

Lutheran Family Services  
of Nebraska, Inc.

# Connections

Spring 2013



## Walking the Talk

*Creating Healthy Homes for Children*

## Message from the President & CEO



With every change of season, I am reminded of how blessed we are to be Midwesterners. We experience and appreciate the simple truth that seasons change; hope endures. We live in a place where people love and care for their

neighbors, and nowhere was this more obvious than during May at LFS!

May marked Foster Child Awareness Month and we have chosen to share stories in this issue of *Connections* about our very own LFS staff members who have built their families through foster child adoption. I was surprised to learn how many of our employees are foster adoptive parents. It is truly inspiring!

As we enter the second half of the year, LFS looks forward to the constancy of our mission, new opportunities to build on our strengths and the enduring hope that grows in the hearts and minds of those we serve. At LFS we are blessed to see lives recover, heal and change... every single day.

Warm Summer blessings,

Ruth Henrichs  
President & CEO

## Connections

President & CEO  
Ruth Henrichs

Vice President of  
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**Our Mission:** *To express God's love for all people by providing quality human care services that build and strengthen individual, family and community life.*

# Walking the Talk

## Creating Healthy Homes for

When staff members at Lutheran Family Services (LFS) talk about the joy of adopting children from foster care, they know that joy personally.

That's how many of them built their own families.

Katherine Dyche, for example. She and her husband Greg have five children who were once in foster care. Today they are just the awesome Dyche family of seven.

The list goes on. In fact, when we added it all up, a total of 17 children formerly in foster care are now part of the LFS family. Eight employees, over 2% of the LFS workforce, met their sons and daughters when they were in foster care. Within Children Services, the statistic is even higher. **Eight percent of the staff are adoptive parents.** Now, these beautiful children are all living with a very different future than they might have had before.

Some became adoptive parents because they were adopted themselves, like Katherine. Or Jessyca Vandercoy, who was in foster care until she was adopted by her parents when she was a young child. Or some, like Amy Muell and Brenna Poindexter, who met their children through their work.

In these two pages, we introduce you to these wonderful LFS employees who embraced their mission for children at LFS, then never let it go...

**BRIAN KEMPCKES** met his son through a "matching" party sponsored by LFS. At match parties, prospective adoptive parents meet with children available for adoption. At first, Brian says 14-year-old "Jacob" was shy since he has trust issues with adults, but now, with therapy and a lot of love, "Jacob" is doing extremely well, both academically and socially. "Jacob" himself says his life is great right now because he's being adopted. He likes to play video games, to draw and to sing. But what he enjoys most? Spending time with his dad. The decision to adopt changed Brian's career path. He became so passionate about foster care he is now a foster care recruiter and trainer for LFS.

**BRENNA POINDEXTER** was a fresh-faced college graduate starting her new job when she met a feisty 13-year-

old girl living in South Carolina. Brenna worked hard to find a permanent home for "Tasha," but nothing seemed to click. After four years of trying, plus a failed adoptive placement, Brenna realized she was out of time. "Tasha" had become her daughter and it was just a matter of making it official. Even though Brenna was barely 11 years older, the relationship was there. "Tasha" didn't believe Brenna at first, calling it a "sick joke," but time has proven the resiliency of this family. "Tasha" has her own purple bedroom and has been in the same home now for more than two Christmases!



Brian Kempkes



Brenna Poindexter

# 1k Children



The Muell Family

Brenna tells their story to anyone who wants to listen because she knows that teenagers deserve to have people who love and cherish them. Brenna works in the LFS Right Turn® program providing support to other adoptive families.

**AMY MUELL** supervises the RSafe® 10-14 program at LFS. RSafe® is dedicated to emotionally healing children, teens and families affected by child sexual abuse. Amy, a 34-year-old single mom, still dreams of marrying one day and perhaps having more children, but for now, her life is all about 15-year-old Ja'Rell and his 10-year-old brother Shomore. Amy had just decided to try out foster parenting when Shomore was removed from his abusive home and came to live with her. It wasn't too long after that that Ja'Rell needed an emergency placement. Now, they are just Amy's sons. Their adoption was finalized on National Adoption Day, November 17, 2012.

