



Lutheran
Services
in America

FRONTLINE HEROES

WINTER 2021



We honor the courageous frontline workers of our member organizations who are serving their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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November 23, 2020



Samaritas

Samaritas is expanding its level of service to the local community in Grand Rapids with the opening of its new Senior Affordable Living Community and West Michigan Child and Family Campus.

Samaritas is one of the largest faith-based, nonprofit health and human service organizations in Michigan. Transforming communities since 1934, Samaritas serves more than 20,000 people in Michigan by helping children find loving families, establishing new homes for refugees, offering transitional homes for the homeless, and providing affordable living communities for older adults, families and people with disabilities.

Samaritas believes its staff “are the rocks that start the ripple of transformation” for those they serve. The ripple grew much bigger on Friday with the grand opening of Samaritas’ Senior Affordable Living Community and West Michigan Child and Family Campus in Grand Rapids.

Housed within the newly renovated historic St. Joseph Seminary building, the West Michigan Campus expands Samaritas’ ability to serve the community by housing several services under one roof.

Affordable housing is the largest health and human service need in not only Michigan but the United States generally, stated Sam Beals in a recent television interview, and Samaritas is proud to include 53 affordable living units for low-income older adults on the new campus. The campus also expands services to children and families, as well as refugees, the homeless, and people with disabilities.

Thank you to Samaritas for continuing to expand your ripples of transformation throughout Michigan’s communities!

November 24, 2020



Luther Manor

For 60 years, Luther Manor has provided exceptional housing and care to seniors in Wauwatosa, Milwaukee, and surrounding areas in Wisconsin. Throughout 2020, staff countered the pandemic with creative ways to communicate and connect with residents.

Life enrichment specialist Stephanie Rutkowski adapted community activities and communications to be in line with social distancing requirements. She adjusted Luther Manor's in-house TV channel to provide all-day programming; developed and delivered activity books that residents could complete in their apartments; and established a new project called Hope Garden.

Lisa Dawson, a licensed practical nurse in Luther Manor's Health Care Center, continues to provide empathetic and engaging medical care that is focused on the whole person. Recently, Lisa made sure a long-time resident was able to spend her birthday virtually with family. Volunteer specialist Rachel Miers has stepped in wherever help is needed, all while posting encouraging notes for staff to see as they go about their day.

The entire team at Luther Manor has put on safe and fun community events fit for the season. In early October, staff took residents out for a drive to view the autumn leaves and enjoy fall-themed treats. They also hosted an entire week of Halloween activities, where residents painted "pumpkin portraits," participated in a raffle, played Halloween bingo, and listened to a live music broadcast on their own in-house channel.

In November, Luther Manor aired a special Veteran's Day ceremony featuring one of their residents playing "Taps" on trumpet. And looking forward to the holidays, the team is putting on "Love Lights," a program in which donors dedicate a light on a Christmas tree in honor or memory of a loved one.

Luther Manor's dedication to residents is exemplified by outstanding programs and people. Thank you to Stephanie, Lisa, Rachel, and the rest of the staff for providing such outstanding support to residents in your care!

November 25, 2020



Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio

Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio provided Thanksgiving meals to people without homes.

The Columbus-based Lutheran Social Services provides services across 27 Ohio counties to address challenges related to food, shelter, safety, and healing. The organization runs five permanent food pantries, two homeless shelter programs, domestic violence services and a safe haven shelter, and three social enterprises. In 2017, LSS received the Columbus Foundation Award for helping central Ohioans in need.

In a year when pandemic has forced many into social isolation, the Thanksgiving holiday poses additional challenges for people without housing.

LSS intends to help see people through this difficult time by providing turkey dinners for residents of its Faith Mission shelter. For safety, residents will have dedicated areas where they can share their meal with others they are staying with at the shelter. The dinners will be prepared by local motorcycle clubs and will include some of the most important staples of a Thanksgiving dinner—collard greens, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes.

Thank you to LSS for providing food security—and a bit of holiday cheer—to residents this Thanksgiving.

November 30, 2020



Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands

Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands has been supporting local communities in the wake of the recent hurricanes and the COVID-19 pandemic.

LSSVI traces its roots back to 1904 when Princess Louise of Denmark sent two deaconesses to St. Croix to help combat the island's high infant mortality rate. Today, LSSVI continues to care for infants and toddlers as well as low-income older adults and people with disabilities.

The organization is also committed to providing disaster relief to support families most affected by the damage of the recent devastating hurricanes; LLSVI has assembled construction teams of 10–20 people to assist the rebuilding of damaged homes for low-income seniors across St. Croix.

Abiding by its motto “by love, serve one another,” LSSVI is also forging partnerships in the community to ensure its staff and the people they serve receive the resources they need to protect themselves from COVID-19. Financial services corporation Ocwen USVI donated supplies for children and LSSVI employees at Sister Emma Cottage and Queen Louise Home for Children to remain safe and healthy.

In addition to COVID relief, supporters in the St. Thomas community donated food and other supplies to help people with disabilities and older adults at LSSVI's senior living communities prepare for the next hurricane.

Thank you to LSSVI for your steadfast efforts in helping resilient communities across St. Croix carry on.

December 1, 2020



Community Family Life Services

CFLS is dedicated to eliminating
the stigma of HIV/AIDS

On this World AIDS Day, we recognize Community Family Life Services for its committed service to people living with HIV/AIDS.

Community Family Life Services (CFLS) has served Washington, DC for more than 50 years, and has gained trust in the community along the way. CFLS provides children, families, and adults with resources needed to move beyond poverty and homelessness, and supports women in their reentry after incarceration. These supports include housing, mentorship, employment programs, as well as health supports such as a HIV testing.

