



Lutheran
Services
in America®

A diverse group of young people, including a Black woman with braids, a woman with glasses, a man with curly hair, and a woman with long dark hair, are smiling and hugging each other. A large orange semi-circle is positioned behind them, partially obscuring the background.

Coming together **with purpose**

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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Dear members & partners,

Thank you for your generosity and steadfast support of Lutheran Services in America. We are delighted to share the progress **you** made possible through your willingness to join with us over the past year. Truly, this report is a testament to **the strength of us coming together**.

It is that strength that enables us to celebrate our incredible growth and resilience—even as we enter a new year of change and challenge. Our greatest strength—**taking action together**—is more important than ever and reminds us that a new year also holds immense opportunity.

Simply put: the challenges in our communities may be urgent and growing, but so is our ability to respond—as we act together.

Be strong and courageous, and do the work. (1 Chronicles 28:20)

Every day of 2024, the impact of our network of more than 300 Lutheran social ministries was seen and felt in more than 1,400 communities across the country. We brought together faith leaders, nonprofits, health organizations, policymakers, funders, and cross-sector partners. We aligned local insight with national action. We spread what works. We activated the power of our network—united around our bold and constant goal: to cultivate caring communities that advance health and opportunity for all.

As you read the stories in this report, I hope you feel, as we do, the immense spirit of this network—not just in what we do, but in how we do it: with intention, with integrity, and with each other.

We are deeply grateful for what each and every one of you brings to this work. There's more work ahead. The good news is: **we'll do it together**.

In Peace,



Alesia Frerichs

Alesia Frerichs
President & CEO
Lutheran Services in America



Colleen P. Frankenfield

Colleen Frankenfield
President & CEO
Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey
Chairperson of the Board,
Lutheran Services in America

Taking collaboration and innovation to new heights

Our **Health and Housing Solution Collaborative** became our largest initiative to date, bringing together 60+ Lutheran social ministry leaders, funders, and policymakers to unlock new financing tools, scale solutions, and preserve critical housing options.

We launched the **Lived Voices Fellowship** last spring, elevating the leadership of those with lived experience in navigating public systems—leaders now shaping programs and policy from the inside out.

Through the **Results Innovation Lab**, we partnered with 75 Lutheran social ministry leaders in 17 states to improve outcomes for more than 15,000 children and families—surpassing national benchmarks.

In rural communities, our **Rural Aging Action Network** empowered trusted local leaders to support older adults age with connection, independence, and purpose.

Our efforts **to educate and mobilize grew considerably in 2024**, expanding participation across diverse populations to more effectively connect with policymakers and other partners—especially important right now as we use a strong faith-based voice to demonstrate the good work that is needed, possible, and already happening.

Coming together in **Community & Partnership.**





Community-centered, trusted and
rooted in our shared faith tradition
of service in community.

Resolute in our mission, together we are:

Cultivating caring communities that advance
health and opportunity *for all*.

This steadfast commitment has made Lutheran Services in America one of the largest social service networks in the country. Together—with our network of more than 300 social ministries, partners, and supporters—we reach 6 million people a year. That’s 1 in every 50 people in America—children, elders, families, veterans, new neighbors—served in 1,400 communities by 250,000 dedicated professionals.

Our three core strategies of our strategic plan point the way:



GROW

collective capacity to
lead and effect change
in communities across
the country



CATALYZE

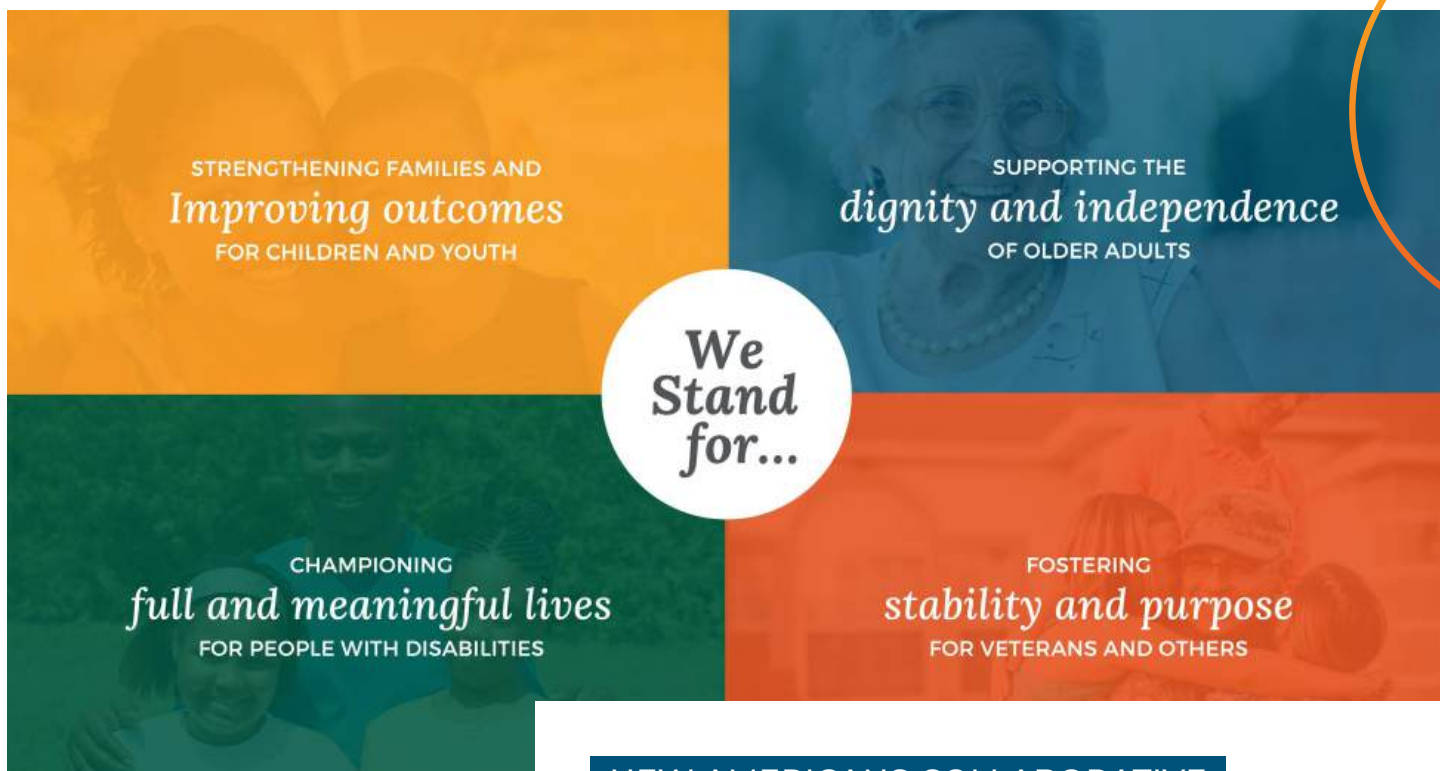
innovation
and collaboration
for impact



AMPLIFY

a united, faith-based
voice that shares
solutions: what works,
why and for whom





Our Founding Story

Our story is rooted in the vision of Martin Luther, who established the first community fund to support orphans, widows, education, and medical care. More than charity, it was a bold move to break cycles of poverty and build a more compassionate, just society. Luther's teachings ignited the collective power—within and beyond the Lutheran tradition—to serve our neighbors. Ours is a legacy of purpose, compassion, and enduring hope.

NEW AMERICANS COLLABORATIVE

Faith, Families and Community Partnerships Expanded

We launched the **New Americans Collaborative** in 2024 to strengthen local leadership, expand community support, and foster knowledge-sharing to meet the urgent needs of families seeking refuge in the United States. This work builds on the deeply rooted and long-standing presence of social ministries and their partnerships with churches and community organizations in cultivating welcoming communities that advance health and opportunity for all and are committed to the **dignity of every person**.



The Collaborative has been incredibly valuable, especially in the way it brings people together to share ideas on how to build more welcoming communities and better support families. Hearing directly from individuals in other states has provided meaningful perspective and reinforced the power of community-driven efforts.”

— **Paul Hernandez**, Senior Executive Director of Upbring (Texas)



LIVED VOICES FELLOWSHIP

“This changed my life forever!”