**BROOKE EGGERT** is a supervisor of foster care for LFS, and for her, fostering is just a way of life. For over eight years, she and her husband took placement of 43 children. One of those children never left. Allison is now a bright seven-year-old, but when Brooke first met her, she was a bruised 22-month-old with lead poisoning. Allison has two brothers, Bryce and Brett – both of whom are strong advocates for

adoption. Bryce says being an older brother makes him feel like a hero, while Brett just says "adoption is fun," and he feels bad that everyone doesn't have a sister to adopt.

**KATHERINE "KAT" DYCHE** adjusted her career path because of her passion for foster child adoption. After she and her husband Greg adopted their five children, she came to LFS as a recruiter for Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK), a signature program of the Dave

Thomas Foundation for Adoption. WWK recruiters work aggressively to search the history of older youth in foster care, looking for that one committed person who might be open to adoption. Kat is so proud of her children.

"I'm so lucky that I got to know these kids. It's like winning the lottery." Kat, who is herself adopted, is convinced that many gifted children are caught in foster care. "They just need a family to help them grow. Families are built on tradition, memories and experiences. I'm a very happy mom."

**JESSYCA VANDERCOY** says she became an adoptive parent simply because she fell in love with her daughter. Jessyca is the LFS Children Services' Statewide Director for Permanency and Well-Being. She says adopting was like coming full-circle – since she, herself, is adopted out of foster care. Jessyca met her daughter Gracie when she was 16 months old and was her foster mother for three years before finalizing the adoption. Jessyca involved her two biological children right away – Jackson, who is five years older than eight-year-old Grace, and Kate, who is five months younger. To quote Gracie, "Adoption is cool." ■

Many thanks to Billings Photography for their services!



The Dyche Family



The Eggert Family



The Vandercoy Family

## Foster Care Classes: Ready to take the next step?

Foster Parent Training is an interesting and interactive way to learn about the unique needs of children who have experienced loss, trauma, abuse and/or neglect. Although the class focuses on building skills to become a foster parent,

it really develops parenting skills for everyone.

Over 40 adults completed the most recent LFS class. It was a very diverse group – in age, race and gender. LFS partnered with Alegant Creighton

Health to provide space large enough to accommodate the group.

As we go to press there are still a few spots open in the June Foster Parenting Class. Sign up with Brooke Eggert (402) 591-5068 or email [begett@LFSneb.org](mailto:begett@LFSneb.org)

# Wicker & Wine®

## Basket Auction

### For Pottawattamie County's most vulnerable children...

#### Every year, the room just keeps getting bigger.

Years ago, it was just a meeting space in the Omni Centre. Then, a half-ballroom at the Mid-America Center. And this year? The whole ballroom!

And it was full to the brim with people committed to making Pottawattamie County an even better place for its children to thrive and grow.

**Matt and Lisa Gronstal** served as the honorary chairs for the 2012 Wicker & Wine® Basket Auction on November 1. **Connie Vogelzang** chaired the silent auction. More than 300 people

attended and helped raise over \$70,000 that will go directly to support the work at the Pottawattamie County Center for Healthy Families®.

Attendees were inspired by stories of what happens at the Center every day. Mothers and fathers explained how the support groups and classes had made them better parents...how the incentive programs helped relieve financial stress, and how the Center staff had really become an extension of their own families.

Center staff members provide therapy for children and families impacted by child sexual abuse (RSafe®), and are now going into public schools to provide classes and support to teenage parents. **The impact of the Center just keeps growing – with 594 preschool children and babies served in 2012. And with each**

**interaction, one more opportunity to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect.**

As one mom said recently, “If every family would take a parenting class at the Center, there would be a whole lot more healthy families in Pottawattamie County.” ■



Richard & Connie Vogelzang with  
Matt & Lisa Gronstal



Lowell Nelson with  
Ruth Henrichs



Pam & Shawn Petersen



Deb Hoag, Joanna Sklenar-Smith  
& Jennifer Hensley



Doug Goodman with  
Kathy & Mike Kennedy



Andy Tingwald, Laura Fender,  
Roger & Karen Thompson



Dr. Martha & Bob Bruckner with  
Bruce Rasmussen



Patricia Russmann with  
Susan Pawloski



Linda & Tim Daugherty



Mary & Jack Hoferer



# FANDANGO® ALL STARS

## \*\*\*\*\* INVESTING IN METRO OMAHA'S CHILDREN

The most touching part of the night? When little Vera Woodward did a little twirl for the crowd in her pretty red party dress. She was one of the "stars" of the evening after all!