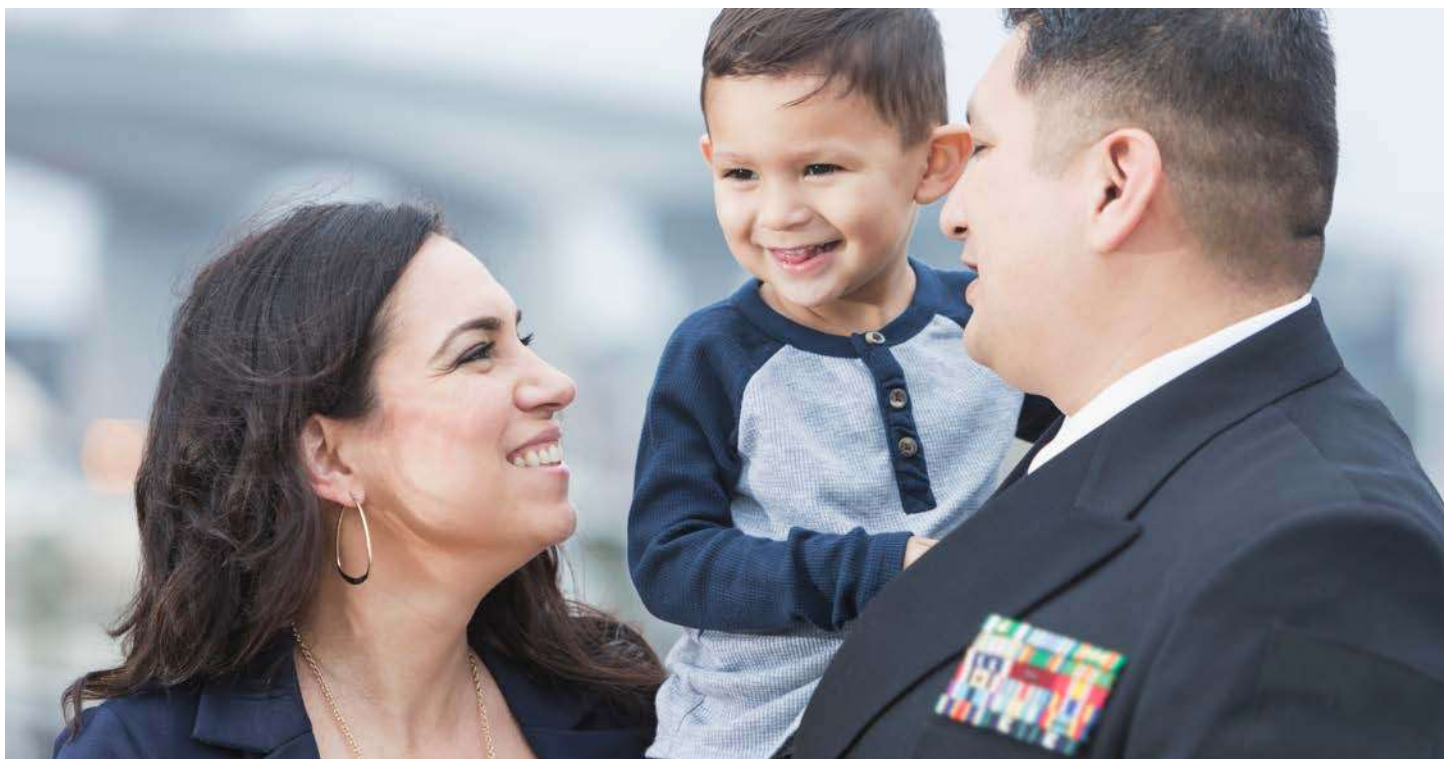
In addition to the supports and services CFLS offers to people living with HIV/AIDS, it is dedicated to eliminating the stigma of the virus, providing public events and education.

The regularly scheduled Safe Sex and Testing Parties feature guest speakers who share comprehensive information about risk reduction, as well as opportunities for HIV testing.

CFLS is also a proud community partner for the Whitman-Walker Health's Walk & 5K to End HIV, which engages thousands of DC residents to fundraise and walk or run to show their support for dependable, high-quality healthcare for those living with HIV. The virtual walk occurred on Saturday, October 24, but supporters can continue to donate to the cause through December 31, 2020.

On this World AIDS Day and every day, thank you to Community Family Life Services for the support and high-quality care you provide to people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS!

December 2, 2020



Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains

Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains in Colorado elevates the importance of mental health for our nation's veterans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LFS considers the mental and emotional well-being of its community a top priority. As the stress and anxiety of the pandemic takes a deeper toll, the organization remains committed to support people who have been affected by COVID-19; LFS provides services through a partnership with the Colorado Spirit Crisis Counseling Program to support people during their recovery.

This past Veterans Day, LFS took an extra step in its recognition of those who serve in uniform.

As one of 19 contracted providers of confidential mental and emotional support in Colorado, the organization's Colorado Spirit Wellness Program hosted a panel of health and human service professionals to explore the difficulties posed by COVID-19 and the resources that are available to veterans, active duty servicemembers, and their families. The panel provided an opportunity to not only hear stories about traumatic situations but to relay important resources related to mental health for the veteran community.

Thank you to LFS for your service to the veteran community and for all individuals seeking a helping hand through this stressful time.

December 4, 2020

Tuff Memorial Home Corporation has an inventive approach to helping older adults have fun and feel more connected to their community.



Tuff Memorial Home Corporation

Located in southwest Minnesota, Tuff Memorial Home Corporation offers independent and assisted living for older adults ranging from individual apartments to private rooms with skilled nursing and professional care.

Throughout the pandemic, the team at Tuff Memorial Home have hosted a wide array of safe events and activities for residents. In recent months, they held a live music performance featuring a member of The Sioux Falls Tempo Band playing Johnny Cash cover songs, organized a historical presentation with a local reenactor and a covered wagon, and arranged barbecues and picnics – all for residents to enjoy outdoors.

Staff have also used social media and their website to encourage open communication between residents and their loved ones through letters, cards, gift boxes, video calls, and visits compliant with social distancing requirements. They have even welcomed animal friends from local rescue organizations to the community – residents have met puppies, kittens, and a zebra this year. Plus, the team worked with local community organizations to arrange a Halloween costume parade and a special service for Veteran's Day.

Thank you, Tuff Memorial Home Corporation, for truly living your mission and providing heartfelt quality care that contributes to a sense of dignity for older adults.

December 7, 2020



Eben Ezer Lutheran Care Center

Eben Ezer Lutheran Care Center in Brush, Colorado, utilizes a communal approach to protecting residents from COVID-19.

Eben Ezer leans on its Christian heritage and appreciation for innovation to offer premium person-directed care for older adults and people with disabilities in northeast Colorado.

The organization recognizes its residents as individuals with distinct needs and interests, and creates an environment with that in mind that accounts for their emotional and mental well-being in addition to the physical. Companionship, meaningful activity and variety are crucial components of life that Eben Ezer incorporates into the long-term care it delivers.

Eben Ezer prides itself as being not only a provider of continuum care for older adults but an advocate for their health on a larger scale as well.

This commitment has taken on new meaning during the COVID-19 pandemic. In October, Eben Ezer CEO Shelly M. Griffith penned an open letter to residents of Morgan County, where the organization is based, to both assure them that the center was doing everything it could to keep its residents safe and to enlist the help of the community as a whole to adhere to health guidelines. Taking simple steps like wearing a mask and social distancing, Griffith wrote, would go a long way to prevent the spread of the virus—and save many lives in the process.

Thank you to Eben Ezer for your transparency and innovative approaches to curbing the coronavirus and keeping those who are at greater risk safe.

December 8, 2020



Concordia Place
provides inclusive
programs that help
children, teens, and
adults thrive

Concordia Place

Concordia Place has adapted its programming during the pandemic to further help working parents and their children.

Based in Chicago, Concordia Place provides inclusive programs that help children, teens, and adults thrive regardless of their economic background. Ordinarily, Concordia Place's School-Age 365 Program offers educational and social activities each afternoon after school.

But after Chicago Public Schools transitioned entirely to remote learning in response to COVID-19, Concordia Place saw a new need surface in the community for childcare that spans the entire school day.

They have since adapted their program to extend to a full-day model that provides access to WiFi, meals and snacks, and support for homework and assignments all within a safe learning environment.

Beginning at 7:30 each morning, children enrolled in School-Age 365 can go to one of two centers in downtown Chicago. Highly qualified instructors then guide them through their day, ensuring they log into their classes, providing support during lessons, and assisting with technology and homework.

When they are not in class, School-Age 365 kids can safely play and socialize. Concordia Place also offers rates on a sliding scale to ensure the program is affordable for all families.

