

Since 1981, LSSI's Intouch Home Care Services has provided home care, personal care, transitional care, memory care, companion care, and other services.

A well-seasoned home care professional, Royster is motivated beyond career aspirations to help build Intouch. Approximately 98% of the organization's home care clients are older adults. Serving this client group, along with adults with disabilities, especially resonates with Royster.

Royster was raised by his grandparents. "My appreciation runs deep for the well-being of seniors. My grandmother had home care services," he said. "I want to help these clients get back to doing what they want to do, what they're able to do."

His empathy for older adults has led Royster to learn more about how clients access in-home supportive services. "They and their caregivers may not even know the questions to ask," Royster said. "They appreciate having an advocate there to help navigate the healthcare system."

For more information about LSSI's Intouch Home Care services, visit LSSI.org/HomeCare.

Supportive Living for Seniors

As adults age, maintaining independence contributes to overall health and well-being. The Oaks of LSSI offers supportive living apartments for seniors to maintain independence, serving as an alternative to skilled-nursing care.

Located within LSSI's Joshua Arms Senior Apartments in Joliet, The Oaks offers a safe, nurturing environment providing physical, emotional, and social well-being.

"One of our goals is to support the independence of our residents," said Rebecca Wells, Director of Clinical Services at The Oaks. This can take on many forms, such as medication reminders, help with laundry, weekly trips out into the community, wellness checks once a day, and housekeeping to augment a resident's own apartment upkeep. The Oaks also has on-site pharmacy delivery, and can assist with scheduling medical appointments and arranging transportation. The Oaks is Medicaid approved.

Wells describes The Oaks as a supportive option between living independently but not yet a level of assisted living. Residents of The Oaks can perform activities of daily living (ADLs) with minimal assistance, such as eating, bathing, dressing, or toileting. "Many of our residents don't have families who can act as their support system," she said. "Our staff can step in to help."

The Oaks also provides daily meals and snacks. Care Coordinators are available to assist residents with community-based social services. An Activities Coordinator plans onsite

activities, including arts and crafts, bingo, and other recreational opportunities.

"We want to make sure our residents have a community," Wells said. "I believe I was meant to be an advocate for our residents. I love what I do."

To learn more, visit LSSI.org/TheOaks.



Clinical Director Rebecca Wells visits with Eunice, a resident of The Oaks.

Gift Planning: Greater Impact, More Joy

When people want to make a planned gift to LSSI, they're often asked, "What brings you joy?" to determine how they want to designate their gift. There are a lot of choices: caring for children, helping seniors, or creating a home for adults with developmental disabilities. So many choices can make it hard to choose.

Events

Monday, March 31, 2025 DEADLINE FOR THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

It's free money—don't waste it! All remaining Thrivent Choice Dollars must be designated by March 31, 2025. Learn more at [Thrivent.com/ThriventChoice](https://www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice) or by calling 800.847.4836 and saying "Thrivent Choice" after the prompt.

Sunday, May 4, 2025 GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY

LSSI invites Illinois ELCA congregations to celebrate their shared ministry with LSSI on May 4 or any Sunday during the Easter season. Visit [LSSI.org/GSS](https://www.lssi.org/GSS) to learn more or request resources, or contact Kelly.Nieman-Anderson@LSSI.org.

Saturday, October 4, 2025 44TH TRUE FRIEND CELEBRATION EPIPHANY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

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

But the gift planning part is easy! LSSI has a team of experienced professionals to help individuals with estate planning. There are many options, but writing a will is perhaps the most straightforward. LSSI recently partnered with FreeWill, which provides a free, online program to write a will along with other helpful, free tools.

For individuals making an estate gift, the Cornerstone Society recognizes them for their generosity.

Because supporting the mission of LSSI with a planned gift makes so many people feel good, LSSI has named its gift planning program, "What Brings You Joy." Look for more information coming soon.

Visit [LSSI.org/PlannedGiving](https://www.LSSI.org/PlannedGiving) to learn more about creating a will or making a planned gift to LSSI.

[LSSI SENIOR HOUSING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1]

Elmwood Park, Freeport, Joliet, Lansing, Rochelle, Rockford, Taylorville, and Wilmette.

"Our goal is to provide decent, safe, affordable, and quality housing to the residents we serve, and a place our residents are proud of calling home," said Joseph Rodriguez, Associate Executive Director of Senior and Disability Services. "We want them to live in a place that they are excited to share with their family, friends, and neighbors."

Property managers are on site at all buildings, and each location has a Social Service Coordinator (see story page 2). Buildings typically include libraries, community rooms, computer rooms, outdoor space to relax and gather, laundry, and parking. A calendar of monthly activities for residents includes movies, potlucks, group outings, and live music.

Bonnie Banning had been on the waiting list at several LSSI senior housing apartment locations when she was notified that an apartment was available at Lincoln Manor five years ago. "I prayed, 'Lord, let me make a good friend,'" she said. Upon moving in, she received a note of welcome from fellow resident Oymaian in her mailbox and they have been friends ever since. Banning added, "I love it here."



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