



FRONT LINE HEROES

Summer 2020

The 300 Lutheran health and human services organizations comprising our national network truly are the unsung heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic. They put their lives on the line every day they go to work to serve so many people throughout America.

We are proud to share this collection of stories illustrating just some of their dedicated work during this historic moment in time, which we will update throughout the year. Their selfless efforts are every bit as innovative as they are inspiring. We think you will agree.



CONTENT



- Advocate Aurora Health – 15, 51
- Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries – 70, 92
- Blue Valley Lutheran Homes – 16
- Community Family Life Services – 12
- Compass Health – 10
- Compass Housing Alliance – 34
- Concordia Place – 77
- Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries – 1, 9, 28, 57
- Ecumen – 8, 24, 67
- The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society – 27, 86
- Genacross Lutheran Services – 23
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Community – 29, 74
- Graceworks Lutheran Services – 2, 19, 90
- Immanuel Communities – 18
- Immanuel Lutheran Communities – 85
- Inspiritus – 56
- Lem Cartman – 43
- Liberty Lutheran – 50, 62
- Liberty Lutheran Community, The Village at Penn State – 14
- LSF Health Systems – 22
- LSS Lutheran Village – 25
- Luther Home of Mercy – 76
- Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois – 41
- Lutheran Church Charities – 65
- Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska – 88
- Lutheran Family Services of Virginia – 39, 55, 69
- Lutheran Home of the Good Shepherd – 64
- Lutheran Life Villages – 35, 54
- Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry – 5, 83
- Lutheran SeniorLife – 21, 75, 91
- Lutheran Services Carolinas – 31, 84
- Lutheran Services Florida – 7, 72, 87
- Lutheran Services in Iowa – 20, 61
- Lutheran Settlement House – 45
- Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota – 38, 59, 82
- Lutheran Social Services of Illinois – 32, 80
- Lutheran Social Services of Nevada – 36, 79
- Lutheran Social Services of New York – 37, 53
- Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota – 60, 71
- Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida – 6
- Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota – 52, 78
- Lutheran Social Services of Southern California – 11
- Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan – 13, 40, 73
- Lutheran Volunteer Corps – 48
- Mosaic – 17, 33
- Mount Olivet Rolling Acres – 89
- NYU Langone – 49
- Samaritas – 30, 66, 81
- The Sharing Place – 47
- St. John's United – 4, 91
- Upbring – 3, 42, 58
- Village On The Isle – 26, 46, 68
- Wellspring Lutheran Services – 44, 63

DIAKON LUTHERAN SOCIAL MINISTRIES

August 7, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, whose Bayada Hospice is organizing fun events for its residents, like the recent Star Wars window visit.

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries has served its community since 1868, and provides resources for older adults, as well as children, youth, and families. Diakon's senior services offers community services, as well as a vast array of options in senior living, including the Bayada Hospice, which provides high quality end-of-life care in Boyertown, PA.



Last week, Bayada Hospice staff organized an exciting event for resident and lifelong Star Wars fan, Joe. A cast of volunteers dressed as Darth Vader, Storm Troopers, Tie Pilots, and Kylo Ren appeared at Joe's window. They visited with Joe through the window, and used a speaker phone to talk and joke with him. Darth Vader even quizzed Joe in a Star Wars trivia game, and the crew of volunteers were all amazed at how much he knew! The volunteers even brought trading cards and other Star Wars memorabilia to gift to Joe. Before they departed, Joe thanked them and used the well-known phrase, "May the force be with you."

Thank you to Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, and the Bayada Hospice for going the extra mile for your residents!

GRACEWORKS LUTHERAN SERVICES

August 5, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Graceworks Lutheran Services, which is going above and beyond to address the social and emotional needs of its employees.

Headquartered in Dayton, OH, Graceworks Lutheran Services has faithfully cared for people in challenging and changing circumstances for nearly a century.

Graceworks is rooted in the Christian faith, and dedicated to upholding personal dignity and wholeness of life for people of all faiths. Its programs include housing services, senior living, and programs for people with disabilities.

In addition for caring for those in its community, Graceworks is dedicated to caring for the holistic needs of its staff.



Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic takes a significant toll on front line staff's emotional well-being, Graceworks expanded its SHINE program. SHINE stands for "Supporting the Holistic and Individual Needs of Employees," and encourages Graceworks employees to practice self-care. Graceworks

outlines best practices for self-care, encourages employees to live well-balanced lives, and provides an Employee Assistance Program, which offers counseling, as needed.

Graceworks' emphasis on holistic employee health earned it a spot on the Dayton Business Journal's 2020 Healthiest Employers list.





UPBRING

August 4, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Upbring, whose brave essential workers who continue to serve children in Texas every day.

Upbring provides holistic services to children and families in Texas, and is “determined to create a world where all children are cherished.” For 135 years, Upbring has been working to break the cycle of child abuse, and supports children and families physically, emotionally, and spiritually with services including foster care, adoption, children’s centers, community services, and others.

Upbring is located in Austin, but provides services across the state and region, serving more than 275,000 people annually in Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. As an essential service provider, Upbring has remained open throughout the pandemic and continues supporting children and families. The front line staff make an active decision each day to keep children safe, strengthen families, and help communities grow safer and stronger no matter the circumstance.

President and CEO, Michael Loo recently posted on LinkedIn that, “As coronavirus cases climb in Texas, child welfare workers remain on the frontlines. I am thankful for the warrior spirit of each person at Upbring.” Upbring also shared a video as tribute to those front line workers, who are committed to serving the children and families across Texas.



ST. JOHN'S UNITED

August 3, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is St. John's United, which is recognizing its direct care staff as superheroes and supporting the next generation of nurses.

Located in Billings, Montana, St. John's United provides a wide array of services to seniors, families, and children. It's firmly rooted in Lutheran identity, and owned by 23 congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), but St. John's is committed to serving the whole community with no regard to religious preference, race, gender, age, diagnosis, or disability.

St. John's United recognizes that its staff has been working hard and under great stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. It refers to the direct care staff as "superheroes," and aims to hire more of those heroes to support the community. Even before the pandemic hit, there was a significant shortage of Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) in Montana. Instead of lamenting that shortage, St. John's took action and started the St. John's United Nursing Apprentice/Fellowship in partnership with Billings Public School and Miley Community College. The program provides students experience in nursing as early as their junior year in high school, while offering credits to be applied to college tuition up to \$8,000 per year. The hope is that apprentices can graduate from college without debt and have first class healthcare experience under their belts.

Thank you to St. John's United for supporting current direct care staff and nurturing the next generation!



LUTHERAN METROPOLITAN MINISTRY

July 31, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry, which is supporting people without homes in Cleveland through the pandemic.

Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry (LMM) has faithfully served the community in Northeast Ohio since the 1960s. Among many services, LMM provides food and shelter to hundreds of people without homes every day. The COVID-19 pandemic has unfortunately created chaos for people experiencing homelessness as shelter systems need to adhere to social distancing; in addition, public spaces have closed, leaving few opportunities for people to wash up or use the bathroom.

County officials and community partners made plans to reduce the number of people in shelters to prevent large numbers of people in the congregate setting.

The Northeast Coalition for the Homeless placed people in need of shelter into hotel rooms, and LMM soon became involved with this work. LMM is now supporting more than 200 rooms at a Cleveland hotel with a capacity to house more than 380 people, providing some with a roof over their head for the first time in months. The hotel has allowed people without homes to safely quarantine and has effectively prevented the virus from spreading among this population. LMM is considering the possibility of using the hotel to help address the needs of people who have resisted going to a shelter due to past trauma or concerns about confidentiality.

Thank you to Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry for your commitment to the homeless, and creativity in finding solutions to meet their needs!

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA

July 30, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida, which is helping supply food to its neighbors.

Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida has served the Jacksonville community for more than 40 years, providing programs that support those "facing hardship stabilize their lives and earn a fresh start." One of those programs is Hunger Relief, which was the first initiative operated by the non-profit. The Nourishment Network is a small food pantry that has fed hundreds of thousands of food-insecure families for decades, and has stepped up with the increased need due to the recent economic downturn.



When COVID-19 hit the United States and the economy took a downturn, LSS realized that there was an influx of food insecure families who had recently lost jobs. LSS drew on its partners and resources to meet the increased need, and saw the community heed the call to help. Community members have donated and delivered carloads of food to families, and made monetary donations. Local businesses also donated, like Simply Healthcare, which provided 1,000 canvas bags to easily and sustainably transport food. Thanks to the generosity of the community and commitment of LSS to supporting families in need, LSS was able to distribute eggs, milk, meat, cucumbers, beans, watermelon, and dry goods to 200 families in the community just last week.

Thank you to Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida for supporting food security in your community, and to the generous community members who make that support possible!



LUTHERAN SERVICES FLORIDA

July 29, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Services Florida, which is providing services to people facing mental health challenges and addiction to prevent them from entering the criminal justice system.

Located in Jacksonville, FL, Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) Health Systems provides behavioral health care for people who face poverty and are without insurance. To ensure that the community's mental health needs are adequately met, LSF is partnering with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office on a co-responder program. The program pairs a full-time police officer with a mental health clinician from LSF to patrol neighborhoods and partner in crisis intervention calls that involve mental illness, substance use, and other emotionally-charged situations. The innovative program is one of only three of its kind in Florida, but has been so successful that the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Director has applied for a grant from the Department of Justice to expand the program to two or three more patrol teams.

Christine Cauffield, CEO of LSF Health Systems, noted that the program saves the tax payer money with fewer people going to jail or to the emergency department for their mental health needs. "It's smart justice and people have been able to avoid arrest or being Baker Acted," she explained. "In fact, our stats are showing that 92% of the individuals that interact with this co-responder program are diverted from jails, from emergency rooms, from crisis stabilization units."

Thank you to Lutheran Services Florida for shifting the paradigm and meeting mental health needs in your community!

ECUMEN

July 27, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Ecumen, which is finding innovative ways to connect seniors and families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ecumen provides senior housing and other services for thousands of residents at 40-plus communities across eight states.



When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Ecumen implemented necessary protocols to protect residents from the virus, including visitor restrictions, but wanted to ensure that the seniors' social and emotional needs were met, as well, recognizing that isolation and loneliness can have a major impact on health and well-being.

Shelley Kendrick, President and CEO of Ecumen, spoke about the organization's commitment to social connection and innovation on WCCO | CBS Minnesota's "Mid-Morning" show. She mentioned that the Minnesota Department of Health recently announced that congregate care facilities could begin to allow essential caregiver visits. Ecumen quickly and enthusiastically began preparing for those visits to ensure safety for staff, residents, and visitors. Additionally, Ecumen continues to encourage families to visit their loved ones virtually and through windows, and created Connection Stations, which are Plexiglas rooms through which residents can visit their families without using masks, allowing them to see the smiling faces of their families. Ecumen is also piloting robots in many communities. These robots sit on the desktop and are interactive, providing scheduling, connecting families, and even communicating with residents and sensing their emotions.

Thank you to Ecumen for your commitment to seniors' holistic well-being, and your innovation to achieve social connection!

DIAKON LUTHERAN SOCIAL MINISTRIES

July 24, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, which is providing fun activities for seniors, such as its Superfood Teaching Kitchen.

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries has served its community since 1868, and provides resources for older adults, as well as children, youth, and families. Diakon's senior services include community services, as well as a vast array of options in senior living.



Luther Crest is a Continuing Care Retirement Community in Allentown, PA with a range of options for care, as well as many opportunities for activity and connection. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Luther Crest has found safe and fun ways to engage the seniors living there. One of those ways was a recent Superfood Teaching Kitchen, which taught residents how to make fun, healthy fresh recipes. One of the recipes was a perfect-for-summer Cantaloupe Aqua Fresca and watermelon-kiwi spinach salad with a balsamic glaze. Executive Chef Tony Morrison led the event, and staff ensure the seniors wore masks and social distanced to keep everyone safe, while still fostering connection through sharing a meal.

Thank you to Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries for your ongoing support of seniors and commitment to their holistic health and well-being!

COMPASS HEALTH

July 23, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Compass Health for its innovation and expansion of behavioral health services to address increased needs during the pandemic.

Compass Health serves nearly 17,000 clients each year in Northwest Washington with services including mental health treatment, crisis prevention and intervention, supportive housing, children's services across five counties. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Compass Health has been on the front lines, serving individuals at high risk of complications from the virus.

The COVID-19 pandemic created increased need for behavioral health resources, and Compass Health rose to meet that need. The non-profit secured \$1.24 million in philanthropic donations from community partners and grants to expand its reach. The funding will support vital mental health and substance abuse treatment, the implementation of Compass Health's telehealth systems, as well as other community supports and resources like PPE.

Compass Health is looking forward, and preparing for the long-term impact the virus poses to mental and physical health.

The expansion of Compass Health's telehealth services greatly increased community's access care. Throughout March of 2020, Compass Health saw a decrease in clients seeking treatment because they were staying home. In response, Compass Health dramatically expanded its mobile telehealth system and trained more than 500 behavioral health professionals to deliver care remotely. By May, about 40% of all billable services were delivered via telehealth.

Thank you to Compass Health for your rapid innovation during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to the community partners who believe in Compass Health's work and supported them financially.





LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

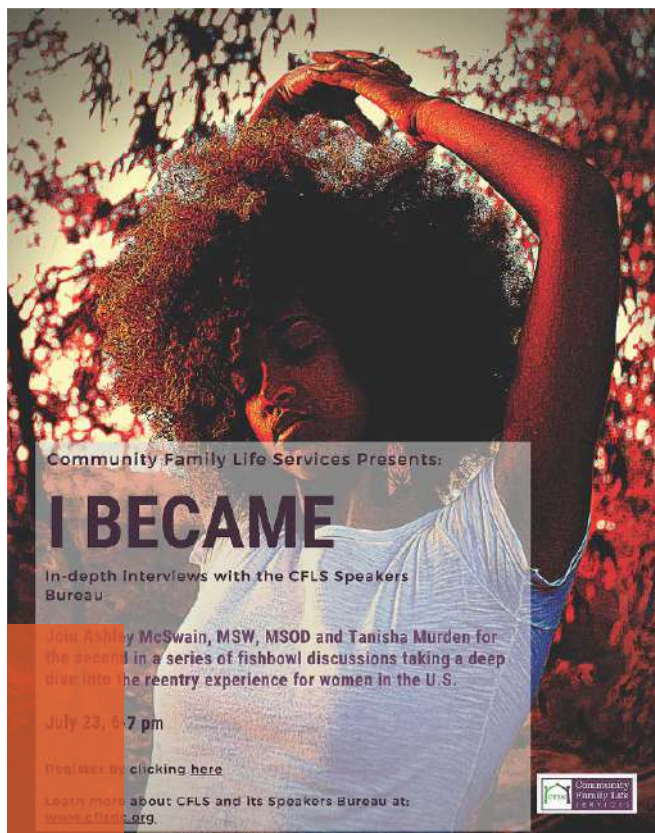
July 22, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Services of Southern California for its efforts to dismantle systemic racism and promotion of productive conversations about race.

For Lutheran Social Services of Southern California President and CEO Dr. LaSharnda Beckwith, the current focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion that are filling our consciousness offer an opportunity for candid conversation about race. Dr. Beckwith recognized that many people in the United States do not talk openly about race because those conversations are often considered uncouth, and she asked if that culture norm is still acceptable in the face of such stark racial disparity. She saw a need for genuine, cross-cultural dialogue, and took action.

Dr. Beckwith hosted a virtual roundtable comprised of voices of dynamic women from across the country. The participants included women from diverse backgrounds, including higher education, social services, religious organizations, technology, and government who have influence over the culture, policies, and performance of their organizations, making them the ideal conduits to have this conversation. Dr. Beckwith facilitated a candid yet respectful roundtable discussion that focused on the intersection of systemic racism and growing disparities revealed in recent months, and how our society can dismantle that systemic racism.

