



Lutheran Family Services
of Nebraska, Inc.

Connections

Spring 2015

"A great Lincoln
partnership, and
another step toward
being the healthiest
community in the nation."
– Mayor Chris Beutler
Lincoln, NE

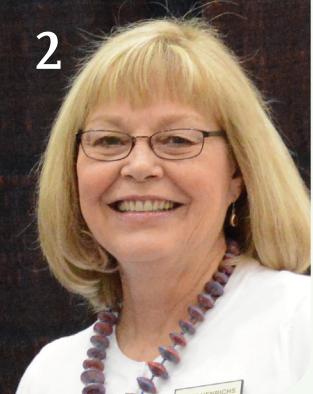
Health 360

SM

A Partnership of Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska and People's Health Center

pp. 4-5





Message from the President & CEO

Welcome to spring! As we are moving quickly into the new year, I find myself taking a few moments to reflect on how evolutionary the last twelve months have been!

On February 2nd, LFS launched a major new integrated care clinic in Lincoln called Health 360SM. The clinic is a partnership with People's Health Center created specifically to save lives. Together we are now removing the barriers to primary health care that plague so many of our behavioral health clients. One statistic really tells their story – **those with a mental health diagnosis die 25 years earlier than everyone else.** Now, in our Lincoln office, mental health and physical health can be diagnosed and integrated care can begin in the same visit.

At this time last year, LFS was just assuming delivery of behavioral health core services from Lancaster County. As of the end of 2014, LFS is now providing direct client services to over 1,700 of the most vulnerable people in that area. We are so thankful for the visionary guidance of the Community Health Endowment of Lincoln and so many others in the health care community who have opened the doors to, as Mayor Chris Beutler said, “....make Lincoln the healthiest city in the country.” We are excited to be their partner!

There is so much to be thankful for...so many blessings I can't list them all here, but I welcome you to learn more in this issue of *Connections*. LFS is blessed by your support of the work that we do at Lutheran Family Services. Your prayers, gifts and volunteer hours are a major part of every single victory – every person who finds hope, every child who finds safety, every family who finds peace and well-being – you are a part of their celebration!

Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Ruth Henrichs
President & CEO

Connections

President & CEO
Ruth Henrichs

Vice President of Development
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We welcome your feedback at (402) 591-5063 or email info@LFSneb.org

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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.



Like many children who have been in the foster care system, Austin* has experienced many traumatic events and exponential loss. In his short ten years, he has lived in multiple homes, both in foster care and with biological family members. He has endured abuse and neglect. His biological parents struggled with drug addiction and were unable to provide a safe home for him. When extensive efforts to reunify Austin with his birth family and extended family failed, Austin was placed with Michelle and Brian Brown.*

On the day Austin came home with them, the case worker told Michelle to “take him home and treat him as yours.”

Michelle responded, “He already is ours.”

Michelle and Brian soon fell totally in love with Austin and wanted him to become a permanent member of their family. The Browns advocated for Austin, getting him the resources he needed. Michelle, Brian and Austin have experienced many successes as they worked to become one family. But there was one challenge they weren't quite sure how to tackle...

right turn® Adoption Strong

By Brenna Poindexter

Right Turn® Parent2Parent and Outreach Coordinator

iStock/kali9

Austin is a registered member of a Native American tribe. Michelle, Brian and their older three children are Caucasian. The Browns wanted to honor Austin's cultural heritage, but weren't quite sure where to begin. When one of Austin's cousins petitioned the Tribal Court for contact with him, Michelle and Brian called Right Turn® for guidance on how to move forward.

While attorneys addressed legal matters, Right Turn® staff created an extensive plan to guide the family through Austin's tribe and culture. Recently, Austin was able to meet his younger brother for the first time. "They played Wii and went swimming. It went really well," says Michelle. Austin also has a close relationship with his two older biological siblings. All together, Austin now has six brothers and sisters! ■

Such success stories are commonplace at Right Turn®. Created after the Safe Haven crisis of 2008, Right Turn® was formed to address the challenges faced by families who have adopted children from the foster care system. Today,

Right Turn® has become a 24/7 resource for all of Nebraska's adoptive families, including those formed by domestic or international adoptions.

