



Anne Reed



Jarred Fitch



Inspired

“Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” MATTHEW 5:16

LSSI Employees Make a Difference

• Founded on October 31, 1867, as an orphanage for children whose parents died in a cholera epidemic, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) has grown and changed over the past 155 years, but one thing has remained constant—the compassion and professional dedication of its employees.

LSSI's more than 1,000 employees served over 42,000 children, adults, and seniors last year at 50 sites across Illinois. These employees are critical to carrying out LSSI's mission, helping and empowering individuals in the communities it serves. LSSI focuses on human potential to achieve greater impact and achieve lasting, positive change in people's lives. LSSI serves the whole person, helping children, adults, seniors, and families realize their goals, enrich their lives, and contribute to the community.

“The children and families we serve inspire me daily,” said Anne Reed, Program Director for LSSI's Children's Community Services in Aurora, which oversees foster care and intact families programs. “Each day is different, and each child and family is unique, so there is always a new opportunity to help someone become a better version of themselves.”

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 4]

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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True Friend for 90 Years

In 1933 at age eight, Bill Fleck learned about LSSI while attending Sunday school at St. Simon's Lutheran Church, Chicago. It was the Great Depression. His pastor spoke of orphans living at LSSI's Nachusa Lutheran Home. There were not enough beds for the kids. A congregation member purchased beds to help. St. Simon's began supporting the home.

Then Fleck and his Sunday school classmates began collecting change to help the children there. For nine decades now, Fleck has supported LSSI. For his long-term commitment to LSSI, Fleck, a World War II Veteran

and former LSSI Cornerstone Trustee, was honored with the True Friend Award at LSSI's 41st Annual True Friend Celebration on Oct. 29 (see page 4).

Fleck has never been one to ask for material gifts for his birthdays. Instead, he asks people to make donations to LSSI. On his 95th birthday, that simple act raised \$450 for LSSI's ministries.

For over 20 years, Fleck hand-carved crosses from donated wood to pass out to people he meets at church or the doctor's office—wherever his journey takes him. He carved over 6,000 crosses by hand over the years.

"I put my late wife's confirmation verse on the back," he said of the crosses. "Let your light shine. Let them see your good works, and praise your cross in heaven."

LSSI Launches New Website: LSSI.org

LSSI recently launched its newly designed website LSSI.org. With a fresh new look, it's organized slightly different than before and features new content and better adaptability for mobile devices. The site also complies with the American with Disabilities Act and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines for better overall accessibility.

Other highlights include:

- A new Stories of Inspiration page highlighting clients, staff, donors, foster parents, and more
- A Get Involved section, making it clearer how people can support LSSI beyond monetary gifts
- A News and Resources section, featuring a new blog launched by our Behavioral Health Services Team and pages devoted to news, publications, and our social media footprint
- A new Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion page with many helpful resources





Bill Fleck, 2022 True Friend Honoree

LUTHERAN WOMEN OF GREATER PEORIA



Working Together for Good

Formed to promote inter-Lutheran fellowship in 1965, the Lutheran Women of Greater Peoria (LWGP) also promotes ecumenical understanding and opportunities for its members to witness through volunteerism.

Today, LWGP includes women from the 26 Lutheran congregations in the greater Peoria area, with a delegate from each church. The group includes both Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregations.

“I got into it, and I’ve been here ever since,” said current LWGP President Pepper Bauer, recalling being recruited after church at St. John’s, Bartonville, in 1976.

LWGP holds fundraisers throughout the calendar year for LSSI and Lutheran Hillside Village in Peoria

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 4]

Pictured above: LWGP’s Octoberfest joins fun with fundraising for LSSI and Lutheran Hillside Village.

A MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Letting Our Light Shine

Dear Friends,

LSSI recently celebrated the anniversary of its founding on October 31, 1867.

Much has changed in 155 years, but there are many constants that continue to play a strong role in LSSI’s viability: neighbors helping neighbors, committed employees, and a willing generosity to support an organization that matches the values of a community.