The roundtable proved to be a valuable discussion, leading Dr. Beckwith to continue to lead these difficult and critical conversations about systemic racism and how we can work collectively to address the problem. Recognizing that there have been some successes in this work, such as progress made by corporations in the US in creating a fair workplace for people of color, upcoming conversations will focus on that progress, while recognizing there is still work to do. Join the discussion at www.lasharndabeckwith.com.



COMMUNITY FAMILY LIFE SERVICES

July 21, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Community Family Life Services, which is committed to safely offering needed programming in Washington, DC throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community Family Life Services (CFLS) is a trusted partner in Washington, DC, having served the community for more than 50 years. CFLS provides children, families, and adults with resources needed to move beyond poverty and homelessness, and supports women in their reentry after incarceration, assisting them as they move into permanent self-sufficiency. These supports include housing, mentorship, employment programs, as well as health supports such as a HIV testing.

A unique program CFLS offers is its Speakers Bureau, which equips women with public speaking and communications skills, and provides them a platform to speak publicly and educate their communities and lawmakers about issues closest to them, including homelessness and incarceration.

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed challenges for social service programs, but CFLS found creative solutions to continue offering their programming. CFLS provides regular programming such as training for interviewing skills and goal setting by Zoom. The I BECAME series is a fishbowl discussion series that shares stories about women's reentry experiences in a virtual forum. The in-depth interviews with CFLS Speakers Bureau participants, facilitated by CEO Ashley McSwain, provide a space for those in reentry work to hear real stories, and for clients to hear stories that parallel their own experiences, helping build a sense of community virtually.

In addition to its virtual events, CFLS is offering in-person programming safely. For example, on July 30th, CFLS hosted a sex education and testing event, but did so safely by limiting entry to allow for social distancing and requiring masks.

Thank you to Community Family Life Services for your ongoing commitment to the community, and for continuing to offer critical programming safely throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF WISCONSIN AND UPPER MICHIGAN

July 20, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, which is promoting diversity and inclusion through servant leadership.

LSS of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan CEO Héctor Colón wrote a recent op-ed in the Milwaukee Business Journal. In his op-ed, Colón calls on business leaders to adopt characteristics of a servant leader to create a work environment that welcomes open conversation about race and effectively promotes equity.

Colón says that after events like the death of George Floyd and discussions about racial equity that follow, well-intended leaders are compelled to "change policies, develop affinity groups, and require training" within the organizations they lead. Unfortunately, these programs and typical ways of addressing racial inequity have shown to be ineffective. With an organizational commitment to race equity, LSS of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan has chosen to look at diversity and inclusion differently. Colón is looking to "Ten Characteristics of Effective, Caring Leaders" by Larry Spears.

This article suggests enhancing diversity and inclusion programs with five characteristics: awareness, listening, healing, empathy, and commitment to the growth of people.

Héctor Colón believes that self-awareness is critical, and "foundational to authentic relationships" which are at the center of in-depth conversations and openness to growing and changing. He is working to create an environment that encourages self-reflection, and listening rather than top down approaches to addressing racial inequity; he believes this collaborative approach can help foster healing. Colón suggests to readers of his op-ed that they find safe places with people with whom they can share their hurts, and find ways to connect with others who have different past experiences, so they can learn to empathize with people who are different from themselves.

Thank you to LSS of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan for your ongoing commitment to racial equity, and to CEO Héctor Colón for leading the organization thoughtfully through this critical time of self-reflection.



LIBERTY LUTHERAN COMMUNITY, THE VILLAGE AT PENN STATE

July 17, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Liberty Lutheran's retirement community, The Village at Penn State, which continues to offer fun activities for residents to stay active throughout the pandemic.

Located in State College, Pennsylvania, The Village is proud of its close relationship with Penn State University. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, residents were often found at the university, attending University sporting events, arts programs, and taking classes.

As a continuing care retirement community, The Village offers an array of options and services at all stages of retirement, including independent living, personal care and skilled nursing. Over the past several months, the staff have taken extra precautions to prevent the virus from entering the community, and to-date there have been no cases among residents or staff.



During the height of the pandemic in Pennsylvania, residents were offered activities that they could do within the comfort of their own apartments or cottages, while meals were delivered right to their door. Now that the surrounding area is opening up according to the criteria created by Pennsylvania's Governor and Department of Health, staff and residents are able to take part in outdoor activities.

"Once we explained everything to our residents, they understood and worked with our staff to do everything they could to stay safe," says Ellen Corbin, The Village's executive director.

"We have a wonderful team here, and even though we've had no cases we continue to work hard as we ease into a new normal."

Thank you to everyone at The Village at Penn State for your hard work and commitment to keeping your residents safe. Lutheran Services in America is proud to highlight your work as a source for home and peace of mind for older adults and their families.

PURPOSE — HAS ITS — PLACE

Modern Healthcare
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2020



ADVOCATE AURORA HEALTH

July 16, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Advocate Aurora Health for creating a positive work environment for its employees, even amid the challenges of COVID-19. Advocate Aurora Health is one of the 10 largest non-profit health systems, and a leading employer in the Midwest. It includes more than 500 sites and serves more than 3 million patients annually. With an aim to help people live well, Advocate Aurora is a national leader in clinical innovation, health outcomes, consumer experience, and value-based care.

Modern Healthcare named Advocate Aurora Health on its 2020 Best Places to Work in Healthcare list. This award program "identifies and recognizes outstanding employers in the health care industry nationwide," and selects award recipients based on their work empowering teams to provide patients and consumers with the best possible care. Also considered in the selection process is transparency in communication from leadership, generosity of benefits for employees, and navigation of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Best Companies Group assists Modern Healthcare in the assessment process, which includes an extensive employee survey. Modern Healthcare's editor, Aurora Aguilar said that 2020 has been a difficult year for everyone, but especially for those working in healthcare as COVID-19 continues to ravage communities. The organizations recognized this year were a source of strength for their teammates and have built trust during a critical period.

"Our 75,000 team members, physicians and nurses are the heart and soul of Advocate Aurora Health and their commitment to providing safe, high quality care to our patients enables us to fulfill our purpose of helping people live well," said Jim Skogsbergh, president and chief executive officer of Advocate Aurora Health. "We are honored to be recognized as a top workplace and remain committed to building our culture and ensuring an engaging environment for our team members to have a rewarding experience and pursue their passion." Thank you to Advocate Aurora Health for fostering a positive work environment for employees throughout the pandemic, and for your commitment to holistic wellbeing for employees, and the larger community!

BLUE VALLEY LUTHERAN HOMES

July 15, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Blue Valley Lutheran Homes, which is forging creative partnerships to access supplies needed to adequately address COVID-19, and remaining transparent and communicative with families throughout the pandemic.

Blue Valley Lutheran Homes (BLVH) is a faith-based senior living facility that has served south-central Nebraska since 1948. Its mission is to care for the elderly and mentally challenged with dignity and respect through Christian love and compassion. Its services include nursing care, assisted living, long-term care, respite care, and rehabilitation services. BVLH is also committed to the spiritual well-being of its residents, and offers worship services of all denominations, as well as Bible studies, and other daily activities that cater to residents' interests.



As needed resources continue to be in short supply, Blue Valley Lutheran Homes is leaning on its partners to help with access to hand sanitizer. The Nebraska Health Care Association received donations of hand sanitizer from Tito's Handmade Vodka, so that nursing homes and assisted living facilities in Nebraska can continue protecting seniors in their care. BVLH jumped on the opportunity, and leveraged its partnerships to ensure it has the resources needed to keep residents safe.

In addition to those creative partnerships, BVLH is working hard to be transparent with families throughout the pandemic. Families are understandably worried about their loved ones in congregate care, so BVLH has made concerted efforts to post public updates about the state of COVID-19 in the facility, even as there are no cases. BVLH is also keeping families updated on cases in the county, and the steps it has taken in accordance with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reduce the potential for the virus to enter the BVLH building. BVLH has committed to alerting families within 48 hours if there is a case in the building.

Thank you to Blue Valley Lutheran Homes for your creativity and transparency as you address the COVID-19 pandemic, and for your commitment to compassionate care for seniors!

MOSAIC

July 14, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Mosaic, whose Direct Support Professionals are going above and beyond in the time of COVID-19.

The virus entered one of Mosaic's group homes in March, and four people within one home tested positive. The team members in that home all responded with great courage, but Andrea Young's work stood out, in particular. As residents were required to isolate in their rooms, Andrea took extra time with each person and maintained a regular schedule with them. She consistently reassured them and ended her evening shifts each day by going into each person's room for a visit. Andrea asked the residents to name something they would enjoy, like a special dinner, an activity the two of them could do together, or virtual visits with loved ones, and she ensured those things happened.



She volunteered to work extra hours, and paid close attention to ensure that the home had proper protective equipment for the staff and medication supplies for the residents. Andrea kept a positive attitude and helped the fellow staff when they were feeling worn. According to her supervisor, Andrea made the day bright, even when things were scary.

Erika Estrada is employed at Mosaic's Central Nebraska agency, and when various staff, including Erika's supervisor, were forced to self-quarantine and work from home, Erika took on new roles. There is no job title Erika has not filled or supported during this time of crisis; she has served as a manager, DSA, trainer, behavior support specialist, co-worker, supervisor, friend, and the list goes on. At the beginning of the pandemic, Erika purchased a sewing machine and materials to sew cloth masks for herself and her co-workers to protect them.

Mikayla Jaras works in day service for Mosaic's Northeast Nebraska agency. Mikayla has been wonderfully creative in engaging the staff and individuals at Norfolk/Hartington day. She has organized scavenger hunts, had daily selfie contests with different themes, scheduled drive by's to celebrate birthdays, and made sure everyone feels included and connected. She recently started overseeing a new location (Hartington, NE) and has welcomed them to the Northeast team.

Thank you to Andrea, Erika, and Mikayla for the love you show to the people you serve, and your commitment to Mosaic's important work!

IMMANUEL COMMUNITIES

July 13, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Immanuel Communities, which is providing supports to seniors living independently throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Immanuel is a leader in the retirement living field, offering innovative programs in independent living, assisted living, memory support, and long-term care. Its faith-based mission guides the work at Immanuel, with a commitment to Christ-centered service to seniors, each other, and the community. Immanuel includes campuses across Nebraska, and two in Iowa, and with twelve decades of service, Immanuel is a trusted partner in those communities.

Immanuel published a recent blog post to help family members know how to best support their loved ones with dementia and Alzheimer's during the COVID-19 pandemic. The blog post recognizes that the pandemic has meant changing daily routines, which can pose a significant challenge for seniors, and enhance the experience of memory loss. Cameo Rogers, a Certified Dementia Practitioner with a passion for serving seniors with memory loss provided her expertise for this blog.

She says that seniors, especially with early signs of dementia, can be at greater risk during COVID-19 social distancing. Rogers provides tangible suggestions for family members who are worried about older adults with memory loss, including sending them care packages with activities like simple puzzles, helping set up grocery delivery, using technology to connect with them, and helping them establish routines. The post also points family members to Immanuel's memory support services, where Rogers is active teaching best practices through national-level memory loss programs. Immanuel's memory support services tailor programming to each individual, understanding that everyone has unique memory support needs.

Experts at Immanuel are also providing resources to help seniors thrive during the pandemic. Its Thriving at Home for Seniors resource page includes resources for seniors and families with information on connecting during social distancing, how to stay well, eat well, and others. Thank you to Immanuel for your work to support seniors holistically during the COVID-19 pandemic!





GRACEWORKS LUTHERAN SERVICES

July 10, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Graceworks Lutheran Services, which is committed to helping residents in its Enhanced Living community reach their goals.

Headquartered in Dayton, OH, Graceworks Lutheran Services has faithfully cared for people in challenging and changing circumstances for nearly a century. Graceworks is rooted in the Christian faith, and dedicated to upholding personal dignity and wholeness of life for people of all faiths. Its programs include housing services, senior living, and programs for people with disabilities. Graceworks Enhanced Living offers residential and day programming to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, offering opportunities for them to be active within their community and live independently with dignity.

When resident Bobby moved into the Graceworks Enhanced Living Anthony Home in April 2020, he shared his dream of running a 5K with the staff. The Graceworks staff eagerly began working to help Bobby achieve this dream. One of the Direct Support staff members, Aji, has been helping Bobby train by running alongside him, encouraging him and celebrating him the whole way. Aji knows that at the end of the day, running a 5K is a goal Bobby will achieve on his own, but in the meantime, she is there to cheer him on as he works toward his dream. See Bobby's inspiring video [here](#).

Bobby and Aji's story is a wonderful example of how the Graceworks Enhanced Living staff work every day to enhance all residents' lives and help them live interdependently with dignity, wholeness, and respect. Thank you to Graceworks Lutheran Services for your commitment to supporting people with disabilities live full lives and realize their dreams!



LUTHERAN SERVICES IN IOWA

July 9, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Services in Iowa for its ongoing support of refugees in its community.

Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) provides a program called Global Greens, which supports refugee farmers in the Des Moines community. The program teaches farmers to grow chemical-free Iowa vegetables, as well as vegetables from their home countries, and provides them access to small garden plots near their homes. The farmers receive training and support from LSI at the Valley Community Center, and the garden plots near their homes are available through a cooperative partnership with the City of Des Moines, volunteers, and private landowners.

The farmers are empowered to eventually sell their products at the Downtown Farmers' Market and across Des Moines. COVID-19 required the Farmers' Market to close in 2020, but the LSI Global Greens Farmers' Market is still operating safely, and provides the refugees with a place to sell products from their gardens on Saturdays in May through October.

In addition to the Global Greens Market, LSI offers a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, which supports more than 20 refugee families. Through the CSA, community members receive boxes of the locally grown food, along with recipes from refugees' home countries, including Bhutan, Burundi, and Rwanda. LSI offers a space for community members to safely pick up their CSA boxes, or they can have the boxes delivered for a small fee.

Thank you to Lutheran Services in Iowa for your committed support of refugees in your community, and for empowering them to offer locally grown food to Iowans!



LUTHERAN SENIORLIFE

July 8, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran SeniorLife, which is using humor to lift spirits at the Passavant Community. Lutheran SeniorLife offers senior living communities in western Pennsylvania, and is committed to providing opportunities for seniors to live abundantly. From active retirement living to assisted living to in-home assistance, Lutheran SeniorLife is committed to serving seniors regardless of physical condition or financial circumstances.

Lutheran SeniorLife's Passavant Community in Zelienople, PA includes residential care and skilled nursing. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Passavant staff began delivering meals to seniors in their rooms to avoid congregating and keep residents safe from the virus. Staff recognized that residents are experiencing isolation since they must stay in their rooms, so the dietary team came up with a solution to help brighten residents' days.

The dietary team added a postcard to each resident's meal with a pun about food. Messages like, "We can 'beet' this together" and "we're eggstatic to be keeping you healthy" brought smiles to residents' faces, and reminded them that the staff care deeply about their well-being. One staff member even created original artwork for each card. The cards were signed by a member of the dietary team and attached to 400 meals delivered to the residents. The messages were such fun for all involved that the team plans to make punny cards again!

Thank you to Lutheran SeniorLife for the love you show to the seniors you serve, and your desire to help them through the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic!

“

*Not seeing
you is
'bacon' us
crazy.*

LSF HEALTH SYSTEMS

July 7, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Services Florida Health Systems, which is working to address crisis fatigue in the community, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and national newfound awareness of systemic racism.

Located in Jacksonville, FL, Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) Health Systems provides behavioral health care for people who face poverty and are without insurance. LSF Health Systems serves 23 counties in Northeast and North Central Florida, and aims to ensure that every child and adult in need receives appropriate services.

Christine Cauffield, licensed clinical psychologist and CEO of LSF Health Systems, spoke on the local news in Jacksonville, FL to make viewers aware of the issue of crisis fatigue. According to Cauffield, there are unprecedented levels of stress resulting from the pandemic, economic downturn, and national awareness of racial inequity. This heightened stress leads to what psychologists call crisis fatigue. Typically, people go into fight or flight mode during emergencies, and return to homeostasis when the emergency has abated. In the current context, Americans are constantly on hyper alert without returning to homeostasis, flooding bodies with cortisol and adrenaline and causing fatigue.