We applaud Concordia Place for expanding their hours in support of a safe, healthy, and fun learning environment for children that ensures their parents can continue to report to work.

December 9, 2020



Samaritan Counseling Center of Southern Wisconsin

Samaritan Counseling Center of Southern Wisconsin expanded its services during the pandemic to give people a sense of stability through this time of uncertainty.

For nearly three decades, the Monona-based Samaritan Counseling Center has provided counseling services to people of different backgrounds and walks of life. The organization adheres to a philosophy of caring for the mind, body, spirit, and community in all manners of counseling, from trauma and depression to couples counseling and therapy for children and adolescents.

Throughout all the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has presented, Samaritan Counseling Center has also found opportunities. The organization's executive director, Dan Feaster, recently outlined the benefits that expanded use of telehealth has brought, including more accessibility to both current and new clients.

For instance, the center is using virtual health visits as a way to continue counseling services for older adults with depression and anxiety who can no longer drive. What's more, the organization hired a new therapist to help treat clients at a time when mental health services are so crucial.

From front line workers who grapple with the stress of working in an environment at greater risk of coronavirus exposure, to others who may be struggling with job loss or other forms of uncertainty, Samaritan Counseling Center is committed to serving the needs of its community.

Thank you to Samaritan Counseling Center for being the mental, emotional, and spiritual rock of the Madison area.

December 10, 2020



Science
—
Technology
—
Engineering
—
Art
—
Math

Peace Community Center

Peace Community Center is dedicated to helping the next generation of STEAM scholars!

Peace Community Center is located in Tacoma, WA and empowers children and their families through transformational educational experiences. Peace Community Center has programs for children of all ages, from elementary school through college, aimed at creating active learners with the skills, experiences, and values to become vibrant members of their communities.

Peace Community Center aims to generate interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math through their STEAM-focused curriculum.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Peace Community Center has had to adjust to life in an online world. In order to continue helping students, they have shifted to virtual one-on-one academic coaching, tutoring, and homework assistance. Online and drive thru events have also helped keep families and students engaged during these difficult times.

Thank you to Peace Community Center for your dedication to learning in these difficult times!

December 11, 2020



McKenzie County Healthcare System

McKenzie County Healthcare Systems, Inc. is mobilizing its community to bring joy to seniors.

McKenzie County Healthcare Systems (MCHS) comprises a network of healthcare facilities in Watford City, North Dakota, and includes a wellness center, a hospital, rural health and specialty clinics, and two senior living communities.

With COVID-19 on the rise, many families will unfortunately have to spend holidays apart. MCHS staff have recognized a greater need to foster connection between residents and their community and in recent weeks, put out a call to action to family members, donors, and local organizations to bring holiday cheer to seniors in their care.

With the help of hundreds of volunteers, they worked swiftly to install Christmas trees, lights, and other decorations throughout their two communities — Good Shepherd Home and Horizon Assisted Living.

Kristin Rhone, the activity director at Horizon Assisted Living, said staff wanted to let residents know the community is thinking of them even though in-person visits are limited. The end result of their effort is a winter wonderland for all to enjoy. MCHS also enlisted the help of children from Johnson Corners Christian Academy to sing Christmas carols for residents.

It is our honor to recognize McKenzie County Healthcare Systems for their empathetic and thoughtful support of seniors as social distancing measures continue this holiday season.

December 14, 2020



Humanitri

Humanitri in St. Louis helps children and people experiencing homelessness achieve their goal of self-sufficiency and stability.

Humanitri has helped more than 6,300 homeless individuals since its establishment in 2006 following the merger of three organizations with more than 130 years of collective history. The organization works with families to establish stability in a supportive community and build the necessary skills to change the trajectory of their lives. Humanitri offers transitional housing services for all people, including the “hidden homeless” — people who do not necessarily live on the streets but rather in domestic violence shelters, the homes of family and friends, or in their cars.

As part of the process of helping clients realize self-sufficiency, the organization helps them learn how to manage their finances, their household, and stress once they are placed into a home, and even teaches them how to navigate the job application process.

Humanitri places a significant importance on serving children given the unfortunate reality that the average age of a homeless person in the United States is just nine years old; many of the organization’s clients are parents who are unable to find daycare for their children.

The organization’s service to children continues to grow in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As many schools rely on virtual learning for safety reasons, Humanitri is moving forward on its Together Achieving Goals (TAG) children’s program. The program, which is eyeing an early 2021 launch, will enable the organization to equip families with what they need to be successful in these abnormal times.

Thank you to Humanitri for your compassion and dedication to helping people of all ages get the support they need to thrive.

December 15, 2020

“Will you
wear a mask
for me?”



Lutheran Homes Society

Lutheran Homes Society in Muscatine, Iowa, have been using their channels to clearly and consistently communicate health and safety measures to their wider community.

Located about 30 minutes outside of Davenport, Lutheran Homes Society is the only Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) in the area that offers a full range of services and living options for seniors.

When a staff member recently tested positive for COVID-19, the organization took swift action, immediately notifying families and caregivers and putting a halt to in-person visits until further notice. They also established a “family pledge” which relatives can sign to wear a mask in honor of their loved one. After signing, participants receive a window decal to display in view of other members of the Muscatine community that reads “I wear my mask for my loved one at Lutheran Living Senior Campus.” The team also enlisted residents’ help in putting together an awareness campaign for greater Muscatine County.

Staff assembled a collection of photos in which residents and front-line workers hold signs asking, “Will you wear a mask for me?” and published it to their Facebook page as a video with a list of guidelines to help prevent the spread of infection.

Lutheran Homes Society has also helped seniors in their care combat isolation and cope with life in quarantine. In addition to coordinating video calls with residents’ family and friends, staff regularly deliver special treats – most recently nachos, vanilla cupcakes, and dark chocolate with almonds. They have even given residents temporary tattoos and organized a “Gone Hunting” day where they could use Nerf guns to fire at staff dressed in deer costumes. Finally, they sought residents’ input to create a “wish list” and made it available for members of the community to send gifts residents can open on Christmas day.

We commend Lutheran Homes Society for helping seniors feel more connected while spearheading broader health education efforts.

December 16, 2020



Fellowship Square Foundation

Fellowship Square Foundation offers caring support of residents and proactive efforts to keep them safe from COVID-19.

Fellowship Square maintains four communities across Virginia and Maryland that offer programs and services for low-income older adults to maintain healthy, active lives. Many residents who live in the foundation's communities hold jobs that offer little to no retirement benefits; some are refugees who have relocated from forced labor camps and many others would otherwise be homeless. What Fellowship Square offers are security, socialization, and the general well-being of its residents.

Fellowship Square's Lake Anne Fellowship House in Reston, Virginia, has been extremely proactive in its efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19.

When one of the facility's vendors was diagnosed with the virus in October, staff quickly identified who had come into contact with that vendor and immediately notified residents within the facility. Residents were asked not to leave their apartments and to avoid contact with other people. The action plan staff developed for such an occasion helps place the foundation one step ahead of the virus; taking precautionary steps like this and following CDC guidelines have limited coronavirus infections within all four Fellowship Square Foundation communities to less than half a dozen residents. Fellowship Square marked its 60th anniversary this month with a virtual celebration that acknowledged its past while nodding to a bright future.