Last spring, we launched our **Lived Voices Fellowship**, a group of dynamic change leaders from across the country who have lived experience in navigating public systems. The fellowship offers our leaders an opportunity to make meaning of their own unique experiences, forge new connections, and hone skills that increase their individual capacity to effect meaningful change in their communities.

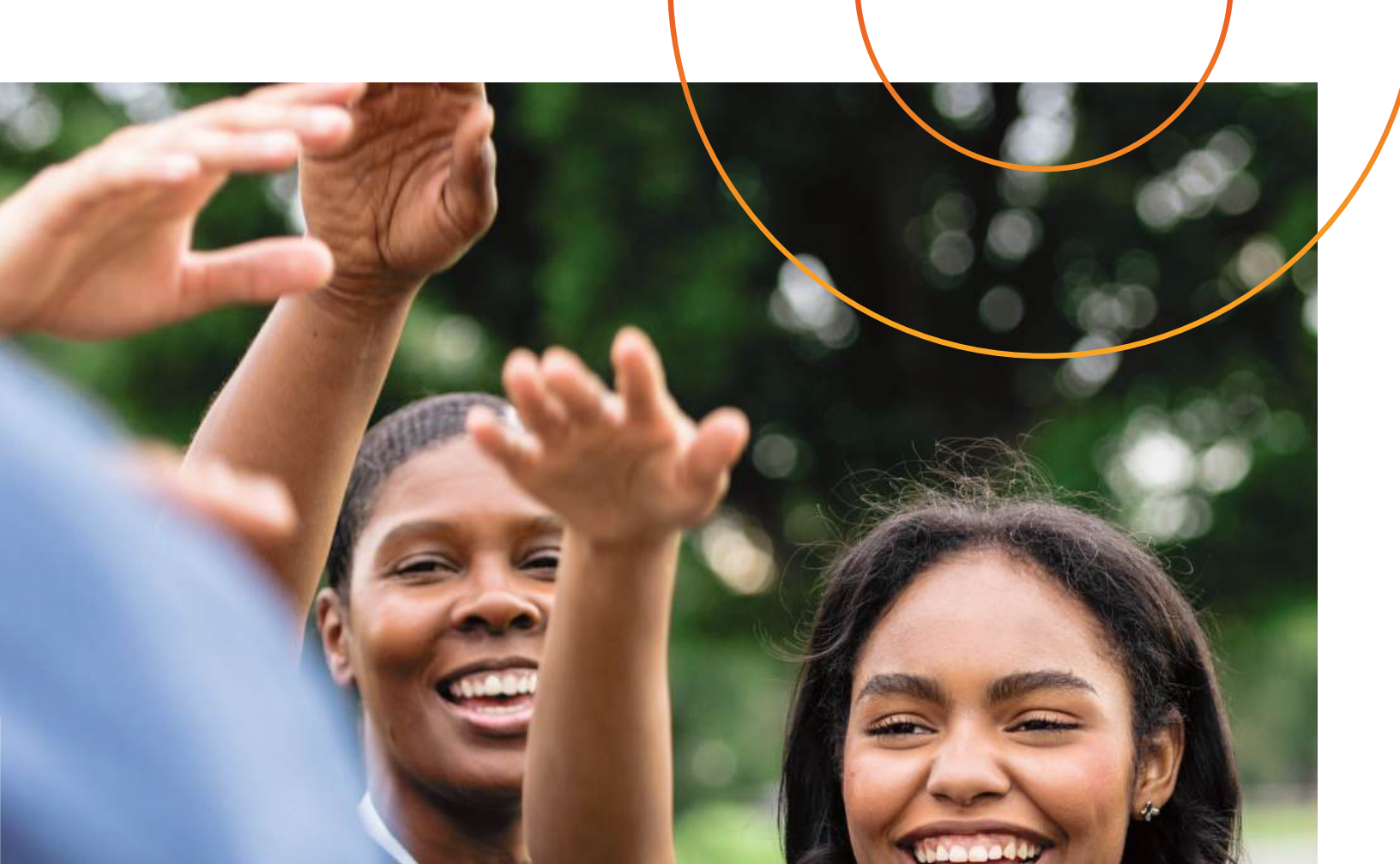
The roles of these fellows vary widely; some serve as counselors, program leads, brand ambassadors, and community outreach specialists, while others lead operations or are senior executives. Through their work, they collectively support older adults, strengthen families, and create pathways for employment and other services. They have lived experience in dealing with the challenges people face. And all are fueled by a commitment to make the world a better place.