Our employees, volunteers, and donors form the strong base of LSSI’s mission. It was a similar group who founded LSSI as an orphanage for children whose parents died in a cholera epidemic. LSSI still cares for children today. Donors and funders continue to fund our innovative services. They let their light shine.

Our 2022 True Friend Honoree Bill Fleck, 97, at age eight began giving pennies and nickels with his Sunday school classmates to support Nachusa Lutheran Home (see story, pg. 2). Bill has been generous to LSSI beyond his charitable gifts—he advocates for our organization and has blessed people with his woodworking talent with the wooden crosses he’s made over the years. Bill lets his light shine.

And our employees work so hard alongside our clients. LSSI employee Anne Reed said, “There is always a new opportunity to help someone become a better version of themselves.” Our employees let their light shine.

As we enter the Advent season, thank you for your support that lets LSSI shine in the world.

Peace and Prayers,

David P. Novak, JD
Vice President
for Advancement





Bill Fleck, Dr. Evisha Ford

True Friend Celebration: In-Person Again

After two years of virtual events, nearly 240 friends of LSSI gathered in person on Sat., Oct. 29 for the 41st Annual True Friend Celebration honoring Bill Fleck, 97, a former Cornerstone Foundation Trustee who has been giving to LSSI since he was 8 years old.

“Bill and his late wife Jean were passionate about LSSI,” said LSSI President and CEO Mark Stutrud in presenting Fleck with the award. “He never misses an opportunity to support LSSI.”

Fleck said he shares the award with Jean. “We got involved early in what LSSI was doing and it touched our hearts,” he said. “I’ve never been a rich man, but there are ways you can use your God-given talents to help LSSI.”

Dr. Evisha Ford, LCSW, a former LSSI foster parent and the founder of iCan Dream Center in Tinley Park, gave the keynote address. Dr. Ford shared her experiences fostering three children through LSSI, two of whom she adopted. “Foster care parenting is so important,” she said. “I’d like to think I provided a bridge over troubled waters for children and families.”

The event raised nearly \$200,000, benefitting children and families served by LSSI programs, including counseling and mental health services, foster care, intact family services, adoption preservation, and prevention services.

To see photos and videos from the event, visit LSSI.org/truefriend.



Double *the* Donation
matching gifts made easy

WANT TO INCREASE YOUR IMPACT AT LSSI?

See if your company will match your philanthropic gift! Go to LSSI.org/giving/matching-gifts and type in the name of your company or former company. You can see if they match, how much they match, and who they match for. You’ll be directed to your company’s matching gift form—it’s that easy. For more information, contact Jillian Madden, Executive Director of Strategic Integration and Development, at Jillian.Madden@LSSI.org or 847.635.4589.

“I come to the office with the knowledge that this day might be the only hug, smile, or laugh a kiddo has had in a long time.”

— APRIL, LSSI EMPLOYEE,
CHAMPAIGN OFFICE

MAKE A DIFFERENCE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

While LSSI employees play an integral role in helping others, the organization also supports its employees in their professional development as well as providing them opportunities to advance innovative ways of providing services.

“LSSI affords opportunities for growth in multiple areas, both personally and professionally, within the mental and behavioral health realms,” said Jarred Fitch, Clinical Director for one of LSSI’s Project IMPACT programs. “LSSI has worked hard at retaining and respecting staff while brokering new ways to encourage and entice new talent into the field. Since starting here, LSSI has launched several new initiatives in this area and appears to be taking feedback seriously from all levels of staff.”

For more information about working at LSSI and current career opportunities, visit LSSI.org/Careers.

CHURCH PROFILE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

(a continuing care retirement community). These fundraisers include an Octoberfest, cookie walk, and style show. In 1999, LWGP assumed management of The Church Mouse, a Peoria thrift store operated primarily by volunteers. All profits are divided evenly between LSSI and Lutheran Hillside Village.

“We’re totally committed to LSSI and Lutheran Hillside Village,” said Bauer. “Our members are so dedicated and everyone really enjoys the fellowship.”



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

