



**LEARNING
COMMUNITY**
OF DOUGLAS AND SARPY COUNTIES

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“Bringing together the strengths within our communities, we will create a collaborative environment that promotes the development of educational opportunity, resource equity and academic excellence that maximizes the potential of every child.”

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ELEMENTARY LEARNING CENTERS MEDIA RELEASE

The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties has contracted with Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska (LFS) to implement its new Family Liaison Program. This program is designed to help enhance the academic success of elementary students, particularly those who face challenges in the educational environment due to factors such as attendance, poverty, limited English skills and mobility.

Within the Family Liaison Program, specialists will pinpoint potential barriers and challenges that are impeding success in school. The Family Liaison will work with the student’s family and teachers to develop a plan then facilitate the necessary intervention and treatment. The Family Liaisons will initially serve children identified in these 9 Omaha Public Schools and 6 Bellevue Public Schools:

Bancroft, Castelar, Druid Hill, Gomez, Franklin, Kennedy, King, Jackson and Skinner (OPS)
Belleaire, Bertha Barber, Betz, Birchcrest, Central, Twin Ridge (BPS).

Many external factors can create barriers to learning, whether it’s alcohol or drug abuse in the home, a job loss, or even domestic violence or sexual abuse.

Lutheran Family Services has a 119 year history of helping high-risk families in crisis. LFS’ proven strength is helping families eliminate or cope with stressors through programs as basic as making parents aware of their child’s developmental markers, or as complex as trauma therapies to help children overcome the impact of domestic violence or sexual abuse.

The Learning Community defines the target audience for this program as:

- Children with excessive absenteeism/truancy
- Children in poverty;
- English language learners;
- Highly mobile students; or
- Low proficiency scores in reading, writing and math

Lutheran Family Services already has a strong physical presence in the communities. LFS also has extensive experience with and is integrated into all of the targeted populations. In fact, LFS is already working with many of these at-risk families through its established programming.

LFS specializes not only in services for children, but also adult behavioral health and community services programs which give the organization extensive experience in dealing with highly mobile populations and populations which are not fluent in the English language. LFS staff members speak 35 languages and dialects and have become an established community resource for providing translation services.

“At Lutheran Family Services, we are very focused on prevention and intervention,” says Ruth Henrichs, President and CEO. “We are excited by what the Family Liaison program will mean for the future of our community—and the families we serve.”

In 2009, more than 90 percent of the clients served by LFS were non-Lutheran. LFS delivers its human care services without regard for religious affiliation.

Lutheran Family Services is currently hiring key staff for the Family Liaison program.

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