Thank you to Fellowship Square Foundation for the compassion and dedication woven into your service to residents, and "cheers to 60 years!"

December 18, 2020

“Concordia gave me what I needed to further pursue my interest in art”



Concordia Life Plan Community

Lutheran Senior Services, Inc. (dba Concordia Life Plan Community) in Oklahoma City is encouraging residents to pursue their passions during the pandemic.

Concordia Life Plan Community offers a variety of senior living options on its 15-acre campus. The staff encourages an active lifestyle for all residents and recently has given extra support to seniors as they explore various creative outlets while social distancing.

90-year-old resident Beverly Langley has been using her time in quarantine to pursue watercolor painting and has produced more 80 pieces of art this year while sheltering in place.

Leadership at Concordia have even provided Beverly with additional watercolors, paintbrushes, and canvas to support her work. Beverly says, “Concordia gave me what I needed to further pursue my interest in art.”

Joan Quatro, 85, has been using a loom-like machine called a “Knifty Knitter,” to knit hats. After teaching other residents how to use the device, she led a collaborative effort to donate the hats for use in care packages for soldiers and to local hospitals for newborn babies. She has also coordinated with nonprofit organizations such as HUGS and the American Heart Association.

Resident Verna Shones devoted herself to gardening and sewing during the pandemic. Her apartment is filled with beautiful houseplants and sewing projects and she says she hopes to share her talents with others when there is no longer a risk of spreading the virus.

Although this year’s events have caused many many seniors to not visit loved ones or participate in group activities like they used to, the residents and staff at Concordia Life Plan Community have inspired us with their emphasis on self-care through art and other hobbies.

December 21, 2020



Solheim Senior Community

Solheim activity staff have planned to give their residents “the gift of time with their loved ones”

Solheim Senior Community is dedicated to keeping their residents’ spirits up during this holiday season!

Solheim Senior Community is a senior living community serving Los Angeles, CA and the surrounding areas. Solheim offers all levels of care for older adults, residential living, assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing in order to provide long-term comfort and flexibility for their residents.

Due to the Covid pandemic, senior living communities have had to come up with innovative ways to keep their residents engaged.

As the holiday season approaches us, Solheim has planned a number of festive events for their residents, such as decorating individual gingerbread houses. In response to the travel restrictions and safety concerns surrounding the pandemic, the Solheim activity staff have planned to give their residents “the gift of time with their loved ones” by adding more video call opportunities to residents over the holidays.

Thank you to Solheim for your dedication to providing your residents with the best holiday experience possible!

December 22, 2020



“We continue to be so grateful to see that smile and hear her infectious laugh each day”

Tillie Dybing

Tillie Dybing of Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, is a resident of the senior living community Ecumen Detroit Lakes and has survived COVID-19 at the age of 107.

This is the second global pandemic Tillie has experienced in her lifetime. She was nearly five years old when the 1918 flu pandemic spread to her childhood home in North Dakota and vividly remembers playing by her parents' bedside while they recovered from the illness. Tillie also survived a battle with uterine cancer at the age of 95 and has endured many other hardships throughout her life, including the loss of several siblings in their infancy, three major floods in Minot, North Dakota, and the loss of her beloved husband.

Thankfully, Tillie has fully recovered from the coronavirus and aside from feeling fatigued, she did not experience a fever or severe symptoms. Staff of Ecumen Detroit Lakes enthusiastically welcomed her back to her apartment after a few weeks in quarantine. “We continue to be so grateful to see that smile and hear her infectious laugh each day,” they posted on Facebook, adding, “She is such a blessing to our community!”

The Ecumen Detroit Lakes is one of 35 communities operated by Ecumen, a provider of compassionate care for seniors throughout the Midwest and Tennessee. Tillie is certainly a living example of resilience and we are thankful to Ecumen Detroit Lakes for celebrating her each day.

December 23, 2020



Orchard Ridge Senior Living

For nearly a century, Orchard Ridge Senior Living in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, has provided comprehensive services for older adults in a Christian-based environment. The organization incorporates residents' families in its care plans. Orchard Ridge views development and growth as a process that everyone—no matter their circumstances—are capable of achieving to ensure a more enriched life.

Orchard Ridge has made a concerted effort to keep its residents active and connected to loved ones during the pandemic. In the Assisted Living area, residents participate in physical activities such as group exercise, brain fitness, and cycling—all socially distanced, of course.

The facility's Memory Care area is also filled with games, music, crafts, and more exercise. On Sundays, Orchard Ridge connects residents to online church services with local churches, and even has an employee who is capable of offering communion through the Church to Catholic residents. While the mental and emotional weight of the pandemic cannot be completely lifted, Orchard Ridge is doing its best to keep residents connected with family through phone calls, video chats, window visits, and in-person visits with masks and plexiglass dividers included.

Thank you to Orchard Ridge for trying to bring some semblance of normality to the lives of your residents during these challenging times.

December 28, 2020



Crest View Senior Communities

Crest View Senior Communities is hosting a virtual gala to directly support seniors during the pandemic.

Crest View offers housing and supportive care to seniors throughout Blaine and Columbia Heights, Minnesota, and each year holds an event to raise critical funding for programs. Their gala is virtual this year, and while tickets are free of charge, Crest View will use donations and proceeds from the event to support residents during the pandemic. Contributions will fund safe visits for residents and their families in addition to activities to combat isolation.

President and CEO Shirley Barnes emphasized the event will also help the greater community show seniors they are not alone.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented immense challenges for older adults in senior living, who have spent nearly a year in quarantine separated from family. We commend Crest View for their renewed commitment to enhancing the lives of seniors in 2021 and using their annual gala to drive direct support.

For those interested in attending, the “It’s a New Year” gala will take place from 7-8pm Central Time this Wednesday, December 30. The program will feature a diverse lineup from the Continental Strings band. Please visit crestviewcares.org/gala to make your reservation.

December 29, 2020

Children traced
their hands to
make ornaments
for residents to
hang on a
“Thankful Tree”



St. John's Circle of Care

The children of St. John's Circle of Care are taking time to safely visit and connect with seniors during the pandemic.

A Minnesota-based nonprofit, the St. John's Circle of Care offers services on its Senior Living Campus that support all needs a person may have while aging, including home healthcare and skilled nursing.

One unique quality of the organization is that it also provides children's daycare and kindergarten readiness programs. As members of the GrandKids and V.I.K. Club, young kids routinely interact with Senior Living Campus residents through reading, singing, making crafts, and enjoying meals together. The goal of the program is to foster children's intellectual, spiritual, and emotional growth while building companionship that bridges generations.

This year, the pandemic has caused the kids at St. John's Circle of Care to forgo traditional activities and come up with creative ways to safely connect with seniors. Earlier this month, they visited a resident's window to celebrate her 101st birthday. They have also had virtual visits with their older friends over video chat and have walked around the Senior Living Campus with signs that read “We Miss You.” For the holidays, children made Christmas cards and traced their hands to make ornaments for residents to hang on a “Thankful Tree.”

Thank you to all the children in the GrandKids and V.I.K. Club for their compassion and commitment to seniors living at St. John's Circle of Care!