Connections that come naturally to children being raised in their birth family do not often come so easily to children being raised in adoptive families. Navigating the situations parents face when trying to help their child build a positive racial and cultural identity is just one of the ways Right Turn® can help. Because Right Turn® is a collaboration between Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska and Nebraska Children's Home Society, families also have access to wrap-around services. These are especially important for those families where children need specialized care, such as those who have experienced or witnessed traumatic events. ■

Right Turn® provides ongoing training statewide for parents and adoption professionals. Learn more about Right Turn® at RightTurnNE.org or by calling (888) 667-2399.

* All names have been changed

right turn®
Now Serving
All Nebraska
Adoptive Families

Effective December 1, 2014, Right Turn® began serving ALL Nebraska adoptive families—international, domestic, private, step-parent and foster adoptive families. This expansion occurred when the state of Nebraska renewed the Right Turn® contract for another five years.

The adoption community in Nebraska is strong, and Right Turn® staff seek to advocate for the special interests of adoptive families and to connect adoptive and biological families to one another. Since its inception in 2010, Right Turn® has evolved to best serve families and their children with six core services:

- Permanency Support
- Respite Care Connections
- Parent2Parent Network
- Mental Health Connections
- Training and Support Groups
- Family Activities

Within Right Turn®, there is a place for every adoptive and guardianship family in Nebraska.

Right Turn® staff takes what is learned from the families served and works to help those families build resources and tools needed to provide safe, committed and loving homes.

Learn more about Right Turn® at www.RightTurnNE.org or by calling (888) 667-2399. ■

Right Turn® is a collaboration between Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska and Nebraska Children's Home Society.



Rendering courtesy
Clark Enersen Partners

Health 360SM

Integrated Care Comes Full Circle

It was a news conference five years in the making. All of Lincoln's media, and some Omaha media, joined Lincoln's mayor and other community leaders at the Community Health Endowment of Lincoln (CHE). So much excitement – so much to celebrate!

A new, highly-visible, fully-integrated health care clinic is coming to Lincoln. **Health 360SM** is a partnership between Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska (LFS) and People's Health Center (PHC). The transformation of the former OfficeMax building at 23rd and O Streets is underway and expected to be completed in January 2016. Health 360SM integrated services have begun at the current LFS location at 2201 South 17th

Street. LFS behavioral health clients can now see a primary care provider from PHC during their visit. They also have access to an on-site pharmacy, which ensures access to critical medications.

Lori Seibel, CHE President and CEO, said, **"We wanted a place where a client, regardless of their ability to pay, could be seen without stigma, without walking into a door that had 'Mental Health Clinic' written above it....that client could walk in and receive care from a team of providers who understood the interconnectivity between the mind and the body."**

The connection between physical and mental health cannot be ignored. Statistics can be grim for behavioral health clients who don't have access to regular medical care. **On average, they**

die 25 years sooner than the rest of the population.¹

Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler believes this is a project that will not only increase access and reduce health care costs, but also create a safer community. One more great Lincoln partnership, he says, that's making Lincoln the "healthiest community in the nation."

Kerry Kernen is the Chief Operating Officer for Health 360SM as well as the Southeast Regional Administrator for Lutheran Family Services. She emphasized that **while the clinic will be a safety net for the most vulnerable, it truly is open to everyone.** Kim Russel, CHE Board Member and President and CEO of Bryan Health, pointed out that this partnership will

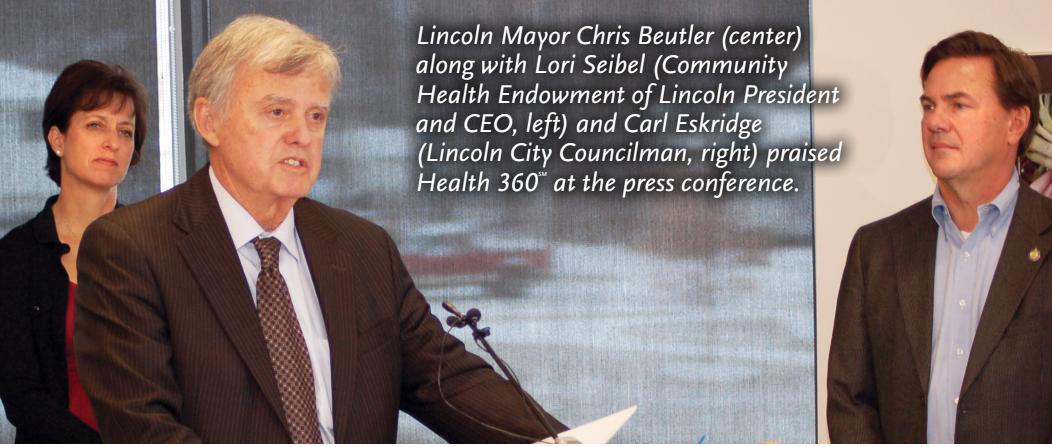
What is integrated care?