Cauffield noticed crisis fatigue having a significant impact on Floridians, and says that people seeking support at LSF Health Systems are reportedly feeling a myriad of emotions, including rage, hypervigilance, depression, and anxiety. She says that these are normal reactions to the abnormal situation, but that it is necessary to bring balance back to life and move forward in a healthy and productive way. Cauffield recommends balancing the negative state of affairs with joy, and reaching out to trusted loved ones for support. She says that reaching out is a sign of health, and can help mitigate the mental effects of crisis fatigue.

Thank you to LSF Health Systems for your work addressing crisis fatigue, and for making the public aware of the issue and how to mitigate the mental health impact.

GENACROSS LUTHERAN SERVICES

July 6, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Genacross Lutheran Services for designating a rehabilitation center as a COVID-19 isolation unit and helping community members as they recover from the virus. In mid-April, near the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ohio, Genacross designated The Labuhn Center, a free-standing rehabilitation center on its Toledo Campus, as a COVID-19 isolation unit. Team members work exclusively in the unit and wear full personal protection equipment (PPE).

"Genacross made the decision to begin admitting COVID-19 patients from local hospitals," said Rick Marshall, Genacross President/CEO. "This is a service to the community at large and aligns with the Genacross mission and values to serve individuals in need." The preparation of this specialized unit took a great deal of time and dedication by the Toledo Campus team members. From maintenance changing the airflow system to the administration and nursing management teams determining where to enter and exit the unit and where to don and remove PPE, the logistics were daunting.

In addition, the dietary department had to design a new meal delivery process, and housekeeping and laundry had to determine the best practices for delivering their much needed services. The activities team was integral as well, providing inspiring ways to enrich the lives of the residents in isolation. Several nursing team members, who are required to wear full PPE for four hours at a time with no breaks, answered the call to serve the residents in isolation. These dedicated team members are walking with the residents through the journey of this pandemic and have provided physical healing, as well as emotional and spiritual support.

To date, The Labuhn Center on the Toledo Campus has serve more than 40 patients from area hospitals. One of those patients was Gladys Sigarroa, who was in town visiting her daughter when she became ill and was diagnosed with COVID-19. She had been in the hospital for more than 30 days and spent 27 days on a ventilator. When Gladys came to the Toledo Campus to continue her recovery, she was on a puree diet and unable to walk. After more than 20 days of nursing and therapy services, she was finally able to return home. Team members held a Clap Out for Gladys in front of The Labuhn Center as she walked out of the building to celebrate her healing, and shared the video of the Clap Out on the Genacross Facebook page.

"The team at our Toledo Campus is doing some amazing work with recovering patients," Mr. Marshall said. "Their compassion and dedication are to be commended." Thank you to Genacross and all the committed staff who work there for serving your community's needs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic!

ECUMEN

July 2, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Ecumen for its commitment to supporting a strong staff and a strong community. Ecumen operates a variety of senior housing options and services, including cooperative senior housing, independent living, assisted living, long-term care, short-term rehabilitation care, home care, and hospice. It serves nearly 20,000 individuals annually across 30 cities in Minnesota, Idaho, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, North Dakota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. The large organization remains rooted in its Lutheran heritage and values, and is committed to treating seniors with dignity and respect.



Throughout the month of June, Ecumen publicly demonstrated its value for social justice. In response to the death of George Floyd, President and CEO Shelley Kendrick released a statement declaring that Ecumen stands in solidarity with Black communities in the fight against racial injustice and inequality. She quoted Martin Luther King, Jr., saying, "The time is always right to do what is right." Ecumen also celebrated Juneteenth Freedom Day on June 19th, and publicly stated its commitment to upholding values of social justice for all it serves, its team members, and as members of the greater community.

Ecumen also joined in Pride Month in June, and raised its voice for social justice, equality, and peace. It celebrated its LGBTQ family and friends, and reaffirmed that Ecumen welcomes, serves, and employs all people.

In addition to joining in the fights for social justice, Ecumen ensures that it recognizes its staff for their hard work and commitment to those they serve. Ecumen started a campaign it calls #EcumenStrong, in which it honors its staff for their strength and endurance throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This video shows Ecumen residents thanking the staff, and recognizing that they bring joy to Ecumen and lift the spirits of residents, while also offering high quality care.

Thank you to Ecumen for your many efforts to promote social justice in your community and recognize the hard work of your staff!

LSS LUTHERAN VILLAGE

July 1, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is LSS Lutheran Village, which held a car parade to connect families and residents while maintaining necessary social distancing.

LSS Lutheran Village is an assisted living facility in Ashland, OH, and is a program of Lutheran Social Services, which provides services in 27 counties in Ohio. The LSS Network of Hope's mission is to contribute to a better world by serving people in need, and at the LSS Lutheran Village, the organization lives out its faith by providing seniors with excellent healthcare services within a welcoming, home-like setting.

LSS Lutheran Village recognizes that its residents are missing their families with the necessary visitor restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. So that residents and families could see each other while maintaining social distancing to keep everyone safe, LSS Lutheran Village hosted a car parade. There was a great turnout with 35 cars and 22 families participating! It was a very emotional event, as the residents and families hadn't seen each other in a long time and were overjoyed to interact, even if from a distance. Executive Director, ShaNa Benner said the day of the car parade was the "best day in all my 18 years here!"



Thank you to LSS Lutheran Village for your creativity in connecting residents to their families!

VILLAGE ON THE ISLE

June 30, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Village On The Isle, which held a celebration for the graduates employed there.

Village On The Isle (VOTI) is an independent living retirement community in Venice, FL that is committed to sharing God's love by promoting individual growth and dignity, enhancing the quality of life, and meeting the spiritual needs of its residents, staff, and community. VOTI certainly demonstrated that commitment when it recently celebrated the high school and college graduates it employs.

Many of VOTI's part-time employees are high school and college students. Six of the high schoolers and three of the college students graduated this year, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic, they did not have a typical graduation ceremony and celebration.

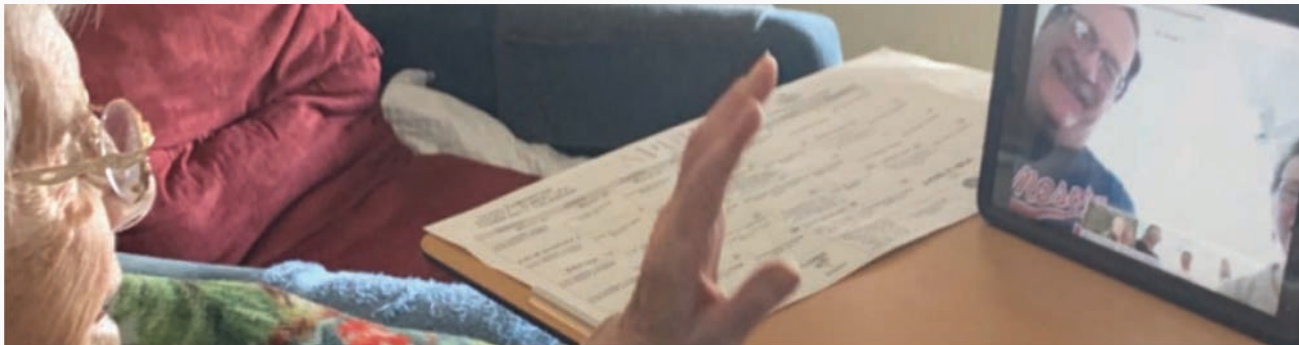
VOTI hosted a ceremony to honor its graduating employees, which was attended by the students, their families, and had a huge resident turnout. The ceremony included speeches, and all of the necessary social distancing safeguards to keep everyone safe from COVID-19.

The VOTI residents loved celebrating the graduates, and said it brought back happy memories of their own graduations, as well as those of their children and grandchildren. The residents care deeply about the students who work on staff, and many contribute generously to the Resident Scholarship Fund. They were delighted to see how their investment in the young VOTI employees' education has resulted in graduating nurses, business leaders, and others.



The love that is present in the VOTI community is felt, and one of the parents of a graduate posted on Facebook, saying that the staff and residents truly care about the employees.

Thank you to Village On The Isle for fostering a community of love that supports young people and celebrates their accomplishments!



THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY

June 29, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, which purchased 1,000 iPads to keep families and residents connected and safe.

The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society provides senior care in 26 states, and is rooted in its faith-based mission and focus on compassionate care. When the COVID-19 outbreak hit and the Good Samaritan Society locations had to enforce visitor restrictions, leadership worried about increasing isolation at the senior care locations. Leadership wanted to find ways to keep residents engaged with their families, while keeping them safe from COVID-19.

Soon after the pandemic began, the organization made efforts to connect families and residents by purchasing 1,000 iPads for its rehab/skilled care and assisted living locations. Helping residents connect to their loved ones has become such a part of daily life that staff at many of those locations say they can't imagine life without the iPads. Staff say their calendars have been full of video appointments since the iPads arrived, and that the video chats are the next best thing to allowing visitors into the building. The iPads are now also being used for doctor's visits, music therapy, and screenings and check-ins.

The Good Samaritan Society leadership recognize that giving residents the opportunity to connect to their families is giving them life. Thank you to the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society for your commitment to seniors' well-being, and helping prevent social isolation by providing resources for virtual family visits!



DIAKON

June 26, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries and Diakon Family Life Services, which is offering an online coffee and conversation support group to the community.

Diakon offers a range of senior lifestyle and healthcare services, as well as programs for children, youth, and families in Pennsylvania and Maryland. Diakon's name means "one assigned by the church to minister to the needs of others," and it takes that name seriously, directly serving more than 70,000 individuals annually.

The COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn have induced stress and anxiety for many Americans. Diakon is working to support the emotional and psychological needs of its community, and began offering an online support group in June. Every Wednesday and Friday, Diakon therapists host a Coffee and Conversation online support group through Zoom. It is free to participate, and Diakon invites all who are interested in meeting new people, chatting about life, or just looking for something new to add to a morning routine. Adults gather with their morning beverage of choice, and get to know the Diakon therapists and each other through conversation, providing a safe place for discussion.

Thank you to Diakon for your work to support the emotional and psychological needs of your community through the COVID-19 pandemic!



GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN COMMUNITY

June 25, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Good Shepherd Lutheran Community, which is caring for the physical, social, and emotional needs of its residents.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Community is a senior living community in Blair, Nebraska, offering skilled nursing care, assisted living, subsidized housing, and independent living. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Good Shepherd Lutheran Community has worked hard to keep residents safe and healthy, including following all guidelines from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and remaining in frequent contact with other entities at the national, state, and local levels to remain up to date on protocols. The team at Good Shepherd Lutheran Community met daily to discuss operations, keeping the residents' physical, cognitive, and psychosocial well-being at the forefront of all they do.

Like many other senior living communities, restricting visitors has been tough for the residents at Good Shepherd Lutheran Community. Administrator Sharon Colling said that while visitor restrictions have been in place, residents have been able to interact with their families at the door of the facilities or spoken through the glass, and Good Shepherd has iPads onsite for residents to use to talk with their families.

Recently, Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts announced that, though it will be a long process, long-term care facilities can begin phasing in to opening soon to allow visitors. Nebraska is still in Phase 1 of reopening and it isn't until Phase 3 that visitors are allowed for limited visitation, but the state has requested plans from facilities like Good Shepherd as they prepare for what Phase 3 will look like. HHS and CMS released guidance for long-term care facilities, which Good Shepherd used to craft a safe plan for visitation, which would allow for visitors by appointment only, in designated areas, and with everyone wearing masks.

Collings said she is really excited for when Good Shepherd can allow visitors, and she will notify families as soon as plans are approved by the state. "I know how difficult it is for the residents, and there is nothing I'm looking forward to more than for them being together," Colling said. "The separation of the residents and their families has been the most difficult thing I have ever endured in my career."

Thank you to Good Shepherd Lutheran Community for keeping your residents' holistic well-being as a top priority, and for making well-informed plans to safely allow for visitors soon!

SAMARITAS

June 24, 2020

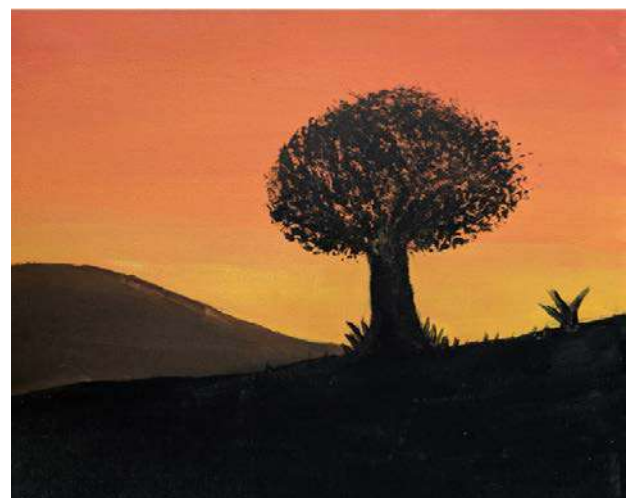
Today's Front Line Hero is Samaritas, which continues to support refugees through programming like the virtual 2020 Youth Refugee Art Show.

Samaritas is one of Michigan's largest faith-based, nonprofit health and human services agencies, serving the state since 1934. Samaritas works to transform "entire communities one life at a time," with services for seniors, children and families, refugees, and others. Services include multiple programs for young refugees, including an unaccompanied refugee minor program, refugee foster care, transitional foster care, host homes, mentoring, tutoring, and interpreters. These programs help support youth as they transition to life in the United States, and provide them with a stable environment, as well as resources to help heal from past traumas.

Samaritas hosts an annual youth art show, with all proceeds supporting Refugee Youth Services programs. All of the art on display was created by the young people in the Samaritas Refugee Foster Care program. Art gives the youth an outlet to express themselves, and Samaritas celebrates their creativity, vibrancy, and energy.

This year's art show is virtual due to the COVID-19 outbreak, and Samaritas is hosting an excellent virtual event. The art show video is here, and Samaritas' online store provides the opportunity for shoppers to have their favorite piece printed on any of the items found in the online store.

Thank you to Samaritas for your commitment to refugees in your community, and for your creativity with programming in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.



LUTHERAN SERVICES CAROLINAS

June 23, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Services Carolinas, which held Father's Day celebrations at its senior care communities.

Lutheran Services Carolinas (LSC) is motivated by Christian faith to walk together with all people it serves.

One of the many services it provides is senior living facilities across North Carolina, including independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing care, memory care, and rehabilitation services.

On Sunday, June 21, LSC's senior living communities celebrated Father's Day. Staff at the communities posted videos with messages from residents' families, wishing them a happy Father's Day. The staff and residents also spoke about what being a father means to them, and posted the videos on social media. For example, Trinity Oaks resident, John McWhorter, was interviewed, and he reflected on being a father, saying that to him, it was about molding a life and seeing another soul grow and develop. Chaplain Paul Myers at Trinity Village says for him, being a father allows the opportunity to pass on the love that he received when he was growing up to the next generation.

Family members sent loving cards and videos to their dads at LSC senior living communities. The communities also celebrated on Sunday with cards from the staff, doughnuts and coffee at Trinity Glen, and breakfast biscuits at Trinity Place.

Thank you to the dedicated Lutheran Services Carolinas staff at senior living communities who celebrated fathers on Sunday, and reminded them that they are loved!



LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF ILLINOIS

June 22, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, which is making efforts to recognize its staff's hard work with a segment it calls, "Healing Heroes."

