



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

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LSSI.org

Northern Illinois Synod 2023 Annual Report from Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI)

Dear Valued Partners in Ministry:

Last year, LSSI served 42,000 children, adults, families, and seniors in our state—one out of every 297 people. We provide whole-person care and embrace a generative model of human services that does more than just address problems: responding to the Gospel, we bring healing, justice, and wholeness to people and communities.

In order to fully respond to the Gospel and fulfill our mission 156 years strong, I am excited to announce a multiyear gift initiative several years in the making, “Expansion of Our Hearts,” which is already helping to fund our strategic priorities and go beyond our shared work and ministry with the Northern Illinois Synod and many others across Illinois. This effort was announced in congregations this spring as part of LSSI’s Good Shepherd Sunday and is grounded in the words of theologian Henri Nouwen:

“One of the most powerful experiences in a life of compassion is the expansion of our hearts into a world-embracing space of healing from which no one is excluded.”

In 1867, LSSI emerged during a cholera epidemic in western Illinois. Lutherans working together established an orphanage and welcomed our first client, Edward, among so many other children who had lost parents. As we celebrate our 156th anniversary this October, I am proud that LSSI provides a lifeline and consistent resource for our communities despite local, national, and global crises that have challenged us in recent years and throughout LSSI’s long history.

Your support and that of your congregations and members remains critical to our ability to serve our neighbors in Illinois through our residential programs for people with developmental disabilities, programs that help individuals and families impacted by incarceration, traditional and therapeutic foster care, mental health services, alcohol and drug treatment, affordable senior housing, and more.

I’m pleased to share some program highlights from this past year:

- Last fall, LSSI began a Celebrating Families program to support clients in our Substance Use Treatment Program based in Sterling. Celebrating Families is a successful, evidence-based 16-week curriculum addressing the needs of children and parents in families that have serious problems with alcohol and other drugs. The program is designed to serve between six and 15 families at a time.
- Project LEAD (Leaders Encouraging Abstinence from Drugs) and Youth WORKS (Wellness, Opportunity, and Resources for Key Services) work in 21 middle and high schools in Carroll, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside Counties. Project LEAD teaches an evidence-based substance use

prevention curriculum to prevent and reduce the negative impacts of drug and alcohol use. Youth WORKS is a violence prevention program that raises awareness and educates young people, parents, and other invested community members about effective ways to prevent and reduce violence among youth.

- Through a partnership with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), LSSI began offering Family Supportive Services. These services intervene when families have been reported to the DCFS Child Abuse Hotline, but a child abuse or neglect investigation is not warranted. Instead, these families are referred for short-term supportive services over a 30-day timeframe, with the goal of preventing or remedying minor to moderate challenges that may be placing their children at risk. The program is provided by LSSI offices in Canton, Champaign, Danville, Galesburg, Marion, Moline, Nachusa, Peoria, and Rockford.
- LSSI continues the distinction as the largest statewide provider of foster care in Illinois, serving 2,747 children last year—roughly 12% of children under the guardianship of DCFS. There are 610 LSSI-supervised licensed foster care homes in the state.

We express our gratitude to Bishop Stacie Fidler for her leadership of the Northern Illinois Synod, as well as her service on the LSSI Board of Directors. We extend our thanks to the following individuals from the Northern Illinois Synod service area who served on the LSSI Board of Directors this past year: Dr. Randall L. Mullin, M.D., Secretary; and Karen L. Dowsett.

We are grateful to the trustees of LSSI's Cornerstone Foundation representing the Northern Illinois Synod service area this past year: Pr. Michel Clark, Chair; and Susan Bernardi.

LSSI appreciates the generosity of our friends in the Northern Illinois Synod who share in our ministry as we expand our hearts to serve our neighbors and follow in Christ's footsteps.

In faith,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark A. Stutrud". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Mark A. Stutrud
President and Chief Executive Officer