Vera and her brother Vernon were special guests at 2013's Fandango®. The seven-year-old twins attended with their mother, who adopted them two years ago and "can't remember life without them."

Helping foster children find permanent and loving homes was just one of the LFS Children Services programs supported by the Fandango® fundraiser. Vera and Vernon were featured in a video showing how the lives of children and families are forever changed because of the human care programs offered at LFS.

The video also told the story of one family saved from homelessness because of the timely intervention of LFS Family Liaison Djuan Johnson. The family's youngest daughter was missing too many days of school. When Mr. Johnson went to discover why, he found a family in crisis and near eviction. After connecting the family of seven with community resources, they are on the right track, and the little girl is doing well in school.

Another family talked about how LFS Early Childhood Therapist Megan Frantz helped them uncover the mystery of their preschooler's disturbing behavior. He wouldn't sleep, was disruptive and could never relax. He was in no condition to start kindergarten! Megan found that the little boy had experienced extensive medical trauma as an infant, and as a result, had never learned to calm himself. It took just a few months of working with the family to correct this child's behavior. Now he's finishing what his mother calls "the best kindergarten year, ever!"

**The other "FANDANGO®: ALL STARS" were the 300 guests! Thanks to their generosity, over \$131,000 was raised for children's programs.** The live auction included premium tickets to the Justin Bieber and Taylor Swift concerts, as well as week-long vacations to the South Carolina coast and Arizona.

Many thanks to our honorary chairs, **Parker and Alanna Schenken** and event chairs, Terri and Alan



Fandango Chairs  
Parker & Alanna Schenken



Roger Thompson with  
Joe & Gaye Lynn Schaffart



Congressman Lee & Robyn  
Terry with Wendy Moore



Susan Pape, Lyn Ziegenbein &  
Dan Pape



Mrs. Heartland Anna Peters,  
Miss Omaha's Teen Sam  
Washington & Mrs. Nebraska  
Kandis Friedenbach



Emcee Julie Cornell



Viv & John Ewing



Brian Osborne, Jane Schulte  
& Alan Wasmoen

Wasmoen, as well as the members of Forever Families Guild who made it all happen. Julie Cornell of KETV served as emcee and did a masterful job of keeping the crowd in line. Her "all-star" blackbelt karate uniform probably helped! ■

## Veteran Leader Corps positions awarded

The AmeriCorps program at Lutheran Family Services (LFS) is reaching new heights.

LFS is now home to three full-term Veteran Leader Corps members! This was the most competitive national grant cycle in the history of AmeriCorps and to be granted three positions is quite an honor. The award notification stated that LFS' selection as a host site is a reflection on LFS' track record and impact in serving America's veterans. These national service volunteers will work with veterans in the LFS At Ease® program.

The LFS AmeriCorps program, the largest in the state of Nebraska, has 44 service corps members, serving over 50,000 hours each year, working with low-income families, refugees and military families.

To learn more about LFS AmeriCorps, you can watch a video about the program on the LFS YouTube Page—[youtube.com/user/lfsneb](http://youtube.com/user/lfsneb)



## Groundbreaking work in LFS Trauma Therapy

*EMDR “unlocks” trauma recovery*

A pilot project conducted by two LFS therapists is helping unblock recovery for clients who are “stuck” in therapy.

EMDR or Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy is used primarily with clients suffering post-traumatic stress. When a person is experiencing trauma, the brain simply cannot process information the normal way. Their traumatic experiences become frozen in time for them: the sounds,

the smells, the images. The person never really moves on from the event and when they remember it, it's exactly like re-living the terror. You can only imagine how that affects the person's ability to function in everyday life.

With EMDR, the therapist helps clear the path for recovery by unblocking those trapped memories.

LFS therapists Ben Czyz and Cyndi Muhlbauer wanted to see if they could actually measure the progress of clients using EMDR. In January of 2011, they started working with LFS clients with significant trauma issues. To measure, they had each client take the brief “Trauma Bond Index” questionnaire both before, immediately after, and one month following EMDR treatment.