December 30, 2020

“Being able to just surprise everybody with even the smallest gift goes a long way”



Missouri Slope Lutheran Care Center

Missouri Slope Lutheran Care Center is making every day of the holiday season special for their residents this year.

Missouri Slope has been serving Bismarck, North Dakota for more than 50 years and specializes in long-term care and rehabilitation for seniors. Recognizing that residents in their facility could not be in close contact with family during the holidays, staff launched “Operation Christmas Stocking Project” to celebrate them every day this December. Enlisting the help of generous individuals and community organizations, the team stuffed stockings and presented them to more than 70 tenants each morning.

Residents received a wide variety of items, such as cookies, blankets, fun face masks, pens, notepads, calendars, books, scented soap, hand sanitizer, and hot chocolate mix.

The project has made residents feel valued and appreciated. In a recent interview with local news, tenant Annie Gallup, said, “It makes us feel so good that people are thinking of others and wanting to bring us happiness and joy.” Reier Thompson, President and CEO of Missouri Slope, said, “Being able to just surprise everybody with even the smallest gift goes a long way.”

Thank you to everyone at Missouri Slope for the extra effort to bring Christmas magic to your residents this season!

January 5, 2021

LCFS
of Indiana/Kentucky
continues to enlist
donors and
volunteers during
the pandemic



Lutheran Child & Family Services of Indiana/Kentucky

Lutheran Child & Family Services of Indiana/Kentucky continues to assist children and families throughout the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

LCFS of Indiana/Kentucky is headquartered in Indianapolis and provides a wide range of residential and community-based programs to help children and families in need. In addition to operating an emergency shelter, group home, and other infrastructure to help young people find respite and new direction in life, the nonprofit works with partners to offer food and other needed items at no cost to families in the wider community.

Through The Sharing Place Food Pantry, LCFS of Indiana/Kentucky provides food to families in Marion County, Indiana, and continues to enlist donors and volunteers during the pandemic to keep the program going strong.

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Reier Thompson, President and CEO of Missouri Slope, said, “Being able to just surprise everybody with even the smallest gift goes a long way.”

Thank you to everyone at Missouri Slope for the extra effort to bring Christmas magic to your residents this season!

January 6, 2021



SpiriTrust Lutheran

SpiriTrust Lutheran is finding ways to bring residents closer together during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For 70 years, SpiriTrust has delivered a variety of services centered around senior living, health and rehabilitation, counseling, and education. SpiriTrust serves more than 23,000 people across Pennsylvania and northern Maryland each year with a promise to help each person achieve an optimal quality of life.

SpiriTrust has been quick to adapt its services in the most creative ways to meet the demands and restrictions required in the COVID-19 era. The organization created a concierge program to make meals available for delivery or curbside pick-up. Life enrichment teams also came up with ways to keep residents' spirits high during the pandemic by developing programs centered around education and entertainment.

With isolation a concern for many, all the challenges presented over the past 10 months has only heightened the importance of community for SpiriTrust's residents. Sandra Teague, a resident at the Village at Shrewsbury, said that "living in a retirement community takes a lot of stress off of my life, especially now . . . There is support and a feeling of community throughout SpiriTrust Lutheran."

SpiriTrust's Village at Sprenkle Drive received a big shot of confidence to end December when residents and staff became the first within the larger SpiriTrust community to receive the COVID-19 vaccine—a much welcomed light at the end of a long tunnel.

Thank you to SpiriTrust for your persistence in the face of adversity and commitment to the wellbeing of everyone served in your communities.

January 7, 2021



Partners For Wichita

Partners For Wichita continues to work towards the goal of breaking the cycles of addiction.

Partners for Wichita, based in Wichita, Kansas, is dedicated to improving the well-being of the city by connecting individuals with faith communities and community organizations.

Partners for Wichita has two branches, each focused on separate groups of equally important issues that impact the greater Wichita area. Samaritan Community focuses on the health and well-being of community members by addressing food insecurity and other hunger issues. Safe Streets is dedicated to improving the safety of communities through drug and alcohol prevention, youth engagement, and other neighborhood safety services.

The Grid was originally a program started by Partners for Wichita in late November 2010 aimed at helping alcoholics and addicts recover from their addictions in a safe and supportive environment.

Over the years, however, The Grid has evolved into a program that aims at bringing recovery, health, and peace to any and all individuals in the community.

Lutheran Services in America wants to congratulate Partners for Wichita on their 10 years of success with The Grid program and we look forward to many more!

January 11, 2021



Columbia Lutheran Home

Columbia Lutheran Home in Seattle is taking aggressive actions and transparency to protect the wellbeing of its residents and employees from COVID-19.

For more than a century, Columbia Lutheran Home has leaned on innovative practices to deliver the best integrated care for older adults. In 1975, it was one of the first facilities to offer an adult daycare program. A few years after that, Columbia became the first nursing facility in Washington state to provide respite and emergency care beds for assisting families caring for loved ones at home. Columbia celebrated its 100th anniversary last year as it continues to serve all members of its community regardless of background.

True to its word about being committed to the health and wellbeing of its community, Columbia provided a dose of post-Christmas cheer to its residents when it announced that it would soon receive the coronavirus vaccine.

The home conducted its first of three vaccination periods last week and will complete the process in mid-February.

Prior to receiving the Pfizer vaccine, Columbia put in place stringent protocols to protect the health of residents and employees, including a temporary suspension of visitations, regular surveillance testing for staff, and regular disinfection of shared spaces. Staff put together a COVID-19 action plan outlining all its preventive measures, and provided updates to residents to remain as transparent as possible.

Thank you to Columbia for your commitment to your residents and staff, and your constant willingness to find new ways to improve the lives of those in your community!

January 12, 2021



Lutheran Social Ministries of Maryland

Lutheran Social Ministries of Maryland operates two continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs) in Maryland - Carroll Lutheran Village in Westminster and The Lutheran Village at Miller's Grant in Ellicott City. They also provide senior services in the wider community and partner with many community and educational organizations that share their passion for service and support for older adults.

Carroll Lutheran Village was recently recognized as Best Nursing Home by U.S. News & World Report for short-term rehabilitation. According to a news release on their website, the community earned Best Nursing Homes status by achieving a rating of "High Performing," the highest possible rating, for short-term rehabilitation.

U.S. News gives the designation of Best Nursing Home only to those that satisfy U.S. News's assessment of the appropriate use of key services and consistent performance in quality measures.

The news release also lists extensive rehabilitation services offered at Carroll Lutheran Village, including aquatic therapy, cardiac and post CVA rehabilitation, chronic and acute pain management, cognitive and memory enhancement, fall prevention, home safety, Lee Silverman Voice Treatment BIG & Loud®, post-operative care, swallowing strategies, wound care, and more.

Congratulations to the staff at Carroll Lutheran Village and Lutheran Social Ministries of Maryland on this outstanding accomplishment.

January 19, 2021

Joint efforts
resulted in more
than 1,800
receiving the
vaccine



Columbia Memorial Hospital

Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria, Oregon, is leading a task force to coordinate county-wide vaccine delivery.

Also known by its legal name Columbia Lutheran Charities, Columbia Memorial Hospital has a long history in the region, with its first building opening in 1880. It is now the fastest growing rural hospital in the state of Oregon and recently joined with Providence Seaside Hospital and the Clatsop County government to establish a COVID Vaccine Task Force, a joint effort to ensure efficient and safe vaccination across the county.

