



## Mentoring Moms Make a Difference

### *New Practice Within LSSI's Adoption Program Benefits Expectant Mothers*

For a little over a year now, LSSI has been connecting expectant mothers with birth mothers who have already placed babies for adoption. These birth moms are available to offer support, answer questions, and provide mentoring throughout the adoption journey. Although still relatively new, these mentoring relationships are making a big difference for everyone involved.

According to Laura Hoffman, clinical director at LSSI, "We are finding great outcomes as newly expectant mothers experience an added level of support, understanding, and unbiased guidance along their journey; while birth mothers have the opportunity to take a once-painful experience and difficult decision and use it to support another. The empathy and understanding that they provide is truly remarkable." As one expectant mother remarked after meeting a mentoring birth mom, "It was like looking at myself!"

This new mentoring option is open to any expectant mother who needs and requests additional support, either as she contemplates whether or not to place her child for adoption or while she prepares herself for life after placement. "We are always looking for new ways to support our birth moms with approaches that will continue to help them as they go through this journey," says Angie Phillips, adoption supervisor. Allison Rorick, adoption specialist, agrees. "Adoption is ever changing. We have to be ready to problem solve, giving expectant parents what they need to successfully place — or parent — their child. Either way, we want them to be as healthy as possible coming through this experience."

Health and wholeness are exactly what this new mentoring approach provides, and not just for the expectant moms, either; birth moms have discovered new avenues of healing through these mentoring

relationships, too. Melissa, one of our mentoring birth moms, explains: "Being there, telling the expectant mom my story and having her listen validated for me that I did the right thing. It always helps to talk to someone who can relate, even the slightest bit." While she admits that sharing her own placement experience was a little scary at first, Melissa was honored to help. "I figured that if she had the guts to reach out, then I had to have the guts to share openly."

This new, one-on-one approach is particularly successful for people who prefer not to join a support group. "We wanted to provide this mentoring relationship as a way to meet the needs of people who are more comfortable talking to just one person," says Angie. Even better, the expectant moms and mentoring birth moms have developed bonds that extend beyond the services LSSI provides. "Each mentoring relationship is different," says Allison, "depending on the support the expectant mom needs or wants."

Indeed, this new mentoring option for expectant mothers is just one more way that we are fulfilling our mission to provide holistic services, adapting and changing the assistance we offer as the needs arise. "As part of the executive staff team, we are always open to listen to new ideas that will benefit our clients, seeing if there is a way we can provide a deeper impact for the people we serve," says Jen Fraizer, chief operating officer. "These mentoring relationships are a wonderful example of how we are able to do this."

If you or someone you know is currently experiencing an unexpected pregnancy and needs support, please contact our Adoption Team. We are available 24 hours a day through our hotline at (260) 494-8687. ■

### Let's keep in touch

Interested in being kept in the loop? Sign up for our mailing list and you'll have access to regular updates on happenings at LSSI. Sign up at <http://lssin.org/get-involved/join-our-mailing-list/>.

Please indicate if you prefer to receive updates via email or in your mailbox.

## Because of You

Special thanks to everyone who participated in the Colonial Oaks Ladies Golf Outing. The proceeds from this event helped us purchase climbing equipment at Children's Village, which in turn will help the children develop their large motor skills.

Thank you to Emmaus Lutheran Church and School for donating 20 birthday bags for our clients. ■



## Poised for Growth

*A letter from Angela Moellering, President and CEO*



We have accomplished much in the past year here at Lutheran Social Services of Indiana. In many ways, 2014 was a year of preparing for the future. We planned, formed partnerships, strengthened our existing programs, and deepened our impact for those we serve. This groundwork has paved the way for continued growth, which enabled us to expand our services to additional communities.

Responding to community needs with the love of Christ is nothing new here at LSSI. Our programs and services have always been designed to do just that, dating back to that very first infant who found a home with a Lutheran family through the care and efforts of Pastor Wambsgans and the Emmaus Lutheran Church congregation.

