



From left to right: Kathy Lehman, Todd Stephenson, Jen Fraizer, and Jeanne Zehr

Joint Partnership Produces Speedy Results

How Feuerstein training at Children's Village — thanks to support from United Way of Allen County — is surpassing all expectations

There is a lot of excitement around Children's Village these days, and it centers on a single name: Feuerstein (pronounced stine, not steen). In case you have never heard this name before, you are not alone. Even if you have heard it, you probably do not associate it with a learning enrichment program for early childhood education, primarily because its target audience to date has been older children and adults. Someday, however, we think that might change, thanks to a pilot program we are running in partnership with United Way of Allen County in our early childhood programming at Children's Village.

Program in a Nutshell

The Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment (FIE) program is founded on a radical shift in our understanding about intelligence. It holds to the basic premise that all people — regardless of age, ability, or socio-economic background — have the power to significantly improve their capacity to learn. In other words, intelligence is not fixed, and no matter what life experiences or trauma people encounter, they have the innate ability to rise above. Amazingly, through effective instruction and interaction, the brain can actually change and grow, opening new pathways for learning.

Our Effective Partnership

We first encountered FIE through a training session sponsored by United Way of Allen County presented by Jeanne Zehr, director of community impact. Jeanne holds the distinct honor of training directly with Reuven Feuerstein (1921 – 2014), the program's founder. Almost immediately, connections between this methodology and our highly acclaimed High Scope curriculum were clear. Kathy Lehman, Children's Village Director, and Jeanne had many conversations about how to adapt FIE for three- to five-year-old children.

In addition to supporting Jeanne's time to train our Children's Village teachers in the Feuerstein methodology, United Way also granted discretionary funds to help us implement the program in our classrooms. "We are so thankful that United Way was willing to invest

in a new and innovative process in which the results and benefits were yet to be determined," says Angie Moellering, president and CEO.

Proof in the Pudding

Well, those results are now in, at least in the beginning stages, and they speak for themselves. Within two weeks of classroom implementation, our teachers were remarking how much calmer their classrooms were. "The children are starting to use words to take care of their problems instead of resorting to emotional outbursts," says Jen Fraizer, chief operating officer at LSSI. "These outcomes are a direct result of the social and emotional concept building and language development we have implemented in the classroom."

The outcomes have even exceeded Jeanne's expectations. "I expected to see changes after a month of implementation," she says, "not a couple of weeks." Through FIE, children have become more engaged in reciprocal conversations with teachers as they develop the skills teachers are modeling. "One little girl was even teaching a lesson about emotions to one of her friends, duplicating the lesson exactly as she had learned it. It was just priceless," says Jeanne.

"United Way of Allen County is happy to partner with Children's Village in helping children prepare not just for kindergarten, but also for a better life," says Todd Stephenson, president and CEO. Angie Moellering agrees. "The FIE training could not have come at a better time," she says, referring to a six-month run of violence in southeastern Fort Wayne. "We want our children to lead more productive — and more peace-filled — lives. FIE is an excellent way to start that process."

Over the next six months, Children's Village will be incorporating additional instruments and engaging parents in understanding and implementing these concepts, so they can reinforce them at home. "We are all excited about the progress we have made so far through FIE," says Jen, "and we look forward to greater growth in the weeks to come." ■

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.

Here's How LSSI Is Helping the Homeless

And How You Can Help!

For many of us, last winter's arctic blast is forever burned into our memories. Who can forget the frigid temperatures and blinding snow? Just imagine how much more unbearable—and dangerous—the season was for the homeless in our community!

Each year, LSSI partners with other social service agencies in Allen County to assist those who are homeless during the harsh winter weather. LSSI contributes to a community fund that provides temporary shelter when winter conditions become severe.

In addition, we volunteer every year in our region's "Point in Time Count," a single day in January reserved for counting the number of households claiming homeless status in our community. (Last year, over 330 households claimed homeless status in Allen County alone.) In addition to volunteering at the counting stations, LSSI collects items to fill backpacks given to those who participate in the count. Each backpack contains much-needed items that will help our homeless neighbors face the cold weather.