The results have been clinically significant, consistently showing ALL clients who rated their trauma levels very high at the beginning showed significant and measurable improvement, even months after returning to standard therapy. Some of these clients had been struggling with the same trauma for years prior to EMDR. Cyndi estimates that many accomplished in two to three months what would have taken two to three years with standard therapy.

Ben and Cyndi have already talked about this on The Kim Foundation's “Not Alone” Radio Program and have been asked to publish their results to the professional journal EMDRIA. The program just received a \$11,500 grant from the Community Health Endowment of Lincoln to train two more therapists in EMDR for the LFS Lincoln office. ■



*LFS therapists Ben Czyz and Cyndi Muhlbauer with an EMDR machine. Lights travel across the front, which the client focuses their eyes on. This helps clients use their brain bilaterally and process traumatic memories.*

## LFS Honored by PRSA-Nebraska

In December 2012, the LFS' Public Relations staff received six awards from the Public Relations Society of America, Nebraska Chapter (PRSA-NE). The LFS 2011 Annual Report and the 120th Anniversary Video both won Awards of Excellence, while the Connections newsletter and the video



Jeff Jensen  
(Creative Design Manager) and  
Bev Carlson  
(Director of Public Relations)

produced for the Fremont fundraiser each won Awards of Merit. ■

## Have you seen the stories about LFS in the Council Bluffs newspaper lately?

Since January, LFS' Public Relations Director has been a guest columnist for the Daily Nonpareil. Monthly articles have focused on programs at the Pottawattamie County Center

**THE DAILY  
NONPAREIL**

for Healthy Families®: Nurturing Parenting Classes, the RSafe® Program, the Diaper Drive. You can still find most of these stories online at [southwestiowanews.com](http://southwestiowanews.com) and search for "Bev Carlson." ■

# Diaper Derby

Luv's® and Huggies® for Lutheran Family Services

This February was all about the "bottom line" at eight Omaha area churches. Congregations spent a month collecting diapers and cash to buy diapers for Lutheran Family Services' Centers for Healthy Families.

All total, the churches collected 43,056 diapers for children and their families. This will bring great budget relief to the Centers, since diapers are the number one choice of families participating in the incentive programs. Such incentives keep young parents engaged in therapy and parenting classes, giving them the hope and faith they need to be successful.

Using our "Diapers to Dollars" formula, this equates to 2013 budget relief of \$8,611!

The 2013 "Golden Huggie" award goes to...drumroll please: **St. Michael Lutheran Church in Omaha**. The eight other participants were Augustana Lutheran, Holy Cross, Kountze Memorial, Lord of Love, Shepherd of the Hills, St. Thomas Lutheran, St. Timothy's Lutheran and Salem Evangelical Lutheran.

Rejoice Lutheran did its own drive in April, and brought in another 11,000 diapers. And between Mother's Day and Father's Day, Council Bluffs and Fremont churches are holding drives.

In 2012, the three LFS Centers for Healthy Families (North Omaha, Council Bluffs, and Fremont) served 1165 parents (moms & dads), 1199 children under five, 1690 children under 18, and 263 pregnant women. 150,000 diapers are needed to support all three centers.



St. Michael Lutheran Church delivering diapers to the North Omaha Center for Healthy Families®



*At Ease® staff accepting Metro Community College /Joining Forces Award*

## Growing At Ease® Program honored

The LFS At Ease® program continues expanding to meet the growing needs of returning military, veterans and their families.

Lincoln services started Monday, March 11, and hiring to provide services to our North Platte office is complete. In Lincoln, therapy services will be offered all day on Monday and Friday, with plans to soon offer employment and peer support as well.

The staff of At Ease® was recently honored with an "Operation Joining Forces Award" from Metro Community College (see photo, left) for its partnership in connecting military families with resources they need.

## A Legacy of Kindness

### Major Gift to Benefit Children

Inez Mortensen was deeply concerned about the hungry and the hurting. She wanted everyone to be able to live an active life, to the best of their abilities. She wanted a cure for cancer.