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) began serving Illinois in 1867 and touched nearly 50,000 lives across the state in 2019. LSSI's mission is to bring healing, justice, and wholeness to people and communities, and it provides a wide array of services including foster care, mental health services, alcohol and drug treatment, various senior services, residential programs for individuals with disabilities, and programs to help people who were formerly incarcerated reintegrate into society.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, staff at LSSI are working to address new challenges in the community brought on by the pandemic and economic downturn. LSSI is recognizing the efforts of individual staff with stories of the "Healing Heroes" on its Facebook page.

One of the Healing Heroes LSSI recognized is Isis Sanchez, a social worker at LSSI's Intact Family Services Child Welfare, who is deeply committed to serving families in her community. Recently, Isis faced the challenge of assisting a single-parent family with three children who became homeless during the pandemic. Homeless shelters were on lockdown, complicating the referral system, and the family was forced to live in their car temporarily. Isis worked hard to support this family by working with schools and referring organizations, while simultaneously securing temporary housing, which is difficult to find.



Isis was successful in her efforts, and secured housing for the family in a hotel until they can find a more sustainable solution, and accessed emergency funding through the Department of Child and Family Services to provide financial support to the family.

Thank you to LSSI staff like Isis Sanchez, who are determined to serve families in need during the pandemic, and to LSSI for recognizing and supporting their service.

MOSAIC

June 19, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Mosaic, which is thoughtfully responding to both the COVID-19 pandemic and systemic racism in our country.

Based in Omaha, Nebraska, Mosaic provides services for people with intellectual and development disabilities, supports behavioral health and people with autism, and offers care for seniors. Mosaic's reach is far and wide, serving more than 3,700 people in 10 states. The organization aims to empower people to be as independent as possible, while providing individualized, loving care.

As part of its commitment to the health of the people it serves, its employees, and the community, Mosaic has taken precautionary measures to keep people safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. It publicly released a comprehensive plan that considers everything from staffing to protective equipment to daily operations, ensuring transparency with the community. Mosaic also calls on the community to help prevent the spread of the virus with social distancing.



The staff at Mosaic have continued their dedicated work throughout the pandemic, and found ways to engage people with disabilities in fun activities. From sending messages to family members, to wearing funny hats, to simply getting outside to enjoy the nice weather, Mosaic staff are always looking for ways to brighten the days of those they serve.

In addition to its COVID-19 response, Mosaic thoughtfully responded to the death of George Floyd and pervasive racial inequity in the United States. Mosaic's president and CEO, Linda Timmons, released a statement reaffirming Mosaic's longstanding commitment to the inclusion of all people and its unequivocal stand against systemic racism. Linda calls on each of us to first "look deep inside ourselves and ask what biases about race we hold," and then ask "how our actions or inactions, which come from those biases, have contributed to the problem." Mosaic's leadership is committed to engaging in that personal reflection, and to leading the organization to make a difference.

Thank you to Mosaic for your continued commitment to empowering your community and promoting racial equity!

COMPASS HOUSING ALLIANCE

June 18, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Compass Housing Alliance, which has made significant adjustments to protect its guests, residents, and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Located in Seattle, WA, Compass Housing Alliance provides essential services and affordable housing for people who are homeless, and those with low-income. The organization is rooted in the Lutheran tradition of showing care to neighbors through service, and welcomes all people equally with love.

Compass Housing Alliance took intentional steps to protect its community from the spread of the COVID-19 virus, including de-intensifying emergency shelters. De-intensifying means moving some guests to new locations in order to give enough room for proper social distancing in the shelters, and a new location at the Miller Community Center was opened in March to provide the additional space required.

Steven has been with Compass Housing Alliance for nearly two years and is a program coordinator at the Miller Shelter. "We are seeing a lot of people coming through," Steven said. "The need is big, even before COVID. There are just so many reasons that people experience homelessness. We take real care at intake to not judge people or assume they are here for this or that reason . . . We work with them, we give them the tools, but it is up to them to use them."

The Miller Shelter took on 35 guests from the Compass First Presbyterian Shelter and 15 from the Blaine Center Shelter. The Miller Shelter features 24/7 access, on-site laundry, showers, hygiene services, common rooms with ping pong and TVs, and a laundry service for bedding.

Compass Housing Alliance has staff on hand 24/7 at the Miller Community Center, and the case managers from their original shelter are available to guests. "We have phones, computers, and everything is socially distanced and masked up," Steven said. "We get our meals, three hot meals a day, from Operation Sack Lunch. The dining area and all the common rooms are spaced out and follow CDC and public health guidelines."

Staff does spot cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day and have a professional cleaning service that comes in twice a day, as well. There have been no positive cases of COVID-19 at the Miller Shelter.

"The other thing I love that we do is the services we provide," Steven said. "Sometimes the support someone needs is as simple as covering the cost for something like a driver's license, or first and last month's rent. We have built into our program ways to remove the barriers that keep people from getting out of homelessness. Sometimes they just need a little support to change their own lives."



LUTHERAN LIFE VILLAGES

June 17, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Life Villages, which is publicly thanking its staff for their hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic, including posting messages of gratitude on billboards.

Lutheran Life Villages is a senior living facility with four campuses in Northeast Indiana, and is committed to ensuring a welcoming atmosphere for residents and compassionate, high-quality care. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Lutheran Life Villages has been creatively engaging its residents by offering activities such as social distancing Bible trivia and Bingo, virtual boxing classes, and ice cream carts delivering treats to residents' homes.

The staff at Lutheran Life Villages have been working hard to ensure that residents are safe, and feel connected to their community. Staff have implemented strict protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and are encouraging the residents to increase handwashing and sanitizing. The staff are also going out of their way to provide fun activities. One member of the dining staff played the saxophone to entertain the residents, and there always seem to be fun themed days and safe, socially distanced events.

Lutheran Life Villages is grateful for their staff's continuous, creative, and compassionate work to serve the residents. There have been "dress like a rock star days," to recognize that the staff are rock stars, and campaigns encouraging residents to send notes of gratitude to staff for their hard work. Lutheran Life Villages even posted messages thanking staff for their work on billboards around town.

Thank you to the staff at Lutheran Life Villages for your dedication to the residents, and to the administration for recognizing them publicly!



LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF NEVADA

June 16, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Services of Nevada (LSSN), which is providing food pantry services every day during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lutheran Social Services of Nevada (LSSN) has provided services in Las Vegas for more than 25 years, and is a trusted source of support in the community. It began with a small group of dedicated volunteers wanting to provide food and clothing to their neighbors in need, and has since expanded to provide a wide array of services, including supports for low-income individuals and families, veterans, seniors, and people with disabilities.

LSSN is well-known for its significant contributions to food security in Las Vegas. Food programs include an online food pantry called DigiMart, mobile food distribution events, nutrition classes, live cooking demonstrations, and meal programs for seniors. As the need for food assistance increased due to the recent economic downturn, LSSN expanded its services to meet that need. It suspended its normal registration requirements for DigiMart and increased the food pantry's size significantly, and transferred Cooking Matters classes to Zoom.

The Partnership for Food Safety Education recognized LSSN on World Food Safety Day, June 7, for its contribution to food security in Las Vegas. The organization highlighted LSSN employee, Nicolas Salas, as a 2020 food safety hero. Nicolas provides food services to pantry shoppers each day during the COVID-19 shutdown. He is the first in the building and the last to leave, and keeps to pantry organized and efficient so shoppers can have a joyful experience at LSSN.

Thank you to LSSN for serving your community's nutritional needs, and especially to Nicolas Salas for his tireless work at the food pantry!



LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF NEW YORK

June 15, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Services of New York (LSSNY), which is making efforts to recognize the unsung heroes of the pandemic.

Lutheran Social Services of New York (LSSNY) has sustained and even amplified its much-needed services in New York throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. LSSNY continues to serve its community, including the formerly homeless, people struggling with addiction, immigrants and refugees, people living with mental illness, families who are food insecure, and children in foster care.

Though they are providing crucial services in New York, social services providers are often overlooked. People thank doctors and nurses for their important work during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they forget about other care providers like social workers, case managers, and many others who are continuing their essential work. At the beginning of April, LSSNY started a series in which they recognize those unsung heroes in their midst.

Last week, LSSNY recognized Sandra Bisono, a case planner for LSSNY's foster care program. For the last two years, Sandra has juggled part-time work at LSSNY and full-time graduate school, and she graduated this year with her masters in social work from Fordham University. LSSNY recently promoted Sandra to a foster care supervision position, a job she has worked hard to achieve and truly earned. Sandra has always stepped up to take on additional work to support the program, and is willing to help whenever needed.

During COVID-19, Sandra has gone the extra mile for her clients, including a 5+ hour's long trip to the emergency room with an 11-year-old girl when a foster parent couldn't leave her other children at home alone. She maintains her composure amidst the challenges COVID-19 presents so she can serve her clients well. Fordham University's alumni magazine also recently recognized Sandra in a piece about alumni on the front lines of the pandemic.

Thank you to LSSNY employees like Sandra Bisono who are committed to the community they serve during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to LSSNY for elevating their work!

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICE OF MINNESOTA

June 12, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSSMN), which is providing much needed resources to its community in times of unrest and uncertainty.

On June 2, LSSMN put out a call to its community for donations to support people in Minneapolis impacted by grocery store closures, damaged business, and transportation challenges. With just two days' notice, the community members showed up on June 4 with immense generosity. People from all over Minnesota arrived at the LSSMN donation drive with van loads of supplies to support their fellow Minnesotans. Donations came in the form of financial gifts, gift cards for grocery stores and transportation, baby items, hygiene items, and household supplies. People also donated their time, with more than 65 volunteers working at the donation drive.

Word spread quickly among residents in Minneapolis, and the LSSMN became a go-to distribution center for people in need.

LSSMN recognizes that the need for resources will persist in Minneapolis, and it plans to continue the donation drive. LSSMN expresses its gratitude to the hundreds of Minnesotans who demonstrated an outpouring of compassion and support for their neighbors.

Thank you to LSSMN for helping to resource residents in Minneapolis, and for fostering unity across the state!



LUTHERAN FAMILY SERVICES OF VIRGINIA

June 11, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Family Services of Virginia, which is making efforts to ensure the Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are shown well-deserved recognition for their hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Lutheran Family Services of Virginia (LFSVA) has provided support and services to children, families, and adults for 130 years. Their programming includes services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, helping children in foster care find temporary or permanent families, adoption counseling, and supporting children with behavioral challenges.

LFSVA offers a wide community of care for individuals with intellectual disabilities, and their efforts are driven by the belief that everyone is worthy. They provide extensive programming to address needs across the state, including group homes, day support, in-home care, and a supported employment to help people with disabilities who seek to fulfill their dream of a real job with a real wage.

The Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who serve adults with intellectual disabilities are considered essential, and have continued their work every day throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating their deep commitment to the individuals they support. LFSVA is grateful for those DSPs and their heroic efforts through the pandemic, and showed their gratitude by purchasing hoodies with a logo that identifies the DSPs as heroes. The LFSVA employees love the hoodies, and DSPs Stormie Shelton, Ang Quinn, and Vicky Hurt are shown above wearing the hoodies proudly and posing as superheroes, with smiles on their faces

Thank you to the incredible Direct Support Professionals who work hard every day to serve individuals with disabilities across Virginia, and to the staff at LFSVA who are recognizing them as heroes!

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF WISCONSIN & UPPER MICHIGAN

June 10, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin & Upper Michigan, which recently released a powerful statement about the death of George Floyd and the ongoing struggle for racial equity.

LSS of Wisconsin & Upper Michigan provides a wide array of holistic services, including programming for children and families, people suffering from addiction, refugees, people with disabilities, and seniors. For generations, LSS has been addressing the states' most complex challenges with the core values to act compassionately, serve humbly, and lead courageously.

LSS President and CEO Héctor Colón demonstrated that courageous leadership with a recent statement he shared with LSS employees, the board of directors, community members, and the media. In the statement, Colón shares his thoughts on George Floyd's tragic death, and he begins by reading Floyd's last words as he died at the hands of the police in Minneapolis. Colón says that his heart pains seeing the video and reports of Floyd's death, as well as the larger story of racial and ethnic disparities that continue to exist in our justice system, healthcare system, and other systems in society.

Colón recognizes that his experience as a person of color differ from the experiences of George Floyd and others in the African American community, but he can identify with some of the racial and ethnic injustices. He relives some of his own experiences with racial injustice, including being needlessly stopped and aggressively searched by the police, having obscenities and racial slurs yelled at him, and being prohibited entry from establishments due to his race.

Colón is hopeful that the country can unite to address complex challenges in our society, and that some good can come from this tragic event. He calls on the viewer to look to systems and policies that foster the conditions in which senseless violence against people of color are allowed to occur, and to act courageously to change those systems. Colón quotes Martin Luther King, Jr., who said that, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." He encourages us to peacefully seek justice, and to act compassionately in the fight for racial equality.

Thank you to Héctor Colón and all the staff at Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin & Upper Michigan who continue to act compassionately, serve humbly, lead courageously, and stand in support of the infinite worth of black lives.

LUTHERAN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF ILLINOIS

June 9, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois, which is speaking out against structural racism, and is dedicated to dismantling inequitable systems in society.

LCFS of Illinois improves the wellbeing of people across Illinois through their children, youth, and families services. They offer programs such as foster care, adoption, and counseling, and their mission is to nurture children and strengthen families in need.

As part of the LCFS Illinois mission and vision, the organization voices a commitment to be color cognizant, "believing in the importance of racial and ethnic differences because of their profound impact on individuals, groups, communities and society, as well as acknowledging the accompanying widespread racism and discrimination in our broader society." LCFS of Illinois has made a public profession to be a place where explicit, productive conversations about race are welcomed, and advocates for racial justice.

After the recent death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police and the protests that followed, LCFS of Illinois released a statement about social justice and racial inequity that aligns with their long-standing commitment to being an Anti-Racism organization. LCFS Illinois recognizes the justifiable anger and grief that followed the most recent acts of violence against African Americans in the United States, though this pattern of violence has been present for centuries. In their statement, LCFS of Illinois reaffirmed their vow to work toward dismantling systemic racism in the United States, and professed their intention to affect change within the organization, in the state of Illinois, and around the country.

Thank you to LCFS of Illinois for your leadership and long-standing dedication to racial justice.

UPBRING

June 8, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Upbring, which is working to bring deserved recognition to the direct care professionals who serve children and families.

Upbring provides holistic services to children and families in Texas, and is "determined to create a world where all children are cherished." For 135 years, Upbring has been working to break the cycle of child abuse, and supports children and families physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Upbring's social workers, caseworkers, clinical therapists, and youth care workers have continued serving children in Texas. In an op-ed in the Austin American-Statesman, Upbring President and CEO Michael Loo refers to these staff as "social change warriors" and "servant leaders," and praises their commitment to children in need.



"Anyone who does
anything to help a
child in his life is a
hero to me."

— Fred Rogers

Caseworkers and direct care staff are implementing necessary safety protocols in their work, such as wearing masks and social distancing, but they know that they are still putting themselves at risk. However, Loo says that they carry on despite the risk and continue their work because they know that often, their presence "is the difference between life and death for many children." This time presents an increased risk for children as stress on families is heightened, and there is reduced visibility for children by adults who may recognize and report signs of abuse or neglect, like teachers and medical professionals. This means that direct care professionals are often the only responders for children in need.

Loo's op-ed encourages the public to view these front line workers as vital, and to hold them in the same esteem as emergency medical professionals. He calls for change in policy and practice, including designating direct care staff as first responders, making testing and personal protective equipment widely available to them, and exploring solutions like contact tracing.

Thank you to Upbring's direct care staff who serve children even amidst a pandemic, and to Michael Loo for showing support and gratitude to these workers who truly deserve it!



LEM CARTMAN

June 5, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lemuel Cartman, intern at Lutheran Services in America, who is promoting racial justice and equity in his community.

Lem will be a junior this fall at Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, IN, and is doing a summer internship with Lutheran Services in America. Due to the spread of coronavirus, Lem is completing his internship remotely from his home on the south side of Chicago. Lem is majoring in Nursing, and has worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant, as well as for numerous community service organizations. He serves on the executive board of his school's service fraternity, and hopes to one day start a non-profit to address health disparities in his community in Chicago.