Today, of course, growth requires a little different process than it did 100 years ago. First and foremost, we have to secure a

certain amount of stable funding in order to provide the services and outcomes that a community needs. As good stewards, we are always mindful of supporting all of our programs through stable funding streams.

But that is just one piece of the puzzle. As we grow, we also need to consider whether or not the new programs line up with our competencies and our impact statement, helping families maintain stability, gain the skills they need to become better parents, and develop financial responsibility through budgeting and financial literacy training. And finally, we seek to staff new programs in new communities with people who live, work, learn, and worship in those geographic regions. Hiring local staff helps us adapt our "tried and true" services to the needs and culture of each community.

Of course, no growth would be possible without your continued support and prayers. Our best partnerships are those we have built with you, our ever-faithful friends, and for this I thank you. ■

## Put Your Money Where Your Heart Is

The staff at Lutheran Social Services of Indiana believes in what we do, so much so that we are willing to offer financial support to the programs we help run! It is all part of our annual "Halos of Hope" campaign, where we encourage every board and staff member to contribute financially to the organization.

While we have always seen a high participation rate in this fundraising program, we have added a little bit of fun in recent years to kick off the campaign through our annual "Penny Wars" spirit week. Here is how it works. We divide the staff into teams. Each team earns one point for every penny placed in that team's collection jar. Any other monetary donation placed in the jar (dimes, nickels, quarters, dollar bills, etc.) earns negative points in the amount of that denomination (1 nickel = - 5 points).

And that is where the fun begins. Each team tries to sabotage the other. We have actually



*Lutheran Social Services of Indiana staff members show their team spirit during our kick-off week for the Halos of Hope campaign.*

seen staff members hide \$20 bills in the competition's jar. (Yes, it is the only time of year where we actually encourage this kind of devious behavior!) At the end of the week, we tally the scores. While each team usually ends up with negative points, everyone turns out to be a winner — while sharing a few smiles in the process.



All this team spirit has paid off, to the tune of \$400 raised this year alone for our Halos of Hope campaign through Penny Wars. Even better, 100% of our staff and board ended up participating in the Halos of Hope campaign, which continues throughout the year. Clearly, investing in LSSI can be productive and fun at the same time! ■

**You can donate online with a credit card at [www.lssin.org](http://www.lssin.org).  
Just hit the donate button at the top of the page!**

# Pray, Praise, and Give Thanks!

By Dennis Herman, Director of Church Relations



Daily prayer is a normal part of our routine here at the offices of Lutheran Social Services of Indiana. This prayer time is a reflection of the apostle Paul's letter to the Romans when he says in chapter

12:10-13, "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality."

With these verses in mind, I would like to share several prayer situations that have come across my desk in the recent past. The first is a prayer request we received from one of our clients with the following plea: "Help me, O Lord, to provide for my family. Please, dear Jesus, give me strength for day-to-day living; protect me and my family from evil; and O Lord, help me resist temptation, in Jesus name, Amen!" I passed this prayer request along to one of our Lutheran pastors located in the geographic region of this client. We then had a whole congregation praying for this individual. We at

Lutheran Social Services of Indiana (LSSI) are very thankful that we have partner congregations that share the prayers of our clients when asked to do so.

Another reminder of the importance of prayer came from one of our delegates in Fort Wayne. Since the beginning of the year, Angela Moellering, our president and CEO, and I have prayed each week for our pastors, delegates, and board members, notifying these individuals each week as we rotate our prayers. Following one of our notifications, we received the following from a delegate:

*Dear LSS Staff, thank you for including us in your prayers. We in turn did the same. And now will continue along with our 80+ family, New Life members, fellow Gideons, neighbors and friends. The community of believers must pray for the community and for the lost. We must "continue and not grow weary. Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving." (Colossians 4:2) It was signed, "In Christ's name."*

Thank you to this delegate, and to everyone who continues to support Lutheran Social Services of Indiana through your prayers and kind words. We are deeply moved by your Christian love. To God be the Glory! ■

## Loaves of Love

Once again, LSSI is offering our Justice Bread gift loaves for the Christmas season. You can choose from a variety of bread types, including cranberry, wheat, or pumpkin. Each loaf comes wrapped in holiday colors, and each package contains a card bearing a seasonal message, making these loaves the perfect gift for friends, neighbors, and family members—even babysitters or mail carriers!