And when she died in 2012, she wanted her legacy, and that of her brother Christian, to be one that provided a better future for children, especially those who were disabled or had been abused.

So, within their estate they left a \$50,000 gift

to Lutheran Family Services. This gift will go to programs that honor the Mortensens' wishes.

Inez Mortensen was a longtime and very active member of Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church in Omaha. She worked at Metropolitan Utilities District for 44 years. After retiring, Inez continued to volunteer at the Tip Top Thrift Shop in Benson, where all of the proceeds go to help at-risk youth. Her brother Christian died in 2003. ■



*Inez Mortensen*

## New Vice President for Children, Families and Community Services

### Todd Reckling Promoted

Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska is happy to welcome Todd Reckling to the Executive Team.

Todd came to LFS in September of 2012 where he began as a case manager and housing specialist working with newly arrived refugees, secondary migrants and human trafficking victims.

Prior to LFS, Todd was the Director of the Division of Children and Family Services for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. He has advocated for safety, permanency and well-being for children, youth and families since 1992.

Todd is a graduate of Creighton University and earned his MPA in Public Administration from UNO in 2006.

Under Todd's leadership, LFS is positioned to respond to the needs of children and families statewide.



*Todd Reckling*



# Special Food Drive for LFS Refugees

*LFS partners with Catholic Charities to serve families*

On Thursday, April 18, a mobile food pantry was held in Omaha for a very special population: former refugees. Lutheran Family Services (LFS) worked with Catholic Charities to identify eligible participants – and together assisted 200 families, totaling 894 individuals from nine different ethnicities.

The families picked up the extra groceries after their English classes at Yates Community Center. Twenty volunteers from Methodist College helped fill boxes full of culturally-appropriate food, including perishables like fresh vegetables. A number of the English teachers said this was wonderful and much appreciated by their families. Most recipients were smiling, but some were tearfully grateful.

“We are so pleased to be able to help this unique group, especially in being able to provide the foods that are familiar to their cultures,” said Linda Butkus, Catholic Charities Community Services Director.

Kara Tofte, Coordinator of the LFS International Center of the Heartland, stated, “Catholic Charities is a wonderful partner in serving Nebraska’s refugee population. We truly appreciate their willingness to create this special mobile pantry for so many of our clients.” Catholic Charities provides many mobile pantries for the needy throughout the community each year, but this is the first one for this special population. Volunteers distributed over 6,000 pounds (three tons) of food. ■

# Stories of New Neighbors Coming!

*LFS works with ADL to tell survival stories*

The stories are really rather miraculous. The man who once lived in a tent camp, who runs a grocery store and restaurant in Omaha is now hiring other refugees! The mother from Somalia with seven children who now serves as an interpreter. The woman from Iraq who once served as a translator for the US Army. She was granted asylum and then worked at Walmart until she was ready for a teaching position. Now you can learn more about these former refugees through a collaboration between LFS and the Anti-Defamation League. The articles will be in the Omaha Jewish Press and LFS publications.



The Htoo Family arriving at Eppley Airfield.  
Photo courtesy Mark Davis/Omaha World-Herald.



# One family helps another adjust

*Omahans know something of the trials endured by newcomers from refugee camp*

*By Erin Grace. Originally published in the Omaha World-Herald on April 8, 2013. Reprinted with permission.*

## Welcome to America.

Here's how to lock your door. Let's practice.

Here is the stove. Turn it on like this. Always turn it off.

The shower is here. This is hot, this is cold. Flush your used toilet paper. Do not throw it away.

These are baby wipes. These are diapers. These are bottles. These are toys, beds, lamps, the thermostat.

It is 1 in the morning, and two days of travel from a Thailand refugee camp are finally over for the Htoo family. Peh Htoo and wife, Ka Na Htoo, and their four children, ages 8 years to 14 months, have landed in Omaha and are settling into their new apartment.

This family is weary. They have endured conditions unimaginable to most of us: huts made of banana leaves and bamboo. No electricity or running water. A fire that killed 60 people.

Now they are in Omaha, confronting a lifestyle and culture that, beyond foreign, requires quick adaptation.

But here to help is a local family, people who have firsthand experience as strangers in a strange land.