As police brutality and injustices committed against African Americans have received greater public attention over the past weeks, Lem has stepped up to be a leader in his community. Lem believes strongly that this moment is ripe for positive social change, and he is taking peaceful action to further that change. From cleaning up his community after riots, to protesting peacefully, to having respectful conversations with community members, Lem is making his voice heard. He made a public statement on behalf of the service fraternity he leads at Valparaiso University, saying that the brothers stand in solidarity against injustice and systemic racism to bring about change that is long overdue. He writes that this is a moral issue, and that we have a moral obligation to stand in the name of justice to "combat the forces of hate that plague our society." Lutheran Services in America is proud to recognize him for his commitment to racial justice and equity!



WELLSPRING LUTHERAN SERVICES

June 4, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Wellspring Lutheran Services, and the compassionate staff who are faithfully serving the youth in their community throughout the pandemic.

Wellspring Lutheran Services supports members of its community in Michigan from childhood through end of life, and is committed to a "whole-person approach" to that care. Wellspring's holistic supports for families include foster care, parenting support, residential care, behavioral health resources, and other family services.

Mr. Bond, (shown in photo above), is a youth specialist at New Directions, a Wellspring residential foster care campus in Farmington Hills for youth who have cognitive, behavioral, and emotional challenges that make it difficult for them to reside in traditional homes. Like many of us, the youth at New Directions are experiencing extreme emotions, as stress is particularly high due to the pandemic, economic crisis, and racial injustice. Past trauma can make it difficult for youth at New Directions to process those complex emotions. In the photo shown above, Mr. Bond got down onto the ground to process emotions with a youth, and was present with him when life felt overwhelming. Mr. Bond is a living example of Wellspring's whole-person approach to care.

Unsung heroes like Mr. Bond are continuing to work on the frontlines every day during the pandemic, and deserve to be celebrated. They are faithfully supporting youth who have experienced trauma, work that is of utmost importance every day, but particularly in high stress times like these. The photo of Mr. Bond is an example of the genuine love and compassion that Wellspring staff consistently show to their community.

Thank you to Wellspring Lutheran Services' staff for the love and commitment you are demonstrating to your community through the pandemic!



LUTHERAN SETTLEMENT HOUSE

June 3, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Settlement House's Bilingual Domestic Violence Program for their work to address domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A report from the United Nations has identified a surge in domestic violence linked to lockdowns responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic and economic crisis have added significant stressors, increasing the likelihood of abuse for many families. Isolation gives abusers more opportunities for controlling their partners, and fewer options for those being abused to seek safety and support since they are encouraged to stay home to stop the spread of the virus.

Lutheran Settlement House's Bilingual Domestic Violence Program is encouraging physicians to look for signs of domestic violence during telemedicine visits and make referrals, as the physician may be the only person the patient interacts with during lockdowns.

Telemedicine doctors are connecting people with domestic violence counselors, such as those with STOP Intimate Partner Violence, a collaborative project of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the Lutheran Settlement House's Bilingual Domestic Violence Program. These domestic violence counselors follow up with free, quality counseling services through virtual visits, and provide resources to support to families.

Thank you to Lutheran Settlement House's Bilingual Domestic Violence Program for your virtual support of families in need of resources to address domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

VILLAGE ON THE ISLE

June 2, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is The Village On The Isle, which showed gratitude to the high school seniors employed there by throwing them a prom.

The Village On The Isle (VOTI) is a large retirement community in Venice, Florida, with 450 residents and 300 employees. Many of those employees are high school students, and for the past few months, they have been delivering meals to the 450 residents with smiles under their face masks.

Like other high school seniors across the US, the students working at VOTI have been denied rites of passage like prom and graduation since the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools to close. One of the students was overheard saying that they should wear their prom dresses to work, since they would not otherwise get a chance to wear them.



The student's idea about wearing their prom dresses to work made its way up the chain, all the way to CEO Joel Anderson. Anderson decided to go even further, and held a prom for the 24 high school students who work at VOTI.

The prom occurred on May 15 and began with a parade around VOTI's campus, during which the high schoolers rode in golf carts, wearing their prom attire, and residents stood on their balconies to cheer and wave as they went past. Then, the students sat down to a plated dinner, served by the senior management staff at VOTI, which was followed by music and dancing.

Anderson wanted to show gratitude to the high school students who have worked faithfully throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. "We are vested in their lives and proud of their accomplishments and we know that everyone in The Village on the Isle appreciates their care and service to our mission and our residents," he said.

Thank you to The Village On The Isle for the kindness and gratitude you show to your employees, and for ensuring that the high schoolers working at VOTI got to enjoy a prom experience!

THE SHARING PLACE

June 1, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is the Sharing Place, which is working to meet the growing need for food assistance in Jersey City, NJ.

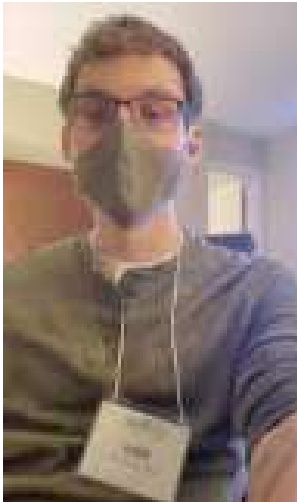


The COVID-19 pandemic brought economic devastation, and many residents in New Jersey are recently unemployed and struggling with delays in assistance from the state. Food pantries are drawing increasingly large crowds as community members are hurting financially, and the Sharing Place is stepping up to feed the growing number of hungry people.

The Sharing Place is a food pantry housed at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jersey City, NJ. The food pantry is one of Hudson County's largest and longest serving food pantries and aims to meet the needs of low and very-low income families and individuals. The Sharing Place provides a wide range of groceries, including fresh produce, meats, dairy, and non-perishable food items.

The Sharing Place has increased its services and is feeding almost double the number of people compared to before the pandemic. The food pantry serves as a lifeline for people who have lost employment or are unable to work during the pandemic, and many people the Sharing Place serves are seniors on fixed incomes. The Sharing Place offers nutritious food that is otherwise unaffordable to purchase at grocery stores, especially with increasing prices of meat.

Thank you to the Sharing Place for serving your community's growing needs during the COVID-19 pandemic and working to ensure that everyone in Jersey City has access to nutritious food!



LUTHERAN VOLUNTEER CORPS

May 29, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Volunteer Corps, and their incredible volunteers who continue to serve during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lutheran Volunteer Corps (LVC) places recent college graduates (“volunteers”) in full-time service positions at social-justice organizations across the US for one or two years of service.

The volunteers develop broad leadership skills during their time of service, and LVC places emphasis on the injustice of racism, oppression, and privilege in its leadership development curriculum. Though LVC has a strong Lutheran history and tradition, volunteers of all faith traditions are encouraged to participate, and they welcome the diversity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted LVC volunteers, but they have adopted safety measures and continue their service. Some LVC volunteers are able to telework, and those in direct-service positions have adopted modified schedules and are taking other precautions like wearing face masks.

Alex, a volunteer serving at Our Savior's Community Services in Minneapolis, MN talks about his experience in a YouTube video. Alex is a case manager for an emergency shelter program in the Twin Cities and continues to serve faithfully through the pandemic. Though the isolation can be challenging, the work carries on and Alex and his colleagues have moved all operations from the shelter to a hotel to better allow for social distancing and prevent people from being exposed to the virus.

LVC President Deirdre Bagley is grateful for the volunteers' continued work and is excited to be receiving applications from next year's volunteers.

Thank you to LVC for your continued commitment to developing the next generation of servant leaders, and to all the LVC volunteers who are serving throughout the COVID-19 pandemic!



NYU LANGONE

May 28, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is NYU Langone and its food pantry for rising to meet increased needs in the Brooklyn community.

Many people in the Brooklyn community and across the nation are without jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are lacking necessities due to loss of income. NYU Langone's food pantry, The Table, is working overtime to meet the increased need for food.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic downturn, The Table served about 100 families. In the past months, The Table has broadened its reach due to increased need, and now serves about 500 families, and they expect the demand for the food pantry's services to continue increasing. Though The Table has just two staff and about six regularly serving volunteers, community members have stepped up to volunteer at the food pantry so that needs in Brooklyn can be adequately met.

The Table is providing a package to anyone in need with a three-day supply of healthy and nutritious food and suggested recipes. The Table has partnered with a local urban farm to ensure that their community has access to fresh produce, which would otherwise be too expensive for many families to obtain. In addition to enhancing nutrition and food security, The Table is providing family support services and crisis intervention through the food pantry's location.

There are a variety of ways families can safely access the food packages, including picking up from The Table's location, where social distancing and enhanced cleaning measures have been enacted, as well as food delivery services. The Table delivers food to people who are homebound or disabled, and recently partnered with the NYU Langone emergency department to deliver food to all patients discharged from the ER and in-patient services.

Thank you to NYU Langone and The Table for your commitment to food security, and for working to meet the Brooklyn community's changing needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LIBERTY LUTHERAN

May 27, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Liberty Lutheran and their dedicated staff at the Artman senior living community.

Liberty Lutheran's Artman senior living community is located in Ambler, Pennsylvania. Founded in 1916 as Artman Lutheran Home, the community stands as a leader in personal care and skilled nursing services that draw from a rich faith-based tradition of high-quality compassionate care. As part of the Liberty Lutheran family of services, Artman is also proud to have been included on U.S. News and World Report's Best Short-Term Rehabilitation list.

"I see the impact they make in the smiles and positive attitudes of our residents."



At Artman, residents are encouraged to live life to the fullest every day. With this in mind, the staff goes above and beyond to surpass the expectations of residents and family members. By emphasizing possibilities, not limitations, the team at Artman builds positive relationships with residents and families that create a sense of warmth and family.

This type of dedication and commitment has been reinforced since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past several months, Artman has instituted a series of practices and procedures to keep residents safe within their homes, while also providing fulfilling opportunities for residents to do from within their apartments.

"I am so grateful to the team here at Artman," says Artman's executive director, Janet Lorenzon. "We are truly blessed to have the support of so many talented and caring people. I see the impact they make in the smiles and positive attitudes of our residents. We are getting through these extraordinary times together thanks to the contributions of so many."

Thank you to the staff at Artman for personifying compassion and care for the people you serve and for one another. Lutheran Services in America is proud to highlight your work as a source for home and peace of mind for older adults and their families.



ADVOCATE AURORA HEALTH

May 26, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Advocate Aurora Health for their research contributions, adding to academic knowledge about the novel COVID-19 virus.

A team of 5 cardiac sonographers at Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center have been working on the front lines during COVID-19, and recognized that ICU procedures to detect impacts of the virus on the heart were inefficient. The team started investigating how the virus affects the heart by personally scanning patients in the COVID-19 ICU. They developed an innovative new procedure that is more targeted, and more accurately identifies deadly symptoms. The new procedure collects better patient data faster, improving patient care and limiting the exposure of caregivers. The Advocate team published their findings, and are writing the worldwide standard for treating COVID-19 patients with cardiac systems.

Advocate Aurora Health researchers are also contributing to efforts to better understand COVID-19 outcomes for cancer patients. An Advocate researcher co-authored a recent study, and will release early data on outcomes for cancer patients at the upcoming virtual American Society of Clinical Oncology conference. The consortium of cancer researchers crowdsourced the data, allowing for speed in releasing the results of the study.

Thank you to Advocate Aurora Health for your dedication to serving patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, and for your work contributing to the global understanding of the novel virus.



LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTH DAKOTA

May 22, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota, which is providing translation services at drive-thru COVID-19 testing sites.

When Smithfield Foods saw a COVID-19 outbreak at their plant in Sioux Falls, SD, the state, Avera Medical Group, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the South Dakota National Guard worked together to set up a drive-thru test site in a local high school parking lot. The collaboration recognized the importance of protective gear to keep the testing site workers and patients safe, but there were other important factors to ensure the testing site was successful.

The Sioux Falls COVID-19 drive-thru testing site had a full fleet of interpreters present, including Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota case worker, Adane Redda. Redda is originally from Ethiopia, and speaks several languages. The interpreters were crucial in collecting important information about each patient, and bridging gaps in communications. Redda said he finds this work rewarding, and is glad to be helpful during the COVID-19 outbreak. Public health officials were grateful for the interpreters from Lutheran Social Services, and anticipate that drive-thru testing sites will become more prevalent, and they will continue to value the important work of language interpreters.

Thank you to Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota for serving your community's various needs through the COVID-19 pandemic, and for working to ensure that everyone, regardless of language has access to care!

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF NEW YORK

May 21, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Services of New York (LSSNY), which is recognizing the unsung heroes of the pandemic.

Lutheran Social Services of New York has been operating at the heart of the pandemic over the last few months, and has continued its much-needed services during the crisis. LSSNY continues to serve its community, including the formerly homeless, people struggling with addiction, the newcomer, people living with mental illness, families who are food insecure, and children in foster care. Though many services remain closed as New York battles COVID-19, LSSNY feels its duty is to meet the community's needs by providing essential support during the pandemic.

We often hear about the work and sacrifices of medical workers on the front lines, but we rarely hear about the hard work and essential services of maintenance workers, case managers, custodial workers, and childcare providers. LSSNY CEO Damyn Kelly is making a concerted effort to recognize the work of the unsung heroes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LSSNY is highlighting essential workers with profiles on its website and in newsletters, and elevating the workers' commitment to service. Custodial workers, for example, are crucial to the health and safety of the community. However, they cannot work from home, and are risking their health and safety to ensure the virus does not spread. LSSNY case managers are on the front lines, making sure that vulnerable populations in New York have the resources they need, especially during these trying times.

"I have always told staff that they were essential and that it was because of them that we [LSSNY] existed," said Kelly. "So as a result, when the governor announced the Stay in Place order...calling our workers essential, I immediately sent out an email to the staff saying the governor has recognized what I've been telling you since the beginning."

Thank you to LSSNY for your continued service in New York, and for recognizing the unsung heroes who make that service possible.

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I have always told staff that they were essential and that it was because of them that we existed.



Lutheran Social Services
of New York

LUTHERAN LIFE VILLAGES

May 20, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Life Villages, which is committed to keeping seniors healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lutheran Life Villages is a senior living facility with four campuses in Northeast Indiana. In addition to an array of senior living options, Lutheran Life Villages offers creative programming such as no contact boxing for individuals living with Parkinson's disease, and a Foster Grandparent program, which matches seniors with low-income children in the community who are at risk of falling behind in school. They are committed to holistic care for seniors, and to building intergenerational relationships in the community.



Lutheran Life Villages recognizes the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the enhanced risk for seniors and individuals with chronic conditions. To keep their residents safe, Lutheran Life Villages is taking necessary precautions, including restricting access, monitoring staff health, increasing their inventory of medical supplies, and communicating regularly with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and their local and state health departments. The increased need for personal protective equipment is unprecedented, and Lutheran Life Villages is working to obtain needed supplies. President and CEO Alex Kiefer is forging new partnerships to gain those supplies, and has made trips to car manufacturing plants to pick up gowns and other supplies that are otherwise difficult to find.

Thank you to Lutheran Life Villages for your dedication to the seniors in your community!

LUTHERAN FAMILY SERVICES OF VIRGINIA

May 15, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Family Services of Virginia (LFSVA), which is dedicated to ensuring children in their community have the resources they need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lutheran Family Services of Virginia has been providing support and services to children, families, and adults for 130 years. Their services include helping children in foster care find temporary or permanent families, adoption counseling, services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and supporting children with behavioral challenges. Though COVID-19 has changed the way LFSVA delivers services, they have been committed to continuing to support their community with services through telehealth.

One of the ways LFSVA supports children with behavioral challenges is through their six Minnick Schools across the commonwealth, which help students age 5 to 22 find success in the classroom.