That's where you can help. If you'd like to reach out to the homeless in our community, we are accepting donations of blankets, wool socks, scarves, gloves (in all sizes!) and personal hygiene items. If you'd like to volunteer at one of the counting stations for the "Point in Time Count" in January, or donate items for the backpacks, please call Kristi Stanley, Director of Intake/Grants Manager, at (260) 426-3347. ■



Forming Successful Partnerships

A letter from Angela Moellering, President and CEO



At Lutheran Social Services of Indiana, we are always looking for new ways to deepen and enhance our programs. One way we do that is by forming partnerships with other agencies.

Collaborating with various community resources enables us to pool our shared expertise, enrich our current programs, and increase access points for our clients. Some partnerships are official, taking the form of contractual agreements; others occur more spontaneously, developing during the natural ebb and flow of our daily efforts to help clients meet their goals.

In this newsletter, you will read about a particularly successful partnership we have built in the past year with United Way of Allen County. The Feuerstein training they are providing to our Children's Village teachers is making a huge impact on the three- to five-year-old children at our Center. We are so grateful for this effective and impactful partnership (See Cover Story).

Effective collaboration requires effort, a willingness to see things from a different perspective, and shared values between agencies or organizations. It also requires a huge "buy in" from our staff. There's no doubt about it. Good partnerships are a team effort, with everybody working together to forge a new path. I am so proud of our staff at Children's Village for their continued support and willingness to tread into new territory, working to apply a methodology in a new way that produces significant results with young children.

And that is where partnerships get exciting. Because when they work, we see amazing results in the people we serve—results we might not have achieved on our own. I am so thankful for all of our partners, everyone from like-minded social service agencies and funders who are open to a greater, collective impact, all the way to the church or individual who offers prayer support for our staff and clients, helping us make a difference—not just for today but for eternity. We could never do what we do without your support. Thank you. ■

Amber Waves of Grain

FARMERS, keep reading to find out how you can make a grain donation to LSSI

By Dennis Herman, Director of Church Relations



There is something exhilarating to me about taking a ride out into the Indiana countryside on a summer day. As I observe the amber waves of grain in the rolling fields, I think of God's great gifts of

grain and beauty given to His people through the dedicated work of the farmer.

Grain farmers put their profession on the line each and every year as they depend on God to provide rain and sunshine at the right times to reap a bountiful harvest. And when God blesses His harvest, all of us reap the rewards of His blessing.

Our Gratitude to God for a good crop year can be demonstrated in many ways. God's Word gives guidance on how the sower can return a portion of his bounty to those less fortunate.

Deuteronomy 24:19 speaks to the return of God's blessings to those in need:

"When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you should not go back to get it; it will be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands."

If you farm, did you know that you can fulfill this scripture by transferring grain to LSSI? Simply let LSSI know what elevator you use, and we'll establish an account for you to transfer the grain. By transferring the grain before selling it, you avoid claiming the gift as income while still being able to write off input costs.

For more information on giving grain, please contact Dennis Herman at (260) 426-3347. God bless our farmers! ■

**You can donate online with a credit card at www.lssin.org.
Just hit the donate button at the top of the page!**



Children's Village Graduation | Thursday, May 29

Way to Go! Thursday, May 29, was graduation day for 20 of our preschoolers at Children's Village, LSSI's early-learning center. Sporting royal-blue caps and gowns, these young graduates treated parents, guests, and senior friends from Lutheran Life Villages to songs and poetry before receiving their diplomas. We pray that the graduates continue to love learning.



Zoo Day | Wednesday, June 18

A Rip Roarin' Good Time Once again, our annual Zoo Day at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo was a huge success! On Wednesday, June 18, 35 seniors, 48 preschool children and many parents, staff members, and volunteers from both LSSI and Lutheran Life Villages came together for a day of fun and learning. Seniors and children toured the zoo for a few hours together, then enjoyed a picnic lunch on the zoo grounds. It's one of our favorite intergenerational activities as we joyously bridge the generation gap!