Integrated care provides a medical home where clients can receive behavioral and/or primary health services at the same location during the same appointment. Additional services such as dental care or a pharmacy are often provided. Clients enter through one door, reducing stigma related to care delivery.

Why 23rd and O?

The former OfficeMax building is situated along a major thoroughfare with full access to bus lines, sidewalks and trails. It is within walking distance of Downtown Lincoln, the University of Nebraska, cultural/ethnic centers and schools. It contains 23,000 feet of usable space, enough to accommodate future expansion if needed.

Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler (center) along with Lori Seibel (Community Health Endowment of Lincoln President and CEO, left) and Carl Eskridge (Lincoln City Councilman, right) praised Health 360™ at the press conference.



Lori Seibel, Community Health Endowment of Lincoln President and CEO, addressing the media and interested community members at the press conference.

play a large role in the city's goal of creating a medical home for every resident. Brad Meyer, CEO of People's Health Center, stated this partnership can help ensure that patients who need mental health treatment or medications will get it.

Judy Halsted of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department thanked Lutheran Family Services—not only for taking the lead on Health 360SM, but for assuming core behavioral health services for 1,700 Lancaster County residents in February 2014. "You have truly made a difference for a lifetime," said Halsted.

Carl Eskridge is the Nebraska Deputy State Ombudsman. He is also the Lincoln City Councilmember for

the 23rd and O Street area. "This is a tremendous transformation of space, but just think how it will transform people's lives. Think about all the good that's going to be going on inside there."

The implementation of integrated care is a fairly new, but successful concept. Interest in the project picked up news interest as far away as Oregon and Indiana. You can see more by visiting the dedicated website at www.health360ne.org. ■

¹ Svendsen, D., Singer, P., Foti, M. E., & Mauer, B. (2006). *Morbidity and mortality in people with serious mental illness* (p. 87). Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) Medical Directors Council.

How is Health 360SM staffed, and how many patients do you expect?

The clinic currently has one Nurse Practitioner, one Licensed Independent Social Worker, a part-time Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner and nursing support staff. By the end of 2016, it will have a total of three Family Practice providers. It is estimated that there will be 20,000 medical patient visits and 12,000 behavioral health visits at Health 360SM in the first three years. ■



Kerry Kernen

Meet Kerry Kernen, Health 360SM Chief Operating Officer

Kerry Kernen, MPA, MSN, RN, provides day-to-day leadership at Health 360SM.

She is also the LFS Regional Administrator for Behavioral Health for Southeast Nebraska.

Kernen, an Omaha native, recently returned from Hudson, Ohio, where she worked for Summit County Public Health since 1999 as Assistant Director and Chief Nursing Officer of the Community Health Division.

Kernen's experience has focused on advancing community health initiatives, clinic operations and emergency preparedness. Most recently, she provided oversight in the development of the Summit County Public Health Care Coordination Unit, advancing the Million Hearts initiative through public health/provider partnerships and assisted with building the Adult Protective Services-Care Coordination community model.

Kernen graduated from Midland University (Fremont, NE) with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and from Kent State University (Kent, OH) with both a Masters in Public Administration and a Masters of Science in Nursing. ■

Wicker & Wine® Fund Drive a Success

100% of proceeds support program services

Every year, over 350 children and their families come to the Pottawattamie County Center for Healthy Families® in Council Bluffs. Once a week, twice a week. Sometimes just to seek encouragement. At the Center, these highly-stressed families with young children find a community, but more importantly – **they find the tools they need to break generational cycles of child abuse and poverty.** Through education and assistance, parents find support to rewrite a better future for their children. Through an incentive program that rewards positive parenting decisions, moms and dads are able to purchase the items necessary to raise a child. Critical items, like diapers, shoes or winter coats.