Giving to Lutheran Services in America is an investment with extraordinary returns. My wife Susan and I are deeply grateful to support work that amplifies voices too often unheard—voices that truly understand life’s challenges firsthand. Through initiatives like the Lived Voices Fellowship, we’re witnessing real transformation that reaches far beyond traditional philanthropy. This approach doesn’t just solve problems; it fundamentally changes who gets to define the solutions—and that makes all the difference.”



Bill Andrews,
Lutheran Services in America
board member



“

This fellowship changed my life forever! I had the opportunity to be in a space with other leaders with lived experience and together we had the opportunity to dig deep into what brought us to this work. I cried, reflected, and gave myself the opportunity and space to step into my story.”

— **Jessica Strauch**,
St. John's United (Montana)

Meet the leaders! (vimeo.com/1027416310)





Coming together to Advance Health and Opportunity.



Honoring our tradition of seeing and supporting the whole person—mind, body, and spirit—enables us to discover innovative solutions that address the multiple factors impacting health and wellbeing.



Health and Housing Solutions

Taking action together is what we do. Our Health and Housing Solutions Collaborative has become our largest initiative to date, bringing together leaders, funders, investors, policymakers, and community partners. This past year, that spirit of collaboration was on full display at our Health and Housing Solutions Summit, where more than 60 leaders from across the country exchanged ideas and explored new ways to strengthen our impact at both the local and national levels.

As one of the largest faith-based provider networks, we have the reach, we have the expertise and we have the responsibility.



- **Expanded Flexible Funding**—Partnered to create new, adaptable funding pathways.
- **Scaled Impact**—Strengthened peer collaboration and formalized ways to expand successful housing solutions.
- **Amplified Our Faith-Based Voice**—Built collective leadership to drive meaningful change in communities.

Because it takes more than a house to thrive.



It was truly inspiring to see the strength and impact of the LSA network in action. The strategies and solutions identified will play a vital role in advancing health and housing in communities nationwide.”

— **Dennis Shea,**
Executive Vice President and
Chair of the J. Ronald Terwilliger
Center for Housing Policy at
Bipartisan Policy Center

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES INITIATIVE

Leveraging partnerships to improve the health and wellbeing of children and families.

Lutheran social ministries have an established history of driving change in practices, policies, and systems that strengthen families and promote holistic health and well-being. In 2024, we launched the **Strengthening Families Initiative** to highlight and expand how Lutheran social ministries are improving outcomes for children and families on Medicaid by addressing behavioral health and broader related social needs. Developed with The George Washington University Milken School of Public Health, our issue briefs and member case studies showcase the powerful impact of this work.

Learn more about our national impact through the **Strengthening Families Initiative**.
(lutheranservices.org/strengthening-families-initiative)



The Lutheran Church Extension Fund, Mission Investment Fund, and California Lutheran Homes Foundation became the three founding members of LSA's **Housing Leadership Circle** to support advancing our shared goal: access to stable, safe, and affordable housing for all.



Huge impact often begins with a simple conversation. In bringing together peers as part of the **Housing Solutions Summit**, two Lutheran social ministry leaders met, shared ideas, and discovered a shared purpose. What followed was transformational: securing together a \$3 million loan that saved a critical housing project. This is not an isolated success—it's a reflection of what is possible when intentional relationships spark real-world solutions.



Case Study Snapshot

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois is a founding member of the Illinois Health Practice Alliance (IHPA). IHPA was developed to transform the state's outpatient behavioral health network to deliver better value for patients. The case study highlights how, between 2021 and 2023, IHPA produced numerous HEDIS quality-care measurements that were in the 90th percentile nationally.

Coming together for All.





Our work leaves no one out,
whether it is strengthening
families, supporting older adults or
creating pathways to independence
for people with intellectual and
developmental disabilities.