Please note that gift loaf orders are due on Monday, December 8, by 11 a.m. Wrapped gift loaves are \$3.50 each. If you prefer unwrapped loaves, they are just \$3. (Please indicate if you want wrapped or unwrapped bread when placing your order with your Lutheran church Justice Bread coordinator.)

And remember, when you buy a loaf of Justice Bread, you are not just giving a holiday treat; you are sharing the love of Christ with the less fortunate, since all proceeds from the sale of Justice Bread benefit those in need in our community.

If your church does not offer the Justice Bread program, you can order loaves directly through our main office by calling LSSI at (260) 426-3347 and asking for Jodi. ■



## Board profile: Family Ties



As a graduate of Concordia Lutheran High School and member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Greg Clark has known about Lutheran Social Services of Indiana for a long time. But it wasn't until he joined the board three years ago that he fully understood the variety and range of services we provide. "After attending a Meet & Eat, I was impressed with the depth and scope of services," he says. "It was very eye opening. LSSI does more for the community than I originally thought. After doing my homework, I was very excited to be a part of this organization."

Although Greg was initially recruited to the board because of his accounting and finance experience, he has discovered new connecting points with LSSI—for himself and his family. "I was impressed with the fiscal responsibility of the organization, as well as the way LSSI works with clients to develop their own personal fiscal responsibility through the Financial Literacy program. What got me really excited, however, was the way the Children's Village staff is impacting children and their families."

Since joining the board, Greg has developed his own family ties with Lutheran Social Services as well. "I look at my involvement with LSSI as an opportunity for my entire family to become involved." Last Christmas, Greg's wife, Erin, and his two daughters, Emily and Hannah, volunteered with the Christmas program and plan to do so again this year. "We are blessed to be able to serve and are thankful for the services LSSI provides for their clients and our community." ■

If you would like to receive an electronic copy of *Perspective*, please contact Rebecca Bash at [RBash@lssin.org](mailto:RBash@lssin.org) or (260) 426-3347.

# Mission

Lutheran Social Services of Indiana expresses the love of Jesus Christ for all people through services that empower individuals and families to move toward social, emotional, and spiritual wholeness.



Help you need.  
Hope you can trust.

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Have you checked out our website lately? Find us online at [www.lssl.org](http://www.lssl.org) to view our videos featuring adoption, ECHO, and Children's Village. Like us on Facebook! Search "Lutheran Social Services of Indiana"



## SAVE THE DATE Annual Meeting Thursday, March 12, 2015



The annual Adopt-A-Family Christmas Program provides assistance to Lutheran Social Services of Indiana families. This two-day program allows volunteers the opportunity to greet and assist sponsors with the unloading of donated gifts December 10 and to help LSSI families with loading their Christmas gifts into their vehicles December 11. This program is held at Concordia Lutheran High School, and this volunteer opportunity may consist of light lifting and physical activity. Please contact Kristi Stanley at (260) 426-3347 for more information.

## Volunteer Opportunity

Lutheran Social Services of Indiana celebrates the life of Denie Snyder, a longtime employee of LSSI who passed away this summer. Although she had been retired from full time employment at LSSI for two decades, she continued to give of her talents in this community. Denie counseled many families and children as she talked openly about her faith and applied clinical skills. She worked to bring a holistic approach to her work with the clients of LSSI. We are grateful for Denie's work and leadership over the years in this community.



## Remembering Denie Snyder