Elliot Ferguson Retires — Again!

Many thanks to Elliot Ferguson for his 15 years of service at LSSI. After retiring from his full-time position with the United States Postal Service, Elliot told us he would help with our building maintenance needs for a few months; instead, he stayed for 15 years! We're so thankful he extended his years of service and wish him well in his second round of retirement. ■



Donor profile

Staying Off Center Stage

Our donor profile this issue focuses the spotlight on someone who would much rather stay out of the limelight. In his words, "Putting my picture in the newsletter is like praying on the front steps of the church. I'm not that type." Respecting his wishes to remain anonymous, we are focusing instead on the many ways this donor has connected with and supported Lutheran Social Services of Indiana over the last 50 years.

Most recently, this longtime supporter has contributed funds to our agency out of his retirement income (thanks to a tax ruling enabling those 70 years and six months of age and older to contribute to a charitable organization from an IRA). "We're getting older and are well provided for," he says, "so our giving has been able to increase in recent years."

This friend of LSSI and his wife have chosen to support LSSI in part because of their long and personal history with us, dating back to when they adopted their son and daughter through our adoption services. "Our children mean the world to us," he says.

Impressed with the 100% graduation rate in our ECHO program, this donor in particular is pleased that his money can make a difference for young, single moms — as well as for the children in our Children's Village early childhood programming.

"My wife and I have been married 64 years," he continues. "I was a farmer, and she worked right along with me. We started with little, accumulated something, and are happy to give back some of what God has given to us." ■



Have you checked out our website lately? Find us online at www.lssin.org to view our videos featuring adoption, ECHO, and Children's Village.



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Search "Lutheran Social Services of Indiana"

If you would like to receive an electronic copy of *Perspective*, please contact Rebecca Bash at 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.



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A Big "Thank You" to Our Funders!

As a private, not-for-profit agency, Lutheran Social Services of Indiana relies heavily on private donations, as well as grant money from various foundations, in order to serve our clients. We are pleased to announce that LSSI has recently received the following grants in order to help fund our many programs:

- **St. Joseph Community Health Foundation** has awarded LSSI a \$10,000 grant to support staffing for intergenerational programming at Children's Village. These funds will enable us to continue bringing together students and seniors for unique, intergenerational programming that promotes growth, learning, and wellness for both groups.
- **Old National Bank Foundation** has presented LSSI with \$5,000 to help us provide financial literacy programming. Last year, we provided over 1,600 financial-literacy lessons to our clients!
- **The Edward D. and Ione Auer Foundation** has given LSSI \$15,000 in support of our quality early childhood program at Children's Village, where we prepare children for kindergarten and create lifelong learners.

We are so thankful for these foundations' trust in our programming and staff. We couldn't serve our clients to the depth and extent we do without your help. **Thank you!**



Happy Grandparents Day!

Lutheran Social Services celebrates all grandparents! If and the difference they make in our community! If your grandparents (biological or adopted) have impacted your life in a positive way, please consider making a donation to LSSI in their names. It's a great way to honor their investment in your life. Call us at (260) 426-3347 for more information.

Wow Moment: When Grumbles Turn to Grins

On eight-month-old Antwon's first day at Children's Village, he seemed terrified of his new surroundings. Over the course of his first week, his frowns slowly but surely changed into smiles, and his cries emerged into the cutest laughs. One moment in particular, however, made us realize that Antwon had finally become comfortable with his new school.

Right before nap time, Antwon started to make a growling noise. When we told his father about the growls, he smiled and told us they were Antwon's way of "wrestling," or playing with us. That's when we realized that Antwon felt comfortable enough in his new surroundings to initiate play with his care giver! These days, Antwon exchanges many growls and grumbles with his teachers — something we look forward to every day.