THE RESULTS INNOVATION LAB

Strengthening our collective capacity to drive change and achieve our mission

Through the Results Innovation Lab (the Lab) Lutheran Services in America brings together leaders in a collaborative learning environment to foster partnerships and to develop innovative, data-driven solutions for complex social challenges. Now in its ninth year and historically focused on at-risk youth and families, the Lab continues to deliver results that surpass national outcomes.

Together, we're

- Equipping leaders with tools and frameworks to deliver solutions that work for families
- Catalyzing mindset and culture shifts to foster collaboration and data-driven decision-making
- Creating opportunities for new community and national partnerships to pave the way for lasting impact



In 2024 the Lab reached 15,854 children and families across the U.S., bringing our total since inception to more than 50,000.



75 Lutheran social ministry leaders across 30 communities in 17 states participated, with 70% new to the Lab this year.

Members in Action: Results Innovation Lab

30

communities

17

states

14

national partners

Lutheran Child & Family Services

(Indiana): Increased active adult participation in their program from 17% to 50%, helping several families achieve employment and family stability.

75

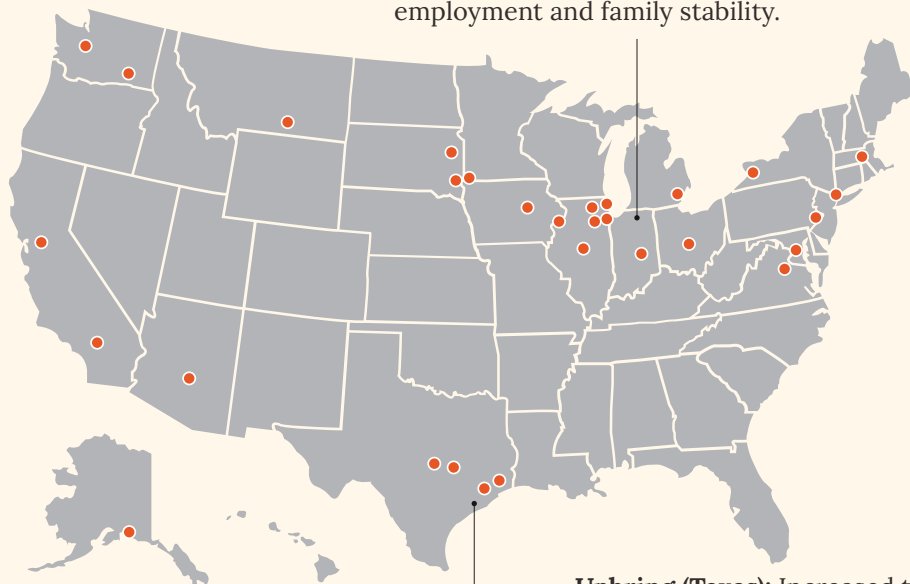
leaders

2,400

employees

400

local partners



Upbring (Texas): Increased the number of children reuniting with a relative or close family friend by 15%.



The Lab fosters a ripple effect across the LSA network and in communities across the country, with leaders advancing adaptive strategies that result in changes to practices, policies and systems.”



Renada Johnson,
Senior Director of Children,
Youth and Family Initiatives at
Lutheran Services in America



The impact of the Results Innovation Lab is clear: its overall outcomes are 13% higher than the national average. Together, we’re co-creating real, lasting solutions that truly work for families—a powerful testament to what’s possible with bold leadership and collaboration.

Building Strength, Shaping Futures: One Mother’s Journey to Community Impact

Determined to provide for her children, a single mother of four sought support. Three of her children had developmental disabilities, faced behavioral challenges, and had medical needs. She was also healing from domestic violence and felt voiceless in her children’s education. Through her involvement in our initiative, she began to recognize her own strength. Her confidence grew, and she became a powerful advocate—building strong relationships with teachers, voicing what worked and what didn’t, and ensuring her children’s needs were met. Today, she serves as a parent advocate on the Head Start policy board—raising her voice not just for her own family, but for others across her community.



Trusted Community Partners in Ensuring Older Americans are Connected and Engaged

For well over a century, from Alaska to Pennsylvania and many states in between, Lutheran social ministries have been trusted community-centered leaders in meeting the needs of older adults in rural communities.

The Rural Aging Action Network Embodies Lutheran Services in America's Legacy of Caring for our Neighbor.