The Task Force meets daily to organize vaccine supplies, schedule vaccination clinics, and provide regular updates to the public.

The county and hospitals, along with Coastal Family Health Clinic, have pooled resources to deliver the vaccine in accordance with Oregon state guidelines. So far, efforts resulted in more than 1,800 receiving the vaccine.

Just last week, the Task Force organized two separate clinics and distributed 500 doses of the Moderna vaccine to people in Phase 1a groups, including health providers, first responders, social services staff, and others who meet eligibility.

Thank you, Columbia Memorial Hospital, for assembling critical resources to distribute and deliver the COVID-19 vaccine in Oregon.

January 20, 2021



Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois is working to neutralize racism within America's child welfare system.

With the reality of racial discrimination in American society in mind, LCFS Illinois is committed to fostering conversations about the role of race within its ranks and strives to be a color-cognizant organization. Its mission to protect children and strengthen families for nearly 150 years continues today with an eye on addressing systemic racism and the social injustices that occur as a result.

Fully embracing the responsibility of being an anti-racist organization and commitment to upending systemic racism is part of LCFS Illinois' long-term goals.

The protests last summer in the wake of George Floyd's death only sharpened LCFS' resolve. The organization released a well-recognized case study, "Dismantling Institutional Racism Brick by Brick," which was named a finalist by the Council on Accreditation for the 2020 Innovation Award.

LCFS will follow up on the study's findings with a virtual event on Thursday, January 21, to share how it is moving the needle within their foster care program by increasing permanency for youth of color and decreasing days in care.

There are about 2.9 million children in Illinois. Thank you to LCFS Illinois for your dedication toward ensuring each and every child has a safe and loving home to call their own.

January 22, 2021

OPEN M distributed more than 25,000 pounds of food to 301 families in December



OPEN M

OPEN M in Akron, Ohio, has distributed more than 45,000 pounds of food to families in need over the last two months alone.

OPEN M stands for Opportunity Parish Ecumenical Neighborhood Ministry, an organization formed in the late 1960s to address poverty and other injustices affecting inner-city life. Now 1,000 volunteers strong, they expanded their effort over the years to offer food, health, and employment services in support of the greater Akron community. OPEN M also works with Covenant Churches and other supporting organizations to provide critical health and human service programs.

On the third Friday of every month, OPEN M hosts “Mountain of Food,” a Direct Distribution program of the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank. Throughout the day, OPEN M distributes in bulk much-needed nutritious, perishable foods such as produce, meat, and bread to families in need of assistance.

Although recipients must bring an ID, no referral or pre-registration is required to receive items. Mountain of Food has continued as a drive-thru through the pandemic, and just last month, OPEN M distributed more than 25,000 pounds of food to 301 families, of which 85 were new to the program. Last week, they hosted another successful event, distributing more than 20,000 pounds of food. More than 185 families received items such as boxed cereal, fresh fruit and vegetables, chicken, assorted snacks, and drinks.

With food insecurity on the rise, we are grateful to organizations like OPEN M who are working through a global pandemic to feed their community. To find out more about Mountain of Food and other programs at OPEN M, volunteering, and other ways you can help, please visit www.openm.org/food.

January 25, 2021

Residents'
safety is our
number one
priority



Lutheran Home of the Good Shepherd



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lutheran Home of the Good Shepherd in New Rockford, North Dakota, has had to adjust its daily activities to ensure that all residents are getting some form of daily interaction. Our residents' safety is our number one priority, and our activity staff has gone above and beyond to ensure that all residents are enjoying daily activities at a safe distance.

Last year for Oktoberfest (a German festival) the activity staff dressed up as German beer servers in the traditional lederhosen suspenders, tall white socks, kakis, and a white shirt. It was a fun-filled German day where we all enjoyed root beer and polka music . . . COVID-19 style! We are so thankful for our front-line workers who go above and beyond to bring a little sunshine into our residents' days!

January 26, 2021

The pandemic
has once again
called nonprofits
to act as leaders
in helping others



Niagara Lutheran Health System

Niagara Lutheran Health System's employees are taking swift action to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

Niagara Lutheran Health System operates The GreenFields Continuing Care Community, providing a continuum of care for seniors in Lancaster, New York, through independent and assisted living; skilled nursing and respite care; memory care; and rehabilitation. The GreenFields has a 20-year history and like other senior services organizations, is working to keep the people they serve safe from infection.

Staff demonstrated their commitment throughout the year by taking on additional responsibilities and comforting and communicating with residents and families.

But when The GreenFields began offering the vaccine in late December, staff showed their overwhelming support with a fantastic turnout to receive it. In fact, the lead Walgreens pharmacist administering vaccinations stated that out of the many healthcare facilities she visited, The GreenFields had the most employees step forward to receive the vaccine. GreenField Health & Rehabilitation Center staff and residents received their second dose of the vaccine last week, and on January 29, vaccinations will continue in memory care and on assisted living campuses.

The pandemic has once again called nonprofits to act as leaders in helping others. Staff at The GreenFields have gone one step further and led by example, enthusiastically embracing the vaccine to stop the spread of the virus.

January 27, 2021

We salute all
of the “Healthcare
Heroes” serving
the Jamestown
community



Lutheran Jamestown

Lutheran Jamestown is going the extra mile to honor the “Healthcare Heroes” amongst its ranks.

Lutheran Jamestown has been serving communities in western New York since 1886, offering care for both youth and older adults.

Last month, Lutheran Jamestown embarked on a campaign to recognize the hard work of its employees and recruit others who would be interested in joining the team.

The organization created signs for staff to place in their yards that invites members of the community to inquire about how to become a Lutheran Jamestown “Healthcare Hero.”

Employees proudly took photos with the yard signs from their homes, many of whom included their families and Christmas decorations.

Thank you to Lutheran Jamestown for providing a holiday morale boost. We salute all of the “Healthcare Heroes” serving your community!

February 1, 2021

Hatton Prairie Village was excited to open its doors to visitors after ensuring that everyone in-house had tested negative for COVID-19



Hatton Prairie Village

Hatton Prairie Village in Hatton, North Dakota, is providing a safe environment for families to reconnect.

Consistently recognized for its exceptional service, Hatton Prairie Village is proud of its high standards of care for its residents. HPV has been awarded on numerous occasions with a five-star rating by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and named to U.S. News & World Report's list of the nation's Best Nursing Homes. HPV draws on the deep experience of its employees, which includes nearly four hundred years collectively amongst its certified nursing assistants alone.

Like all nursing facilities, HPV has had to make a number of tough decisions over the past year to protect its residents and staff from the coronavirus.

The community has chronicled its evolution of its increased use of PPE, from paper masks and goggles to N95s and face shields. While HPV's legion of front line heroes must remain hidden behind masks for residents' and staff members' mutual safety, the organization was excited to open its doors to visitors last week after ensuring that everyone in-house had tested negative for COVID-19.

The regulated visitations will continue as long as all parties involved keep testing negative—a welcome development for residents and their families who will cherish the added time to reconnect.

Thank you to Hatton Prairie Village and your staff for your dedication to the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of your residents during the pandemic!