Attorneys Stu and Dari Dornan are working with Lutheran Family Services to resettle the family.

The couple's travels to Romania and Russia to adopt five of their nine children have taught them

about the world and the needs of traumatized people.

The Dornans don't know a word of the Htoo family's language, nor do they know much about the forests of Myanmar from which generations of ethnic Karen fled, nor do they know what it's like to live with your family in a hut.

They do know something about inexorable waits — it took two visits to

Russia to bring home son Nikita. They do know something about paperwork rigmarole, given the complicated international adoption process.

The Htoos, like refugees worldwide, had to complete applications, pass background checks and wait two years, if they're lucky, to get a ticket to the United States.

Now they're here. And despite the hour, the cold weather and the first lesson about America — car seats, an unhappy discovery for baby Moo Ta Lay Say — the Htoos are relieved.

Grateful, they say through the interpreter, "Jester," an Omaha artist and ethnic Karen who was a refugee himself.

Jester says Peh Htoo is thrilled.

"He's never dreamed this before,"

Jester interprets inside the two-bedroom, two-bath apartment near Benson Park.

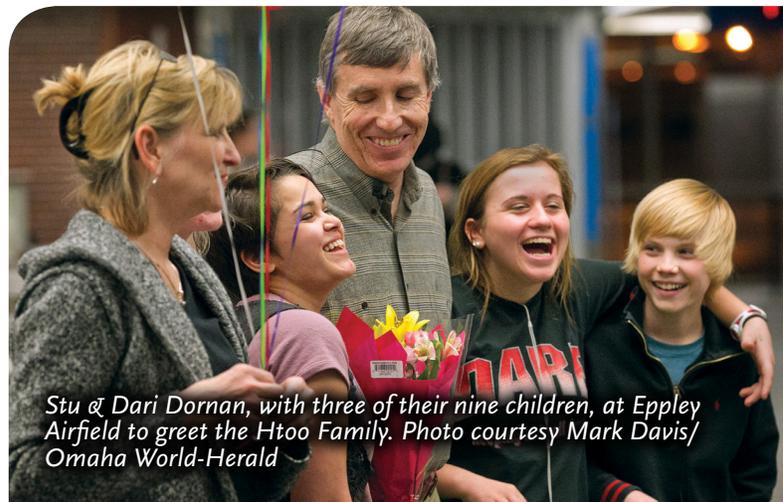
It's tight for a family of six. Yet it's four times their space in Thailand.

The Dornans found it, furnished it and stocked the pantry with donations and their own contributions.

One of the Dornan teens lets it slip that the family dropped \$500 at a dollar store.

"We went to Family Dollar with our list," Dari says, "and we just piled up."

The result is practical and lovely. A fully furnished living room. A little plate, fork, spoon and yellow sippy cup on the high chair tray. Beds, one with a pink Disney Princess spread. Hair barrettes and ribbons in the medicine cabinet, Legos in the toy bin. Fish sauce, oyster sauce and hot chili sauce above the sink.



Stu & Dari Dornan, with three of their nine children, at Eppley Airfield to greet the Htoo Family. Photo courtesy Mark Davis/Omaha World-Herald

# CONNECT WITH US

## Gift Options

- Cash Gifts
- Bequests or Estate Gifts
- Gifts of Stock
- Gifts of Grain
- Donate Online
- Designate Thrivent Choice Dollars to LFS
- Employer Matching Gifts

## Engagement Options

- Volunteer as a group, at your workplace or church, to sponsor a refugee family
- Participate in a diaper drive or donate new items for children under five to the Centers for Healthy Families
- Join the “Forever Families Guild” or “Fremont Family Friends”
- Donate your professional skills to help a veteran or child aging out of foster care

## Stay Connected with LFS

- Become a Facebook fan of Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska—[facebook.com/LFSNEB](https://facebook.com/LFSNEB)
- Follow us on Twitter—[@LFSofNebraska](https://twitter.com/LFSofNebraska)
- Join our LinkedIn network—[linkedin.com/company/lutheran-family-services-of-nebraska](https://linkedin.com/company/lutheran-family-services-of-nebraska)
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- Sign up for email updates—[www.LFSneb.org](http://www.LFSneb.org)

When you share your email with Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska it allows us to send you important information, stories and community updates electronically. We are able to be better stewards of our resources by eliminating some printing and mailing costs.