The Minnick Schools offer highly trained educators and treatment specialists to meet unique needs of many children the public educational system cannot address. In addition to teaching the state's educational curriculum, the Minnick Schools help students learn about behavior choices, how to make positive decisions, and how to respond to stress and challenging situations.

Though the Minnick Schools are closed in accordance with Virginia Governor Ralph Northam's order, the teachers are still committed to serving the students. Many families are struggling with food security during the COVID-19 pandemic, so Minnick School teachers have been delivering food to their students. The teachers are wearing masks and keeping safe distances from the students while they work to ensure children in their community have the resources they need.

Thank you to LFSVA for your commitment to ensuring your community is resourced by offering telehealth services and food delivery!

INSPIRITUS

May 18, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Inspiritus for their work cleaning up after tornadoes in Tennessee, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Inspiritus' mission is guiding individuals and families whose lives have been disrupted on a path from surviving to thriving. To fulfill this mission, Inspiritus serves communities through a variety of programs, including disaster response.

Though most of the nation's focus and energy is directed toward COVID-19, Inspiritus is still faithfully engaging in disaster response. Tornadoes in Cookeville, TN, east of Nashville, killed 24 individuals and damaged homes in the community. The Inspiritus disaster response team has been working in that community to help them rebuild.

Inspiritus staff and volunteers are adhering to social distancing guidelines as they help Cookeville rebuild. Inspiritus staff say their rebuilding efforts are actually ahead of schedule, and they have seen incredible support in the way of volunteers and donations. The community is showing immense love and support to those who were impacted by the tornadoes, which helps with rebuilding and healing.

Thank you to Inspiritus for your work in Cookeville, and for your dedication to communities' needs in the wake of natural disasters!



DIAKON LUTHERAN SOCIAL MINISTRIES

May 15, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, which is bringing smiles to seniors' faces with visits from alpacas!

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries has been committed to transforming lives in their communities for more than 150 years, and provides support to people of all faiths through compassionate services, gracious hospitality, and charitable care. In addition to Diakon's programs serving children, youth, and families, it also serves older adults through programs such as comprehensive senior living across Pennsylvania and Maryland.

To maintain the health and safety of residents and staff in senior living facilities, Diakon has been following all federal guidelines related to COVID-19, including visitor restrictions. However, Diakon has gotten creative with ways to thank their staff for hard work, and the staff are doing their best to make the lives of the residents feel a bit more "normal."

This week is National Nursing Home Week, so Diakon planned staff appreciation events at their nursing homes. The event at Twining Village in Holland, PA included a complimentary ice cream truck and sidewalk chalk messages from the community, thanking the staff for their work. Diakon also celebrated National Nursing Home Week by welcoming alpaca Duchess and her owner, Wendy, who visited the residents of Manatawny Manor in Pottstown, PA through the windows.

Thank you to Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries for your creative spirit, the gratitude you show to your staff, and all the ways you are working to make life as normal and joyful as possible for residents.

UPBRING

May 14, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Upbring, which is honoring their staff, whom they call "warriors," in their valiant efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Upbring provides holistic services to children and families in Texas, and is "determined to create a world where all children are cherished." For 135 years, Upbring has been working to break the cycle of child abuse, and supports children and families physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

COVID-19 presents immense challenges for front line workers, and Upbring recognizes that the current environment is requiring their staff to go beyond their regular job descriptions. Upbring acknowledges that staff are picking up extra shifts and putting in extra work to meet the enhanced needs of families related to the pandemic. The staff show up every single day, tucking away fear and weariness, and smiling even when life is hard. Upbring released this video to thank their staff, and to honor their hard work and commitment.

Upbring's video refers to the staff as "warriors," who stand strong for the people they serve and for those who serve alongside them. The video recognizes case workers, therapists, direct care staff, kitchen and maintenance, supporting staff, and others, and serves as a reminder that every single member of the Upbring staffing community is a warrior and they matter. Upbring is grateful to these staff for not giving up during COVID-19, never faltering in their shared mission of breaking the cycle of child abuse, and for making Texas better.

Thank you to Upbring and your staff for the tremendous work you continue to do to serve Texans through the pandemic.



LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICE OF MINNESOTA

May 13, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSSMN), which is hosting a series of virtual events for the caregivers and care receivers in their Caregiver Support community.

SPRING INTO SUMMER

ONLINE
MUSIC AND
FUN!

Caregiver Support provides in-home respite by volunteer caregivers throughout Minnesota so that family caregivers can have much-needed rest. They continue to provide that support virtually and over the phone during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Caregivers Support service has long utilized technology to support family caregivers in rural communities, offering opportunities for caregivers to connect with the world outside their home, and that technology is especially important now.

Laura Rasmussen, the regional coordinator for LSS Caregiver Support and Respite services, recently viewed a video of a violin concert held outdoors at an assisted living facility. She saw the joy the concert brought to the residents, and wanted to replicate the concert virtually, so people across Minnesota could enjoy it. Laura reached out to the violinist in the video, Kelsey Joy, who gladly offered her talents to LSSMN.

LSSMN hosted the virtual violin concert on May 6th and encouraged caregivers and care receivers in Minnesota to join via the TEAMS app. The concert was a great success, so Laura planned additional virtual events throughout the month of May, including a farm tour, piano performance, and an antique car tour. The aim is to help older adults feel connected to their community during this time of isolation, and know that they are cared for, even from afar. LSSMN is also posting shortened versions of the performances on their Facebook page so that people outside of the Caregiver Support community can enjoy them, as well.

Thank you to Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota for your creativity in providing virtual events for the Caregiver Support community!



LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF NORTH DAKOTA

May 12, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota (LSSND), and the dedicated Aging Life Care staff who are delivering meals and groceries to their neighbors in Minot, ND who are unable to shop or cook for themselves.

LSSND staff Cheryl Coyle and Amy Swenson jumped into action when they learned that many elderly Meals on Wheels volunteers needed to pause their service to protect themselves from COVID-19 exposure. The two women began delivering food to members of their community every week, stopping at apartments, houses, senior living complexes, and condos to deliver well-balanced meals. The women bring joy to clients who often do not have other visitors during the lockdown. Cheryl and Amy are careful to practice social distancing and hygiene guidelines, but the interpersonal connection has been valuable for the clients, and rewarding for Cheryl and Amy.

LSSND's Aging Life Care program helps clients navigate the complex issues and systems around aging and changing health. The Aging Life Care staff advocate for seniors, connect them to community services, and work to ensure that no one falls through the cracks. Much of their programming includes face-to-face contact, which has been put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, Cheryl and Amy and the other Aging Life Care staff stay in contact with clients through phone calls, video chats, and by sending cards. Cheryl and Amy love delivering meals to their community members because it provides them a way to continue serving seniors in person, and they value that interpersonal contact.

Thank you to Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota's passionate staff who are going above and beyond to serve their community during the COVID-19 pandemic!



LUTHERAN SERVICES IN IOWA

May 11, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI), which is deeply committed to ensuring children in Iowa are safe and cared for during the COVID-19 pandemic.

People across the US continue to isolate to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, but unfortunately, that isolation puts children in abusive homes at greater risk. Services that prevent abuse and neglect are incredibly important, especially as families are isolating in close quarters under added stress.

Families at risk of abuse or neglect rely on social workers, who typically provide in-home visits.

LSI is finding new ways to serve these at-risk families and keep children safe, particularly through digital platforms.

Social workers in LSI's Early Childhood Services are conducting weekly video chats to provide families with tips and resources to address stressors at home to reduce potential abuse. The social workers are also connecting these families with needed resources such as employment assistance and affordable housing.

Thank you to Lutheran Services in Iowa for recognizing the continued needs of families in your community, and rising to address those needs.

LIBERTY LUTHERAN

May 8, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Liberty Lutheran. Rooted in more than 100 years of history, Liberty is a non-profit organization with a purpose that is strongly connected to its faith-based roots. Every day, their staff faithfully accompanies individuals and families who are facing life-changing situations through an empowering approach that honors their choices and well-being.

Located in Pennsylvania, Liberty Lutheran is the parent organization for five retirement communities, as well as Lutheran Congregational Services, Lutheran Disaster Response - Eastern Pennsylvania, Lutheran Children and Family Services' (LCFS) West Philadelphia Senior Community Center (WPSCC), a home health service called Liberty at Home, and a fitness center geared toward older adults called The Becoming Center. Liberty Lutheran's CEO, Luanne Fisher, feels that Liberty Lutheran is "privileged to answer the call to serve others and walk with them during their life journey."

This sentiment has been especially true over the past several weeks. During the COVID-19 pandemic, staff across Liberty Lutheran have been working tirelessly to ensure health, safety, and comfort of their residents, while WPSCC has worked with partners to launch a food delivery service for those in need. For its part, Lutheran Congregational Services is working with congregations and relief organizations across Eastern Pennsylvania to navigate challenges presented with the pandemic and the reopening of the state.

Thank you to Liberty Lutheran and everyone who contributes their talents to achieving Liberty's mission to empower and care for others, especially those who are most vulnerable during these extraordinary times. Your talents, dedication, and warmth, are what is needed most.



WELLSPRING LUTHERAN SERVICES

May 7, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Wellspring Lutheran Services, which is celebrating National Nurses Week, and honoring the hard work of front line nursing home staff.

Wellspring Lutheran Services supports members of its community in Michigan from childhood through end of life, and is committed to a "whole-person approach" to that care. Wellspring's senior services include independent living, assisted living, memory care, long-term care, and affordable housing, and they aim to share hope and demonstrate respect for senior adults in all of those services.

This week, Wellspring is celebrating National Nurses Week, and especially honoring the hard work of the front line staff in senior services. Wellspring released a video to recognize the front line workers in senior services, and open a dialogue about the treatment of nursing home workers in the media and society. In addition to the video, Wellspring is launching a social media campaign to raise awareness of this issue, using #invisibleandessential.



The video reminds viewers of the Christian call to honor the elderly, and identifies front line nursing home workers as those who are faithfully serving the elderly in society. These workers are "holding a hand late at night," and "praying at the bedside" when families are not allowed to visit due to COVID-19, and ensuring that no one is alone during the pandemic.

Unfortunately, these front line nursing home workers have little support. Wellspring calls on policy makers to support front line heroes in nursing homes with funding and resources, and calls on society to honor and respect elders by honoring those who serve them.

Thank you to Wellspring Lutheran Services for recognizing the importance of front line nursing home workers, and for your efforts to change the narrative so those workers can receive the support they need to continue faithfully caring for the elderly in society.

LUTHERAN HOME OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

May 6, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Home of the Good Shepherd (LHGS), which has been working hard to meet the physical and spiritual needs of its residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lutheran Home of the Good Shepherd is a skilled nursing facility in New Rockford, North Dakota, focusing on high quality long-term care for residents. When the COVID-19 outbreak began, LHGS quickly took the necessary precautions by limiting visitors to keep residents and staff safe from the virus. LHGS has made great efforts to keep families up to date on happenings at the facility, link them to resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and encourages families to schedule time for virtual visits with the residents.

In addition to keeping residents physically healthy, Lutheran Home of the Good Shepherd is also attuned to their spiritual needs. Paula Loewen, who provides pastoral care at LHGS, holds church services in each unit on Sundays in which residents can attend physically, but remain at least six feet apart. LHGS even purchased a portable sound system so all the residents can hear these services, since they are taking place in a larger space than usual. Paula also provides one-on-one spiritual care, and LHGS recognizes how important faith is for many residents, particularly in the midst of uncertainty that COVID-19 brings.

The Activities Department has been busy with more one-on-one activities and Intercom Bingo, to name one, to help with the isolation. Dietary is providing meals in rooms as well as dining rooms to safely provide for social distancing.

Nursing is on the ball keeping residents' families as involved as possible from a distance and providing outstanding care during a time that even doctor visits can be risky. A couple of residents are busy making masks or sewing buttons onto headbands for the masks. And all departments are trying to staying tuned into the possible rise in depression in staff as well as residents.

LHGS is in a unique situation in that they also offer staff childcare in the Childhood Development Center, managed by Ruth Braaten. The staff entrust their little ones to the outstanding daycare providers. With COVID-19, new responsibilities have been added including facilitating online schooling for some 12+ children who attend daycare in several different grades and two different schools. This has helped their employees rest assured that their child's education has some continuity and allows for less stress when they get home after a strenuous day working.

In an effort to support the community of New Rockford that has for so long supported LHGS, they are purchasing on-site lunches from local establishments. The residents are really enjoying a lunch from the places that they frequented themselves through the years! It's all about connection...even at a distance.

Thank you to Lutheran Home of the Good Shepherd for the holistic and attentive care you provide to your residents!





LUTHERAN CHURCH CHARITIES

May 5, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Church Charities (LCC), and the LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry, which has adapted their services to offer virtual visits during the COVID-19 pandemic. The LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry is based in Northbrook, IL and includes 130 trained golden retrievers in 26 states. The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs are typically dispatched in times of disaster to provide comfort to people who need it most.

The current stay-at-home orders in most states mean that unfortunately, the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs cannot do physical visits, but the LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry continues their services through virtual visits. Many people are experiencing loneliness, isolation, and anxiety amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, and the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs are available to help around the clock. People can request appointments with the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs online, and interact with them virtually from the comfort and safety of their own homes.

LCC President / CEO Tim Hetzner says that many of the scheduled visits right now are for healthcare workers, and iPads are getting passed around emergency rooms so doctors and nurses can interact virtually with the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs. The dogs bring joy and help lower stress for healthcare workers, and Hetzner says, "It's been rewarding because a lot of hurting people right now just need to talk and have a friendly face and a friendly canine face."

Thank you to Lutheran Church Charities for continuing the LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry and bringing joy and comfort to people across the nation during this stressful time!

SAMARITAS

May 4, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Samaritas and its committed staff who are working hard to meet the changing needs of those they serve during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Samaritas has more than 60 program sites in 40 cities in Michigan. The organization offers several vital services with robust programming, including adoption, foster care, senior and affordable living, and disabilities services. The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly created challenges for these programs, but Samaritas is adapting to meet the community's continued needs.

Samaritas purchased 160 iPads for seniors and children in foster care to stay in touch with their families during social distancing.



Samaritas also received donated iPads from the community to contribute to this effort to keep families connected virtually. Acquiring adequate protective equipment continues to be a challenge for many health and human services agencies, so Samaritas commissioned a dedicated supply team to explore various avenues to purchase protective equipment for staff. Samaritas was grateful to have hundreds of hand-made masks donated by the community while they waited for supplies to arrive!

The direct support staff are truly committed to serve during this difficult time! The Samaritas administration reported that the staff in their senior living communities are seeing fewer call-offs and changes in schedules than they have ever seen. The staff at disabilities group homes are finding great ways to engage the residents, including making cards and sending them to hospitals to thank healthcare workers for their support in the community.

Thank you to Samaritas for your extraordinary service during the COVID-19 pandemic, and for your staff's continued dedication to the community!



ECUMEN

May 1, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Ecumen, which quickly designed an innovative program called "Stay Connected" to help residents and family members remain in contact during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ecumen provides senior housing and other services for thousands of residents at 40-plus communities across eight states. Ecumen has implemented necessary protocols to protect residents at every site during the COVID-19 outbreak, including visitor restrictions. In addition to keeping residents physically healthy, Ecumen wants to ensure that their social and emotional needs are also met, and crafted their Stay Connected program to keep the seniors in contact with their loved ones.

As part of the Stay Connected program, Ecumen distributed iPad tablets to any communities that did not already have them, and established sanitizing protocol for iPad use. The Ecumen staff also created a centralized chat schedule so families could easily select convenient times to connect with their loved ones online, freeing up staff to focus on care. The team announced the program by email and invited family members and social workers to participate, and included links to schedule their video chat.

The Stay Connected program was an immediate success, with 75 video chats scheduled in the first week, including family members from around the world who were excited to connect with their loved ones. The residents have loved seeing their family members! A face mask cannot hide the smiles, laughter, and joy being shared daily.