February 5, 2021

Dr. Beckwith's personal mission is to "enable, encourage, empower, and energize others to be all that God has called them to be"



Dr. LaSharnda Beckwith

Dr. LaSharnda Beckwith joined Lutheran Social Services of Southern California (LSSSC) last year as the first African American CEO in LSSSC's 75-year history. Her tenure began just weeks into the onset of a global pandemic and Dr. Beckwith has courageously led her team in addressing COVID-19 through community-wide efforts.

She is also a member of the Lutheran Services in America Race Equity Network, a cohort of leaders that meets quarterly to discuss how to promote racial diversity, equity, and inclusion among Lutheran social ministry organizations and inform the national policy agenda on issues affecting racial equity. By her own effort, Dr. Beckwith has led virtual round tables to foster strategic conversations about the impacts of systemic racism in our society.

Before joining LSSSC, Dr. Beckwith worked at California Southern University as Provost and Chief Academic Officer.

She also served for 27 years in the Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) and created the Professional Christian Women in Service in 2005.

Dr. Beckwith says her personal mission is to "enable, encourage, empower, and energize others to be all that God has called them to be." LSSSC staff note how she inspires them every day to embrace, equip, and empower individuals and families through 70 different programs in Southern California.

Speaking to what calls her to her work, Dr. Beckwith says, "Ultimately, my desire is to live out Proverbs 31:8-9 – Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

You can find out more about Dr. Beckwith on her website, www.lasharndabeckwith.com. For more information on the incredible work that Dr. Beckwith and her team are doing to help others through the pandemic, visit the LSSSC website, www.lsssc.org.

February 11, 2021

“Being black and female means I’m looking at equity and inclusion from an angle typically not considered”



Deirdre Bagley

As many organizations look for ways to increase diversity, equity and inclusion while also dismantling institutional “isms” in society—racism, sexism, heterosexism, and the like—the Washington, D.C.-based Lutheran Volunteer Corps is approaching the issue with a different lens.

“Our goal was to start doing things differently rather than consider the ‘isms’ a project to be completed with check boxes,” Lutheran Volunteer Corps president Deirdre Bagley told Lutheran Services in America in an interview. “We also did not create the iconic Director of DEI position, which often passes the responsibility on to a member of the team instead of having everyone share the responsibility, including the CEO and board. We looked at what had become normalized, and identified new ways of doing things. We continued a training focus on anti-racism and equity for our volunteers, staff and board, and used a white supremacy framework to assess how we do business.”

Even with all of LVC’s progress, Ms. Bagley is not resting on her laurels. “This is just a start,” she said.

Ms. Bagley’s background and experience has naturally informed her understanding of equity and inclusion and how she approaches her job as president of Lutheran Volunteer Corps. “My understanding of the challenges comes from lived and observed experiences, and my approach comes from the same. Being black and female means I’m looking at equity and inclusion from an angle typically not considered,” she said. “Still, that’s not enough—so I include a lot of research and consultation to broaden my skill set in this new landscape we’re all experiencing together, positioning us for action and not perfection. I’m a strong believer that movement happens when you do, rather than just talk about doing.”

Despite all the challenges, there are many positives to show for LVC’s equity and inclusion efforts. In fact, “There are too many positives to count,” said Ms. Bagley, “and that’s a good news story!”

February 12, 2021



Elder Care Alliance

Elder Care Alliance went above and beyond to ensure its staff felt safe and comfortable getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

Elder Care Alliance is a network of five communities serving seniors throughout California, and the communities aim to be a place where seniors flourish. Elder Care Alliance is committed to the holistic well-being of everyone in its community - older adults, as well as their families and caregivers, and the organization's team members. Staff at Elder Care Alliance enjoy employee wellness programs and ample opportunities for professional development, and when COVID-19 vaccines were made available to front line workers at Elder Care Alliance, the opportunity to vaccinate was handled with great care and transparency.

The administration at Elder Care Alliance recognized that the decision to vaccinate is a deeply personal one, and that finding accurate information about vaccines can be overwhelming.

The administration was intentionally transparent with the vaccination process and provided online resources and FAQs about the vaccine in addition to its regular COVID-19 Updates. Elder Care Alliance President & CEO Adriene Iverson, as well as community leaders, adopted an open-door policy, met with staff on a 1:1 basis, encouraged staff who had questions about the vaccine or its dissemination process to contact them.

This commitment to transparency built on an already strong value of trust in the Elder Care Alliance communities. The result is that more than 85% of the staff have chosen to vaccinate against COVID-19.

Thank you to Elder Care Alliance for fostering a healthy community and for continuing to effectively fight the COVID-19 pandemic!

February 17, 2021

Taking the
guesswork out of
vaccine
appointments for
older adults



Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey

Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey (LSMNJ) is helping older adults register and receive the COVID-19 vaccine despite technological hurdles.

Currently, residents and workers of long-term care and high-risk congregate care facilities in New Jersey fall under “Group 1a,” and are therefore eligible for vaccination. By the state’s definition, this group includes residents of skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, continuing care retirement communities, and personal care homes. However, older adults enrolled in the [Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly \(PACE\)](#) were initially excluded from the priority list.

Despite their eligibility for nursing home care, PACE participants in most cases remain in the community and receive comprehensive medical and social services outside of a long-term care facility. LSMNJ bridged this gap, working with the state and hospital association to obtain vaccinations for PACE participants.

Then, when it became clear what technological requirements might prevent PACE participants from registering - internet access and an email address - LSMNJ completed the process for them.

They have also made vaccination easy for their affordable housing residents through community-wide clinics. As of last week, [66 percent of LSMNJ affordable senior housing residents - 375 seniors - have received the vaccine](#) in their own apartment building.

In a video posted to the LSMNJ website, residents Walter and Lorraine Flynn pointed out the excellent and proactive care staff have taken to keep residents healthy. Walter acknowledges that seniors in other communities are still waiting online to receive the vaccine, and states, “We didn’t have to wait online. We were given the time and we got our shot... They saved our lives.” Lorraine added, “We’re very lucky to be in the hands of the Lutheran social ministry, because a lot of people haven’t gotten their vaccines yet.”

February 19, 2021



Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry

In the wake of George Floyd's murder and the nationwide Black Lives Matter protests, the board of Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry made the decision to reflect on racial justice, both in their community and nationwide. In a series titled "A Push Towards Justice," board members wrote an open letter to the LMM community as a whole to start a dialogue on the role everyone plays in equality.

Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry is intimately familiar with the impact racism can have on a community. As explained by board member Rev. George Hrbek in his letter, "LMM was formed as a response to the virus of racism, exposed in the Hough riots of 1966 and the vandalizing of the home of a Lutheran Black family. A group of Lutheran lay and clergy, spurred by these events, took action to form, through an agency, a means for Lutherans of Northeast Ohio to collaborate in anti-racism witness and action."

This proud legacy of fighting for racial justice can be felt throughout each board member's letter. Some took the opportunity to reflect on why this fight matters to them individually, while others reflected on their own experiences with racism in America.

However, Marcella Brown, Vice President of Development and Communications at LMM, summarized the overall feel of these letters and LMM's work very clearly: "If communities of color are burning, all of America is burning. Will you stand by and let the future of our nation go up in flames, or will you use the resources that you have, the people you know, the conversations you engage in to put out the fires of systemic racism, social injustice and lack of accountability?"