Lutheran Family Services settles the most refugees in Nebraska. It coordinates with families or nonprofits to “sponsor” the families. It’s unusual, said spokeswoman Bev Carlson, for an individual family to step in like this.

Stu Dornan, a prominent defense attorney who formerly served as the Douglas County attorney and was in the FBI, sits on the organization’s board of directors.

He and Dari, an attorney for Northern Natural Gas, asked to sponsor a family. The experience, he said, would be good for their children still at home: Matt, 18, Edita, 17, Maddie, 16, Kelly, 16, and Nikita, 13.

Their adopted children have scant memories of their homelands, having come to the United States to live at ages 7, 6 and 3.

Edita, who came from Romania, remembers balloons and welcome-home signs. She also razzed her mother about her coming-home outfit.

“I was wearing,” she groaned, “an American flag shirt.”

Kelly made the Htoos’ welcome-home sign. She was a bit unsure about how accurately she had captured the Karen language, which looks like bubbles and squiggles. “I hope,” she said, “it says, ‘Welcome to America.’”

That first hour at the Htoos’ new home was a blur of safety instructions and people.

Karen relatives and friends poured in, bringing a steamer of cooked rice and other hot food. One Karen friend carried an iPad, capturing everything on video.

The four Htoo kids, all in shorts, scattered among the rooms. Three-year-old Nee Gay Doh Mya, the only boy, immediately plopped in front of colorful toy bins. Mar Naw Soe, 6, combed Strawberry Shortcake’s pink hair, and Salo Lay Htoo, 8, let Edita paint her nails.

“You’re very lucky,” Jester the interpreter told the young children’s parents. “Some people don’t have sponsors.”

The Htoos are most likely

traumatized by life in the Thai camp, the fire and the globe-crossing move, Lutheran Family Services workers say.

And there is a grief in leaving the familiar and starting over. Peh Htoo and Ka Na Htoo looked beat. Dari Dornan fretted about buying diapers that were too small. Stu Dornan watched and listened.

As they so often do, children led the way in bridging the formidable gaps between the two families.

The Dornan teens seemed to know what their new friends needed. They knelt to be eye level with the children. They offered toys, crayons, paper. They tied balloons to the children’s wrists, held the baby and showed how toy cars work.

Mar Naw Soe grabbed two teddy bears and brushed their fur. She carefully wrapped the arms of the bigger bear around the body of the smaller bear in a hug.

Satisfied, she went on to explore her new home. ■



## TIMES CHANGE~HOPE ENDURES

120 Years of Service 1892-2012



2012 Annual Report

2012 ANNUAL REPORT NOW AVAILABLE  
at [www.LFSneb.org](http://www.LFSneb.org), or contact us  
at [info@LFSneb.org](mailto:info@LFSneb.org) or  
(402) 591-5063 for a copy.

# Thank you for your generosity!

**give**  
To Lincoln Day  
May 16, 2013  
LINCOLN COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

**M**any thanks for your generous giving during "Give to Lincoln Day" and "Omaha Gives!" These two events were held by the Lincoln Community Foundation and the Omaha Community Foundation, respectively. Each was a 24-hour

online fundraising drive for hundreds of not-for-profits in those two communities, complete with matching funds.

Not including matching funds, during these two events exactly \$21,000 was raised for the children, families and individuals served by Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska!

We at LFS are humbled by the generosity of those in the Omaha and Lincoln communities. Thank you for your care for and investment in the people of Nebraska!

**OMAHA GIVES!**  
a 24-hour charitable challenge

## 2013 Events Calendar

Tuesday, June 11—  
**My Favorite Things**  
Fundraising Dinner & Auction  
Fremont Golf Club, Fremont

Saturday, June 22—  
**World Refugee Day**  
Benson High School, Omaha

Sunday, September 15—  
**Faith in Action® Dinner**  
Embassy Suites, LaVista

Saturday, October 26—  
**Omaha's Great Pumpkin**  
Village Pointe Roundabout,  
Omaha

Thursday, November 7—  
**Wicker & Wine®**  
Mid-America Center,  
Council Bluffs