With **one in four older Americans living in rural areas**, the demand for tailored, community-based solutions to ensure choice and independence has never been greater. RAAN continues to strengthen rural leaders through peer exchange, training, new partnerships, shared resources, and evaluation.



Twenty rural health leaders are making a meaningful impact across six communities, working to improve the health and well-being of older adults in rural America. We recently released the **Rural Aging Action Network (RAAN)** program summary and evaluation report along with new installments that showcase the leaders' innovative approaches, key insights, and the strength of community-driven solutions.



A successful rural aging program isn't just about providing services—it's about mobilizing the community to support older adults and family caregivers. Through the Rural Aging Action Network, neighbors come together, resources are shared, and older adults are supported in a way that allows them to age with independence, purpose, and a deep sense of belonging."



David Trost,
President and CEO of
St. John's United (Montana)



Explore our new video series to learn more about the people working together to improve the lives of older adults and family caregivers in rural America.

View our video series *Coming Together: Aging in Rural America*.
(lutherservices.org/raan-in-action)



Connected, Engaged, and Vital Members of their Communities.

The Rural Aging Action Network is powered by leaders with lived experience of their communities. Marian is one of them. Marian's connection to Lutheran social ministry began in childhood, when her family—refugees from Liberia—immigrated to Massachusetts through Lutheran resettlement efforts. Today, Marian serves as a RAAN coordinator with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, guiding older adults through the health and social challenges of aging in rural areas. Marian and other RAAN leaders are addressing isolation and helping older adults remain connected, engaged, and vital members of their communities by providing a range of support, from transportation to housing.



THE DISABILITY NETWORK

Championing Meaningful Improvements for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The LSA Disability Network is a powerful force for change, uniting 17 Lutheran social ministry organizations. Through our focus on advocacy, innovation, culture, and engagement, we're not just responding to challenges—we're shaping the future. This year, we explored breakthrough research on workforce trends and cutting-edge technologies that open doors to greater independence and possibility.



- Led the charge to professionalize the direct-care workforce—elevating and shining a light on the essential role caregivers play in the lives of people with disabilities
- Engaged national leaders to inform future disability policy, including raising Social Security Income (SSI) limits to foster savings.
- Grew to 17 social ministries representing 33 states