The road to true racial equality is long and difficult, but we're grateful to Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries for helping lead the way.

February 24, 2021

RCFL practices
what it preaches
about equity
and inclusion



Redeemer Center for Life

Redeemer Center for Life's mission is to help members of the community **attain financial stability** and to support the needs of young people that ultimately lead to a promising career path. In its pursuit of these goals, RCFL maintains a strong commitment to equity and inclusion; it strives for **social equity for people of all backgrounds** and emphasizes a proud African American identity in its work to achieve racial justice in North Minneapolis.

Community engagement is a strong part of RCFL's effort to lift the youth of North Minneapolis. RCFL's **Venture North program** is attempting to reduce the economic disadvantage for North Minneapolis residents through **workforce development, youth leadership and community reinvestment initiatives**, which includes owning and operating the only Northside bike shop! The program's focus on racial, economic and gender equity is helping residents retake control of development in their community.

RCFL's efforts to expand inclusion is no more evident than within its own ranks. **Veronica Hawman**, who became the RCFL executive director in July 2020, recently spoke about the significance of helping an organization in a city where a woman of color assuming the role of chief executive is still a rarity. "When you have Black leaders, that means there's that trust there. That means you're allowing us to make the decisions . . . I would like to be an example for other organizations who want to move in this direction."

Board chair Dawn Johnson seconded **the importance of leadership development for Black women**, saying, "We can shift that narrative . . . We need the support of others, of everyone, to embrace this and not just be performative allies. We need folks who really get it and believe in this work, and truly believe that Black women can get this done. Embrace the uniqueness of this opportunity."

February 26, 2021



Lutheran Sunset Ministries

Lutheran Sunset Ministries is confident it will “right the ship” in no time

Millions of Texans are doing what they can to move forward after a harrowing week of devastating wintry weather, and the staff at Lutheran Sunset Ministries are no different.

Two weeks ago, this scenic 32-acre campus, designed to accommodate residents at various levels of care through innovative programs and interdisciplinary activities, was reveling in being voted as **the number one retirement community in Bosque County** for 2020. Now, after several difficult days, the Clifton-based nursing home and assisted living community remains determined to rebound after one of the most harrowing experiences in its 65-year history.

The torrid conditions knocked out Lutheran Sunset’s electricity for six and a half hours, prompting concerns about having to evacuate residents for their safety. Heavy leaking left one building with no water.

Despite the barrage from mother nature, Lutheran Sunset wasted no time in beginning repairs. Power was eventually restored, and the community is confident it will “right the ship” in no time.

March 10, 2021

Serving on the
frontlines before
there was a
frontline



My Friend's House Foundation

My Friend's House Foundation in Los Angeles continues to serve some of the most disenfranchised during this unprecedented time of need.

My Friend's House was on the frontlines years before the COVID-19 pandemic hit a year ago. Since its inception, My Friend's House has **served more than half a million people**, including many along Skid Row in downtown Los Angeles, home to one of the largest homeless populations in the country. The foundation supports people young and old, first by providing basic needs and encouragement and then by setting them up to be self-sufficient in order to live healthier lives.

With many nonprofit and charitable organizations needing to cut back services due to the pandemic, My Friend's House stepped in to help additional people in the community experiencing homelessness with food, clothing and essential hygiene supplies.

My Friend's House was serving about 500 people per week before COVID-19; the health crisis only expanded the need to serve many more. The foundation increased its healthy food offerings to improve recipients' immune systems and is busy distributing "COVID Care Kits," which include PPE, safety information and even inspirational material.

My Friend's House is dedicated to providing life-sustaining staples for people experiencing homelessness and the economically disadvantaged: food, clothing, and encouragement. L.A. County residents can help My Friend's House **feed, clothe, and encourage people experiencing homelessness** every Wednesday. Nonresidents can also make a significant impact by making a donation.

Visit www.MyFriendsHouseLA.org for more information on how you can serve as an important lifeline and source of encouragement for so many.

March 17, 2021

“What we do
isn’t a job; it’s
a calling.”



The Hearth at Drexel

As part of the Liberty Lutheran family of services, The Hearth at Drexel offers **assisted living and memory care to older adults**. Nestled in the Main Line section of the greater Philadelphia area, the community is known for going above and beyond to offer its residents outstanding care and services. When the coronavirus pandemic started last spring, **the team bolstered its dedication to the well-being of residents**.

“Our staff has really stepped up during this pandemic, placing the needs of our residents above themselves. For instance, during our strategic planning process, when we started talking about implementing safety precautions and the possibility of needing to offer special care, we had people stepping forward very early on to say ‘I’ll do it,’” said Dana O’Donnell, executive director of The Hearth. “You often hear people in caregiver industries say, ‘**What we do isn’t a job; it’s a calling.**’ What I have seen over the past several months truly demonstrates that here. Our staff members have been incredible in the way they’ve come together to help the residents and their families throughout an ever-evolving situation.”

Throughout the pandemic, **the team at The Hearth has become like family to those who call the community home**. The provision of care and comfort has gone both ways. Staff members also continue to find strength, hope, and support in the kind words, smiles, and thoughtful gestures from residents and their families.

Lutheran Services in America is proud to highlight the work of The Hearth at Drexel and Liberty Lutheran Services as a source of care, compassion, and peace of mind for older adults and their families.

Liberty Lutheran Services is a member of Lutheran Services in America, a network of more than 300 health and human service organizations providing services in more than 1,400 communities across the United States. Together, the network makes a difference in the lives of one in 50 Americans every year.

March 24, 2021



It takes a
village to
raise a child

Vincent Madera

Until 2005, The Children's Village—established in 1851 to care for orphans in New York City—largely focused on residential programs. Under the leadership of President and CEO Jeremy Kohomban, The Children's Village **transformed into an irreplaceable source of support for children through community engagement**. Vincent Madera, the director of The Children's Village Institute, is a **key player** in that transformation.

As Vincent describes it, the **goal is to keep families together safely** by ensuring they have access to the resources they need to be successful through **community-based programs**. Today, the Children's Village offers community-based services, in addition to some short-term residential initiatives, that enable youth to stay in their homes.

Vincent, who has faithfully served families in New York City for decades, recently joined the **Lutheran Services in America Congregate Care cohort**—an initiative to improve equitable outcomes and permanency for children in congregate care—to share his insights on the **importance of investing in community-based programs**.

He recognizes the inherent racism in the child welfare system and how the process of removing youth from their families causes significant trauma. Ultimately, families must have the resources and support they need to be successful. The Lutheran social ministry organizations participating in the Congregate Care cohort were inspired by Vincent's words, and he recently returned for an in-depth session to further support the cohort.

We thank Vincent Madera for his commitment to transforming the child welfare system, and for inspiring Lutheran social ministry organizations to do the same!

The Children's Village is a **partner of Lutheran Services in America**. Together, with our members across the country, we are working to increase permanency rates and strengthen outreach to families, with a particular focus on addressing racial inequities.



Lutheran
Services
in America

**DO YOU HAVE A
FRONTLINE HEROES
STORY TO SHARE?**

CONTACT US.

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