A big thank you to Ecumen for your focus on the needs of residents and families while also promoting health and safety!

VILLAGE ON THE ISLE

April 30, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Village On The Isle for their commitment to keeping residents safe and maintaining transparency with the community.

There has been increasing public pressure for transparency regarding COVID-19 cases in long-term care facilities. In response, the Florida Department of Health recently published a list of facilities that had reported COVID-19 cases. Unfortunately, when people see a facility's name on the list, they fear the worst. Some long-term care facilities that made the department's COVID-19 list have only had one positive COVID-19 case in their facility, and are following all the appropriate protocols to keep their residents and staff safe.



Village On The Isle (VOTI) is a large retirement community in Venice, Florida, with 450 residents and 300 employees. VOTI quickly implemented CDC guidelines when the COVID-19 outbreak began, and welcomed the increased scrutiny of long-term care facilities. CEO Joel Anderson was confident in their efforts to prevent a COVID-19 outbreak within the community, and said the staff transitioned quickly to the necessary protocols. Their team has been delivering all meals to residents and helping with grocery and medication deliveries.

Recent COVID-19 surveillance efforts in Florida show a very small percentage of COVID-19 cases in all assisted living and nursing homes statewide, demonstrating how diligently staff have worked to keep residents safe from the virus.

Thank you to Village On The Isle for your commitment to keeping your residents safe!



LUTHERAN FAMILY SERVICES OF VIRGINIA

April 29, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Family Services of Virginia, and all the Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who faithfully serve Virginians with disabilities on a daily basis, pandemic or not.

Direct Support Professionals work on the front lines, caring for the physical and emotional well-being of individuals with disabilities. LFS VA Group Home Supervisor Angela Quinn wrote in a recent newsletter that she worries about individuals with disabilities living in group homes because they are so routine-oriented. The COVID-19 pandemic certainly disrupts their routine, including how they perform their jobs, receive job-training, and experience community outings. However, DSPs are rising to address these new challenges in the group homes. In addition to making preparations and decisions that protect individuals in their care on a daily basis, they have become entertainers, teachers, professional Nintendo Wii players, and total socialization packages for the people they serve.

DSPs cannot work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, but Quinn says the DSPs at LFS VA are wonderfully committed to their work and in high spirits. Though they already have a full plate, they are demonstrating dedication and flexibility with the changing needs presented by the pandemic. Their positive attitudes translate to the people they serve, and any time Quinn calls a group home, she hears the familiar sounds of laughter and contentment.

Thank you to all the Direct Support Professionals at Lutheran Family Services of Virginia! Your work on the front lines supporting individuals with disabilities is so appreciated!





ALLEGHENY LUTHERAN SOCIAL MINISTRIES

April 28, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries, which is working hard to provide compassionate care for the seniors in their residential communities during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Like other senior living communities, the Lutheran Home at Hollidaysburg has restricted visitors to prevent the viral spread of COVID-19 and keep the senior residents safe and healthy. Despite these necessary safety precautions, seniors are in high spirits. They miss seeing their families, but feel hopeful and are grateful for the time they get to spend talking on the phone and video chatting with loved ones. The seniors say they are "burning up the phone lines" regularly communicating with families, and are enjoying the exercising and activities the Lutheran Home continues to provide, while respecting social distancing protocols.

The Lutheran Home at Hollidaysburg has taken all necessary safety precautions, including wearing face masks and ensuring social distancing, to protect the seniors they serve. The staff continue to be committed to providing love, care, and compassion to the residents, and regularly communicate with families so they know the residents are receiving exemplary care during COVID-19. The Lutheran Home at Hollidaysburg is grateful to their community for their support and prayers, and posted a video to help reassure the community that the senior residents are doing well and in high spirits.

Thank you to Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries for your compassion care at the Lutheran Home at Hollidaysburg, and for your commitment to protecting seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Lutheran
Social
Services**
of North Dakota

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF NORTH DAKOTA

April 27, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota and its Aging Life Care Program (ALC), which is adjusting its services to provide remote service delivery whenever possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aging Life Care connects older adults and individuals with chronic medical or mental health needs with a trusted care coordinator to help navigate the many complex issues that come with changes in health and/or living situations. ALC provides a sliding scale of fees based on income and ability to pay.

While the necessary in-person care continues, ALC care coordinators have transitioned to remote service delivery whenever possible. In addition to providing the same level of care, ALC is now providing a daily dial-in support group as well as an option to receive daily texts.

"We are offering a daily support group for clients to call in for socialization, positive support and jokes, to answer questions, provide tips and dispel myths regarding safety and COVID-19," said Carmel Froemke, the team lead for ALC. "We also send out daily texts to those who want them." Participants have said that these daily calls make a world of difference in easing their anxieties and loneliness during social isolation.

Thank you to Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota, and the Aging Life Care Program, in particular, for adjusting services to continue serving your community faithfully during the COVID-19 pandemic!



LUTHERAN SERVICES FLORIDA

April 24, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) Health Systems, which is going the extra mile to ensure staff have access to much needed protective gear, in an effort to keep staff and clients safe and healthy during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Lutheran Services Florida provides many crucial services across the state, including a robust network of behavioral health organizations. LSF recognizes that, despite the COVID-19 outbreak and social distancing requirements, behavioral health needs are still present in the community. The demand for behavioral health services has actually increased significantly during the pandemic, and LSF continues to serve individuals with mental health and substance abuse disorders who are indigent, under-insured, or have no insurance.

Unfortunately, like many health systems across the country, LSF is experiencing a shortage of protective gear, but is committed to continuing behavioral health services through the COVID-19 pandemic. LSF Health Systems leaders Dr. Christine Cauffield and Shelley Katz drove to Tallahassee to obtain two SUV loads of gloves and hand sanitizers so the behavioral health services could continue safely, and prevent further spread of COVID-19.

Thank you to Lutheran Services Florida for your commitment to serving your community safely during the COVID-19 pandemic!

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF WISCONSIN AND UPPER MICHIGAN

April 23, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, which is helping seniors in their community with the economic challenges associated with the COVID-19 outbreak.

In addition to health challenges, COVID-19 presents significant economic challenges, particularly for vulnerable populations. Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan is working to meet the economic needs of tenants in their affordable housing program, including senior citizens.



This new outreach program provides budget support to tenants whose jobs and income have been temporarily paused due to the economic downturn associated with COVID-19.

LSS of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan is also raising funds to help their counselors continue their work in supporting the more than 5,000 people who rely on their services. Especially during the economic downturn, many families do not have access to mental health resources, addiction counseling, affordable housing, and other necessities that LSS is committed to providing. Donations for this important work are being collected here.

Thank you to Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan for your commitment to serving vulnerable populations, and response to the new needs presented by COVID-19 and the economic downturn.

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN COMMUNITY

APRIL 22, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Services in America member organization Good Shepherd Lutheran Community, a 71-bed nursing home in Blair, Nebraska. Good Shepherd has instated new protocols to keep residents safe from COVID-19, and adapted the way it engages with families to prevent residents from feeling isolated.

The COVID-19 outbreak has been particularly challenging for nursing homes, as seniors are especially susceptible to negative outcomes associated with the virus. To keep the virus from spreading in their facility, Good Shepherd Lutheran Community is bringing residents' meals to their rooms, and checking each resident between two and three times per day for COVID-19 symptoms, including fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Good Shepherd also enacted new protocols for any employees or caregivers entering the building, taking their temperature and screening them for signs of the virus.

In addition to prevention, Good Shepherd is also prepared if the virus were to enter their community. Administrator Sharon Colling said they have established an isolation wing for anyone presenting symptoms of COVID-19.

The wing is also used to house residents who return to the facility after leaving for outside business, such as hospital visits. Good Shepherd is utilizing protective equipment they have available, and is reserving donated fabric masks received from the community for emergency situations, as obtaining adequate supplies and protective gear continues to be a challenge.

The precautions Good Shepherd has taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their community means that the facility is closed to outside visitors. To keep residents connected to their families and loved ones, Good Shepherd is providing iPads with Skype, FaceTime, and Zoom so they can video chat. Families are encouraged to call as often as they wish, and to visit outside the windows of the residents' rooms.

Thank you to Good Shepherd Lutheran Community for your commitment to keeping seniors safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic, and for ensuring they can stay connected to their families during social isolation!





LUTHERAN SENIORLIFE

April 21, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran SeniorLife, and their LIFE (Living Independence for the Elderly) program, which is delivering thousands of meals to seniors in their community.

Lutheran SeniorLife manages four LIFE programs at locations in Western Pennsylvania, (LIFE Beaver, LIFE Lawrence, LIFE Butler and LIFE Armstrong), currently serving more than 760 participants. The LIFE program provides support and services that meet personal and health needs of the program participants.

It is a managed care program that provides a comprehensive, all-inclusive package of medical and supportive services. The program is known nationally as the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE).

Each LIFE program has an Adult- Day Center housed in the county in which it serves. LIFE participants can attend the centers to receive not only medical care from the Interdisciplinary Team but also socialization, programming and wonderful hot meals for breakfast and lunch daily.

When Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf announced the need to close many facilities to slow the spread of COVID-19, the LIFE programs, including the Nutritional Services staff, shifted their focus from serving meals at the centers to sending out frozen meals and food supplies to participant homes. Many of the seniors state that the only hot meals they eat are those received weekly at the LIFE centers. The LIFE program already had systems in place to screen participants for food insecurity and provide frozen meals to those participants in need. The meals are prepared at the LIFE centers and hand delivered by LIFE transportation staff. Prior to the pandemic, they were providing an average of 350 frozen meals per month. Over the past five weeks, they have delivered more than 10,000 meals.

This has truly been a team effort by LIFE staff and a labor of love. They are receiving calls daily from participants and families thanking them for this service. One participant stated that she feels lonely at times being "stuck at home," but when she sits down to eat her meal, she feels grateful and happy to know that "you all are thinking and care about me." Many of the participants who have not requested food assistance feel reassured just knowing food is available if they should ever need it. "I can sleep better knowing that you will help me with meals if I need them," said one participant. "God bless you LIFE, I love you all," said another. This service helps fulfill the mission of Lutheran SeniorLife to continually transform and elevate health, wellness, and social services while fostering an Abundant Life for those they serve.

Thank you to Lutheran SeniorLife for your commitment to the seniors in your community, and for promoting food security during COVID-19!



LUTHER HOME OF MERCY

April 20, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Luther Home of Mercy in Williston, OH, which is working to meet the physical and spiritual needs of those they serve. Luther Home of Mercy serves adults with developmental disabilities through a variety of ministries, including residential options, supported living, and day programs.

Typically, residents at Luther Home of Mercy are able to gather for weekly Bible studies and chapel services, but the need to social distance due to COVID-19 has put those weekly in-person gatherings on hold.

Expressions of faith remain important to many residents at Luther Home of Mercy, and staff wanted to provide them with ways to worship safely. Throughout Holy Week, Luther Home of Mercy streamed religious services so residents could participate, and a local church even donated palms for Palm Sunday! Residents could also see the Easter bunny on Easter Sunday morning, who kept a safe distance outside their windows.

Thank you, Luther Home of Mercy, for meeting the holistic needs of those you serve during the COVID-19 pandemic, and finding creative ways to celebrate Easter, and all of Holy Week.



CONCORDIA PLACE

April 17, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Concordia Place, which reopened its doors on Monday, April 13th as an emergency childcare center for children of essential workers. Concordia Place provides community programs addressing key social needs for children, youth, adults, and seniors, with locations throughout Chicago, IL. Concordia Place is guided by the principle of being a "Place of Yes." When they saw the need for childcare so parents could go to work, they responded, "Yes!"

Concordia Place paused its community programs amidst directives to social distance, but soon recognized essential workers' need for childcare, since schools and daycare facilities have closed. They recognized that they were well-equipped to serve their community as an emergency childcare center, since they had facilities that typically house community programs for children, and staff who are trained in health and safety precautions. The center is open to any family whose position is within the Illinois definition of the essential workforce and does not have another source of sustainable child care. The service is not limited to Concordia families, and the center is no open Monday – Friday, 7 am – 6 pm.

As part of their opening as an emergency childcare center, Concordia has enhanced health and safety precautions, many of which will continue as they resume full operations at each of their locations. Precautions include health screenings for children and staff at arrival, temperature screenings during the day, enhanced sanitation procedures, additional nightly janitorial services, and limiting classrooms to ten children to allow for social distancing.

Thank you to Concordia Place and your dedicated staff for being a "Place of Yes," and adapting to serve the needs of your community.

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF SOUTH DAKOTA

April 16, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota (LSS SD) for their creative solution to supply their community with much needed protective equipment.

LSS SD hosts a learning center for children, and they are providing childcare services during the COVID-19 crisis. When the children saw one of the learning center staff, Sarah Anderson, sewing masks, they were eager to help. Sarah taught the children how to sew using a sewing machine, and they were enthusiastic to use this new skill to help keep the staff safe at LSS SD. The children at the learning center at LSS SD have spent the past few weeks sewing good quality, three layer masks for the staff, their family and friends, and their teachers. LSS SD is now asking parents if they know of anyone in need of masks, and expanding their reach into the community.

The children are suggesting they make masks to send to retirement homes, since they know the elderly population is particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. LSS SD is seeking donations to help cover the cost of supplies as the children continue using their new-found skills to provide much needed protective gear.

Kelo Land, LSS SD's local news station, covered this uplifting story: <https://www.keloland.com/video/lutheran-social-services-daycare-kids-making-face-masks/5024388/>.

Thank you to LSS SD for your dedication to serving and protecting your community, and for instilling community service in the next generation!





LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF NEVADA

April 15, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Services of Nevada (LSSN), for expanding their digital food pantry services during the COVID-19 pandemic. LSSN has operated a food pantry for more than ten years, serving members of their community who are food insecure. The food pantry offers fresh produce, meats, dairy, bread, and an array of non-perishable food items, and provides low-income shoppers with the dignity of choosing the foods they wish to eat.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased food insecurity in vulnerable communities, and LSSN is rising to the challenge of meeting that need. LSSN launched the country's first digital food pantry, DigiMart, in 2016, allowing clients to select their food items from any electronic device connected to the internet, including desktop kiosks at LSSN.

DigiMart has become a necessity in the era of social distancing, allowing low-income families and homeless populations to select groceries online. LSSN is expanding the size of the DigiMart food pantry from 750 square feet to 3,058 square feet, and suspending registration requirements so they can serve more people who are facing food insecurity.

Thank you to Lutheran Social Services of Nevada for working hard to promote food security in Southern Nevada during the COVID-19 pandemic!