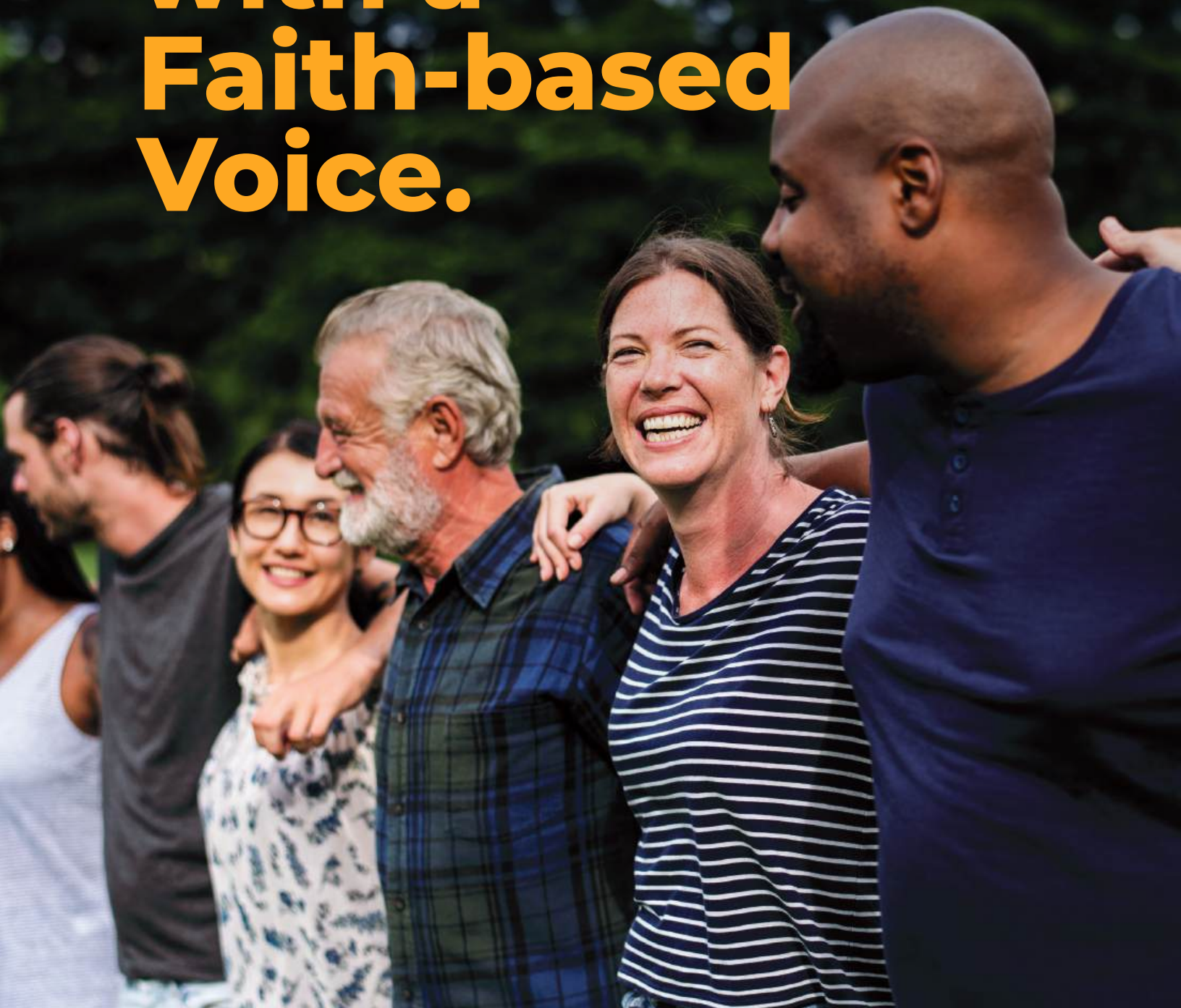


“

My first DN meeting knocked my socks off! After 20 years in this space it was my first opportunity for open, back-and-forth conversation with a director of Medicare and Medicaid—where he truly heard us, and we learned from each other.”

— **Danielle Fox**,
Newly appointed President and CEO of
Mount Olivet Rolling Acres (Minnesota)

Coming together with a Faith-based Voice.





With our office just steps from the U.S. Capitol, we ensure the voice of one of the largest faith-based networks is amplified in the national conversation.



For more than a century, the faith-based social ministries that make up the LSA nationwide network have been the known, trusted and community-centered leaders working to improve health and opportunity in communities across the country. Amplifying the voice and raising the visibility of our united faith-based network has never been more important.

Our work goes beyond charity, focusing on lasting solutions rather than temporary fixes. And we will continue to speak this truth with faith for aligned action.

That's why this year we launched the **Policy and Advocacy Committee** with an initial focus on Medicaid to drive meaningful dialogue, inform peer exchange and engage with decision makers. Together, we are championing policies that support our social ministries and their work with children and families, older adults, people with disabilities, and others. We are educating policymakers and partners, sharing insights, offering solutions, and aligning efforts to amplify our collective impact.



Capitol Conversations

Capitol Conversations is a live, interactive series we launched in 2024 designed to deepen understanding of key policy issues. Grounded in facts and open to all perspectives, these sessions create space for honest dialogue about the challenges and opportunities shaping the future of our sector. Conversations featured outside thought leaders, policymakers, and other experts who share diverse insights and real-world perspectives—building bridges for understanding and aligned action.



Amplify

241

meetings led with
lawmakers and coalitions.

300

health and human
services organizations.

1,400

communities represented
by 147 representatives
and 92 senators.

Ongoing advocacy to **strengthen access to care** by addressing proposed changes to Medicaid and other programs to address health related social needs (HRSN) and behavioral health care gaps.

Work to **broaden the workforce pipeline** in direct care: increasing recruitment, improving retention and training and fortifying existing staff.

Efforts to **strengthen access to housing** with supports and services, including Yes in God's Backyard (YIGBY) and low income-housing tax credits (LIHTC) .

What's next.

As we enter and navigate 2025, we do so with a renewed sense of urgency, recognizing that the need for mission-driven, faith-based social ministry has perhaps never been more essential to addressing the expanding needs of our communities.