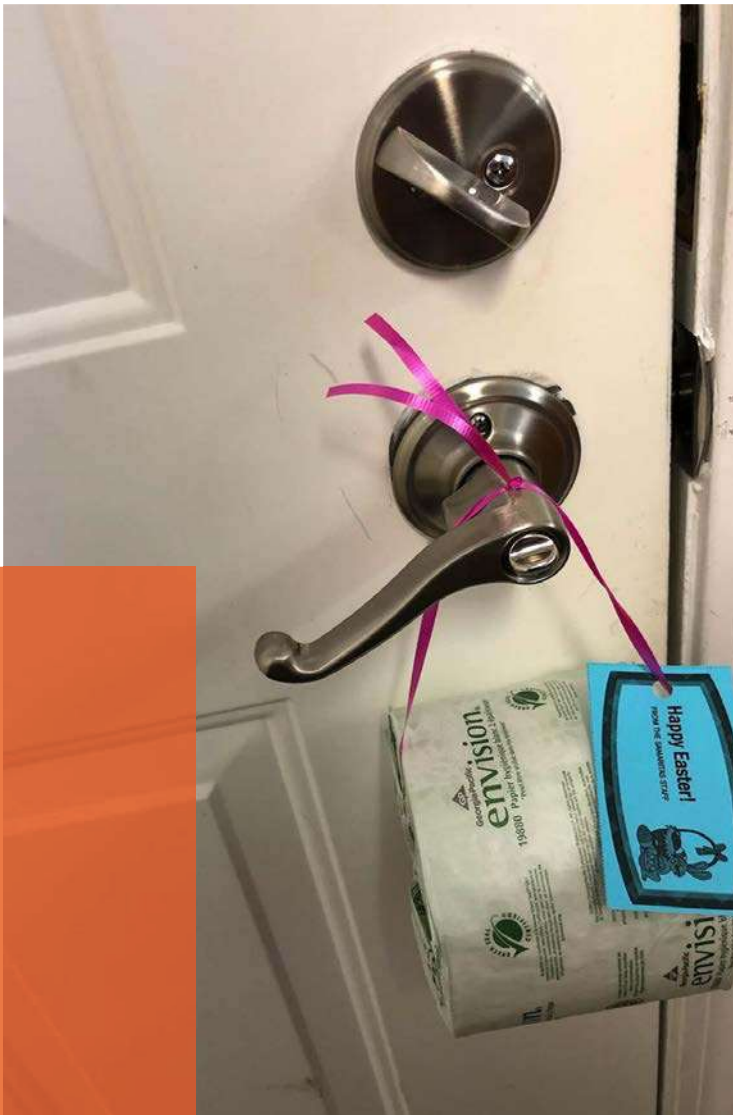
LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF ILLINOIS

April 14, 2020

Today's Front Line Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, and the Project IMPACT staff. Project IMPACT is a behavioral health crisis program, operating in five hospital emergency rooms in Chicago. The crisis mental health counselors and social workers of Project IMPACT provide psychiatric evaluations, and place patients needing psychiatric care in behavioral health facilities, ensuring that ER beds are available for those who need testing and acute medical care. Those ER beds are especially critical now, during the COVID-19 crisis.

Project IMPACT staff cannot work from home, and have courageously answered the call to serve their community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Counselors and social workers are taking on extra shifts to cover for their colleagues who are worried about exposure, unable to work due to illness, or staying home with children. Some staff who are temporarily unable to work are spending their time sewing masks to keep their colleagues safe.

Thank you to Lutheran Social Services of Illinois and the Project IMPACT staff! We recognize that you are working in increasingly challenging conditions, and we appreciate your dedication to bringing healing and wholeness to your communities.



SAMARITAS

April 13, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Samaritas, and the staff at their affiliate, Adrian Affordable Living. Due to the need to social distance during COVID-19, Adrian Affordable Living was forced to cancel their annual Easter party. Each year, Adrian Affordable Living hosts an Easter party on the property for the community, including an Easter egg hunt for the children. They saved money by cancelling the Easter party, and decided to use that funding to provide a necessity for their residents instead: toilet paper.

In the spirit of giving, staff at Adrian Affordable Living provided toilet paper to every household, which was greatly appreciated since toilet paper has been in short supply and many families have had trouble finding the needed product. One of their residents called the office to thank them for the gift, saying she had "prayed to the toilet paper gods just that morning," since her family had run out and did not know how they would find more toilet paper.

Hats off to Samaritas and Adrian Affordable Living for using their resources to help their community! Though Easter parties had to be cancelled this year, we appreciate that you are looking to build community in other ways.



LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICE OF MINNESOTA

April 9, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, which has forged a new partnership with MyPillow to meet the needs of their staff who are working on the front lines in the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many healthcare and social services providers, LSS of Minnesota experienced shortages of much-needed supplies like masks and gloves to enable them to continue to serve their community, but without risking the health of their staff and furthering the spread of COVID-19. Unfortunately, it could be a 2-3 week waiting period before receiving protective gear, and LSS of Minnesota did not want to reduce or stop their services while they waited for the necessary equipment.

To fill the gap in protective equipment, LSS of Minnesota partnered with local supplier MyPillow, and MyPillow generously repurposed their manufacturing resources to produce cotton masks in mass quantities. These supplies allowed LSS of Minnesota to provide their services safely. MyPillow has continued manufacturing washable masks for hospitals and other healthcare facilities during this time of need.

Thank you to MyPillow for stepping up during the COVID-19 crisis to provide much-needed resources, and thank you to Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota for your ongoing service and dedication to your community, regardless of circumstance!



LUTHERAN METROPOLITAN MINISTRY

April 7, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry (LMM), which is faithfully serving the most vulnerable people in Northeast Ohio amid the COVID-19 challenges. Among many services, LMM provides food and shelter to hundreds of people without homes every day. The need to social distance creates major challenges for these homeless services, but LMM is rising to that challenge in continuing to serve people who are struggling while also keeping their staff safe.

LMM is providing virtual visits, where possible, and making adjustments since shelters are not set up for social distancing. Marcella Brown, Vice President of Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry, said they have reduced their shelter count significantly to provide more space for people sheltering. But no one is being left out in the cold; LMM is partnering with other community organizations to ensure everyone has a place to shelter, and social distancing can continue in efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Thank you, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry, for your dedication in serving the most vulnerable people in your community – made all the more vital in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

LUTHERAN SERVICES CAROLINAS

April 6, 2020

Today's Frontline Hero is Lutheran Services Carolinas (LSC), which is actively responding to the needs of their community during the COVID-19 pandemic in so many ways. LSC is proactively checking in with their community members and offering to connect people with resources, such as caseworkers and spiritual leaders. Staff continue to work hard on the front lines, risking their own health by doing so.



Staff and volunteers are sewing homemade masks and other protective equipment in short supply so they can remain healthy and continue to serve their clients and residents, who now are even more vulnerable. Though LSC is under financial stress due to the costs of protective equipment and needed additional staff, they remain committed to serving their community. Their recent \$56,000 purchase of hand sanitizer to ensure they are operating in a clean environment is just one such example.

LSC is truly rising to the challenge of COVID-19. Though they recognize these are trying times, the LSC team is celebrating the resilience and love they see throughout their community. Family members continue to visit the gates and windows of senior living facilities to wave to their loved ones, birthday celebrations continue remotely, and generous support goes out to refugee families.





IMMANUEL LUTHERAN COMMUNITIES

April 3, 2020

Today's Frontline Hero is Immanuel Lutheran Communities and CEO Jason Cronk in Kalispell, MT. Immanuel Lutheran is a senior living community, and they have been working hard to keep the coronavirus away from their over 300 residents. They recognize their population is particularly susceptible to COVID-19, and the ability the virus has to spread quickly presents a real danger. Jason and his team put in place critical protocols to keep their residents safe, including restricting visitors and implementing a 14-day private observation period for new residents, or residents who are returning to the campus after an absence. The team also is practicing social distancing for all non-essential meetings and gatherings.

Alongside their protocols to keep residents safe, Immanuel Lutheran also is aiming to ensure residents feel connected despite social distancing. They are making arrangements for families to contact their loved ones regularly through social media, phone, and videoconferencing. Jason is doing a great of keeping the community updated on life at Immanuel Lutheran Communities. Check out his recent, related op-ed in The Missoulian.

Thank you to Jason Cronk and all the hard-working employees at Immanuel Lutheran Communities for your commitment to faithfully serving your community residents during COVID-19!

THE EVANGELICAL GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY

April 2, 2020

Today's Frontline Hero is the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society and Sanford Health for offering generous benefits to its hardworking employees during the coronavirus pandemic. The Good Samaritan Society recently announced it will be offering a support program to its more than 50,000 employees across the nation. All full-time hourly employees will receive a bonus to cover their health insurance for the next three months, and all part-time employees will receive a similar bonus.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on everything we do.”

The Good Samaritan Society communicated that its employees and their families are of utmost importance to the organization, and they want to support employees during these uncertain times. Randy Bury, president of the Good Samaritan Society, said, “The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on everything we do. We owe a debt of gratitude to our frontline caregivers who are protecting the most vulnerable during this time of great need. Our support plan offers much-deserved assistance to our employees. Our staff's determination to continue to provide the best care to all those we serve has never been more critical.”

Thank you to the Good Samaritan Society for your generous support of the employees who are working hard to combat coronavirus!





LUTHERAN SERVICES FLORIDA

April 1, 2020

Today's Frontline Hero is Lutheran Services Florida (LSF), which is finding creative solutions to serve their community remotely during the coronavirus pandemic.

LSF is truly committed to serving the mental health needs of their entire community. The organization has significantly increased its telehealth capacity so people can continue accessing mental health resources, counseling, and case management from their homes – a move so crucial during this challenging time. In addition to telehealth services, Dr. Christine Cauffield, CEO of LSF Health Systems, is providing expert guidance in the media on managing the mounting anxiety and challenges to mental health arising in communities due to the pandemic.

LSF also is providing solutions to challenges presented by social distancing in the field of education. Educational leaders are designing remote support kits for Head Start families as they teach their children at home.

Thank you, Lutheran Services Florida, for your creative problem solving and dedication to your community's needs in such trying times!

Multi-lingual Resources & Services for NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

- Visit our [YouTube Channel](#)
- www.LFSneb.org
- or call 1-833-903-2376



LUTHERAN FAMILY SERVICES OF NEBRASKA

March 31, 2020

Today's Frontline Hero is Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, which is going the extra mile to communicate effectively with their community during the coronavirus pandemic. LFS of Nebraska created an 800 phone number for their clients and those seeking telehealth mental health services during this challenging time. They increased telehealth therapy capacity by more than a hundredfold in less than 24 hours to ensure everyone could continue their therapy, and to manage additional mental health needs as community anxiety over the pandemic grows.

As part of the organization's efforts to promote expanded telehealth services, LFS of Nebraska sent 7,000 letters to clients in language used in the home. The Global Language Solutions team assembled interpreters who went to work translating LFS of Nebraska's communications, along with CDC-issued materials and information on how to stay safe during the pandemic.

They also published videos in 14 languages on their YouTube channel to disseminate information about the coronavirus to typically marginalized communities. Some of the languages include Somali, Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda, Kurdish, Spanish, Burmese, Nepali, and more. Notably, the Ohio Department of Health discovered these helpful videos and is using them for their own community outreach efforts.

LFS of Nebraska also is developing virtual town hall information sessions in a variety of languages, launching a podcast, and will soon release a short video series to help people stay informed and stay connected.

Thank you, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, for your unflagging commitment to serving your community, and for making the extra effort to communicate this crucial health information to so many people!



MOUNT OLIVET ROLLING ACRES

March 30, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Tracy Murphy, President of Mount Olivet Rolling Acres in Minnesota. Tracy recognizes the funding challenges non-profits are facing as they aim to continue their important services amidst the COVID-19 outbreak. She called on her network to contribute to their favorite non-profits NOW, and ensure their gifts are unrestricted so they can be used where they are needed most. Tracy practices what she preaches and generously doubled her yearly donor advised fund allocation.

Mount Olivet Rolling Acres continues to care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities during the pandemic. The staff are pitching in however they can, with the executive team delivering craft supplies and making face masks, and doctors helping disinfect the work space. Great work Tracy, and all the staff at Mount Olivet Rolling Acres for your generosity, flexibility with job descriptions, and recognition that we are all in this together.

GRACEWORKS LUTHERAN SERVICES

March 27, 2020

Today's Front Line Hero is Graceworks Lutheran Services, (with 63 locations in Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky), who is going above and beyond to meet the holistic needs of residents and employees.

Graceworks is focused not only on keeping residents and employees safe amid the COVID-19 pandemic, but on making sure residents don't feel isolated during this time. For example, staff at Bethany Village (Centerville, Ohio) are creating original programming on the senior living community's internal television station for residents in independent and assisted living settings as well as long-term care, including exercise classes, mini concerts by talented staff, and frequent spiritual segments. Resident council meetings and regular updates also are being broadcast, all helping to lift the spirits of residents and keep them engaged, helping earn Bethany Village recognition from local media for their efforts to connect residents and family members during times when visitors aren't allowed in licensed areas. Staff help residents utilize iPads and smartphones to connect with their loved ones, as well.



Staff at Graceworks Housing Services, providing affordable housing for income-qualified seniors or those with disabilities, is connecting residents with donors from the community who want to help in this time of need. At Messiah Community in Urbana, Ohio, a local restaurant owner delivered a shopping cart full of items to a resident who had no means of shopping for herself. The owner indicated he would be back as needed to make sure she has supplies so she can stay home during the pandemic.

And at Graceworks Enhanced Living, which provides homes for persons living with intellectual disabilities, staff is supporting one another by displaying ways to practice safe hygiene during the crisis. They also are encouraging residents to practice social distancing while still enjoying the warming weather.

The organization's Human Resources staff are focused on making sure employees practice self-care as well. Graceworks has adopted a motto of SHINE, for Supporting the Holistic and Individual Needs of Employees. Regular messages are being sent to employees thanking them for their valuable and selfless service, for doing the right things to keep everyone safe, and providing information on ways to focus on all areas of holistic health.

Lutheran Services in America is proud of the holistic care our member organizations like Graceworks are providing. We're glad to recognize them for their valuable efforts today!



ST. JOHN'S UNITED

One of our members of Lutheran Services in America's Great Plains Senior Services Collaborative, St. John's United in Montana, has gone the extra mile in their communities to promote and create employment opportunities to help community members affected by COVID-19-related economic impact. David Trost, the organization's President & CEO, posted this ad of solidarity in the Billings Gazette, and partnered with Montana Health Network to provide FREE at-home CNA training to help reduce the barrier to entry for workforce. Great teamwork from David, Taylor, Sarah, and the entire St John's United team!

TEMPORARY WORK OPPORTUNITIES

With so many people out of work, St. John's United has created these needed work opportunities
MINIMUM WAGE TEMPORARY RELIEF POSITIONS

Door Greeters and Screeners

Welcome and screen staff

Culinary Valets

Deliver food to elders

Assisted Dining Companions

Assist Elders needing help

To apply visit www.stjohnsunited.org or Kylie at 406-655-5920

CNA HEALTHCARE TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

In this time of great need for healthcare workers.

St. John's United Foundation will offer

FREE ONLINE AT HOME CNA EDUCATION
with our partner, Montana Health Network.

Upon successful completion of an estimated 45 hours of education, you may make an application for PAID employment and completion of clinical coursework requirement at St. John's United, Avantara Skilled Nursing or Any Montana Health Network Member with a Certified Clinical Instructor and Headmaster Test Observer.

Please inquire and make application by going to
www.montanahealthnetwork.com/contact-us



LUTHERAN SENIORLIFE

March 26's Front Line Hero is Lutheran SeniorLife in Mars, PA, who put out a request for homemade masks from their community members.

Lutheran SeniorLife is committed to protecting their staff and their residents, and is drawing on their community's resources to fill gaps during the global shortage of personal protective equipment. Their slogan, "Make it fashionable, make it fun – as long as it's cotton, you'll help a ton!" inspires creativity and encourages the community to have fun with this valuable donation. Their website even includes video tutorials for making masks. We are proud to recognize Lutheran SeniorLife for their great work with senior adults and throughout their community!



ALLEGHENY LUTHERAN SOCIAL MINISTRIES

March 24, 2020

Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries (ALSM) in Altoona, PA is coming up with creative ways to keep their community connected to their important work. Their dedicated team has asked community members to make homemade masks out of fabric and, according to President and CEO Pat Savage, ALSM has received an outpouring of generosity! People from far and wide have donated masks to all three of ALSM's campuses, helping protect the healthcare workers and those they serve. Individuals from the Altoona Community Theatre even switched their efforts from making costumes to making masks.

In addition to the masks, ALSM residents are receiving letters and artwork from children who are home from school. This demonstration of love and support from ALSM's community is lifting spirits and connecting people, despite physical social distancing. To keep residents in contact with their loved ones, staff members at the Lutheran Homes are coordinating FaceTime and Skype calls. One of the residents was overjoyed to hear her son's voice and to be able to tell him, "I love you!"

We are proud to recognize Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries' excellent work, as well as their generous community!

CONTACT US



Lutheran
Services
in America

Have a **Front Line Heroes** story to share?

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