We move forward with a deep sense of purpose that is rooted in our shared mission and what we know is possible. As one of the nation's leading nonprofit networks working to advance real-world, large-scale, breakthrough solutions, we align local priorities with national objectives and national policies with local needs.

That's why we are particularly excited about deepening our work in areas where we know we can continue to have an impact:

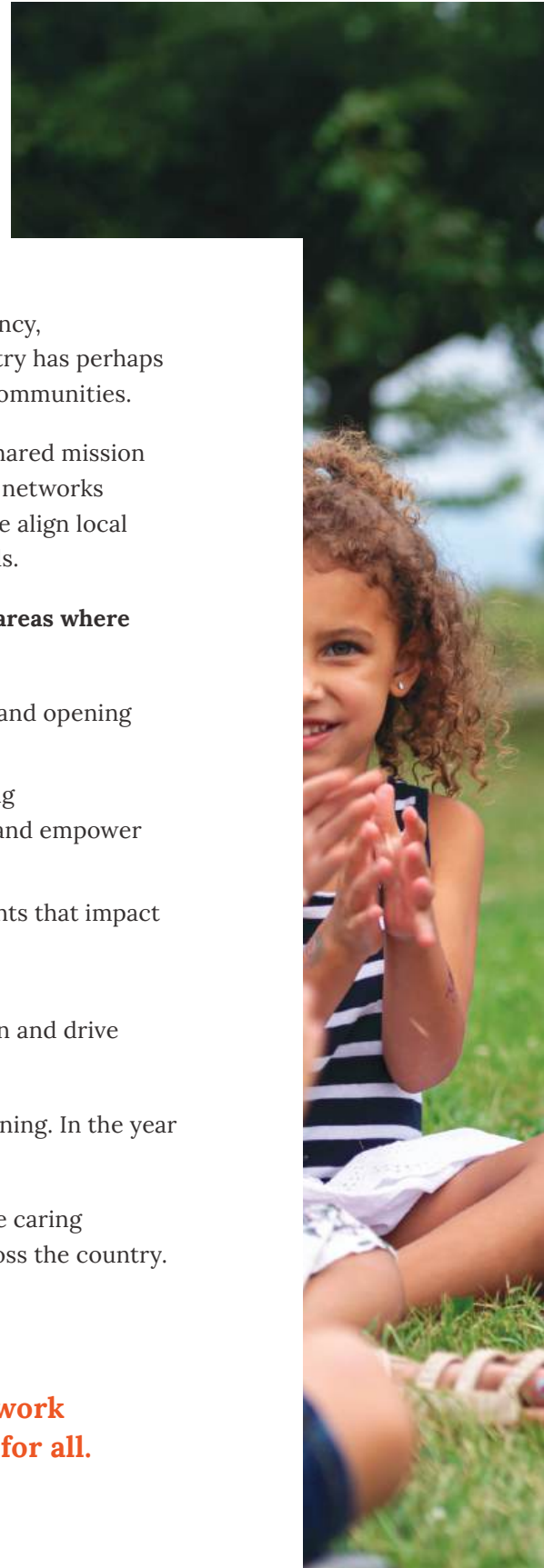
- Expanding health and housing solutions by scaling what works and opening new pathways for collaboration and funding.
- Strengthening leadership pipelines through fellowships, learning collaboratives, and national convenings that develop, connect, and empower bold leaders across our national network.
- Elevating our national voice to shape the policies and investments that impact people's lives—particularly in housing, aging, disability services, and child and family well-being.
- Building new cross-sector partnerships to accelerate innovation and drive sustainable, community-rooted change.

This is what happens when we come together—and it is only the beginning. In the year ahead, we move forward with bold and courageous action.

Thank you for helping make it possible for us, together, to cultivate the caring communities essential to advancing health and opportunity for all across the country.

Thank you for making our mission real.

**Continue your support to strengthen our work
together to advance health and opportunity for all.**





Thanks & Acknowledgments

In Gratitude

We gratefully acknowledge financial contributions from our friends and partners whose generosity makes our work together possible.

SUPPORTERS

(gifts received January 1 – December 31, 2024)

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Advocate Health		
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