For each child who comes to the Center, Lutheran Family Services (LFS) must raise \$350 per year to sustain the program. Historically, most of that investment came from the annual Wicker and Wine® auction. But in 2014, a decision was made to forgo the event. Instead, LFS conducted a “No Overhead” Fund Drive. Former Council Bluffs Mayor Tom Hanafan was the chair of the campaign, which **raised \$42,211.** LFS extends our tremendous gratitude to all who contributed. Donations to the Pottawattamie County Center are accepted year-round, so if you missed the drive, you can still invest in the lives of Pottawattamie County children! ▀

Thank you for investing in children and families!

SAVE THE DATE FOR WICKER & WINE: NOV. 5, 2015

**Tom Hanafan
with Jazmine, a
Center client**



FANDANGO: ALL STARS, EVERY ONE

“Dear Lord, thank You for all the wonderful and caring people who are here tonight. Without all these great people helping children like me, it would not be possible for them to have a loving family and great home....”

-TJ Hodgson, 10-year-old LFS Client

TJ Hodgson stole the show in so many ways at this year’s Fandango®. The fourth grader delivered a beautiful blessing that he wrote himself. He was also a video star. His story of overcoming the brutality of his first five years of life was a centerpiece of the evening’s program. In the video, he talked about how special his therapist was, “Because it’s hard to talk about my past life, and instead of just saying ‘Uh-huh,’ she listens to me without getting upset or angry.”

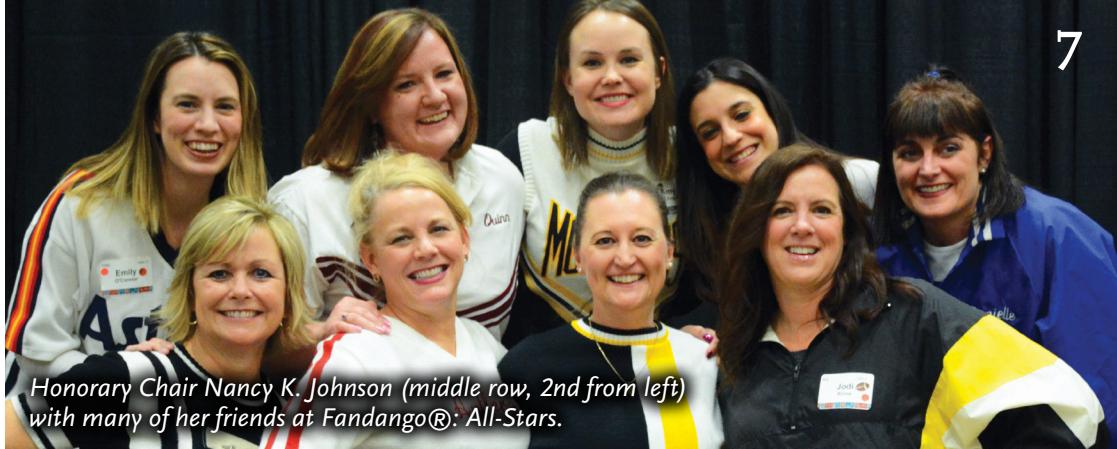
TJ’s history of foster care, adoption and RSafe® sexual abuse trauma treatment was one of three stories highlighting Children Services programs at Lutheran Family Services (LFS). Others included the Home Visitation Program and In-Home Services, which provide early intervention and prevention programming that keeps children safe and families together.

Guests were inspired! With a record crowd, the silent auction and a live auction masterfully facilitated by Scott Moore, the evening raised over \$120,000 for the 23 Children Services programs at LFS. LFS Board Member and State Farm Agent Anthony Anderson presented a \$5,000 check to Jessyca Vандеркоу of LFS Children Services to cover driver’s education and initial insurance costs for teens in LFS foster care programs. Emcee Mary Nelson of KMTV’s Morning Blend donned shoulder pads and even LFS President and CEO Ruth Henrichs wore her grandson’s football jersey. But the award for best sports attire went to Jeff and Julene Warren who came as rodeo clowns! They won a punching bag, which they quickly donated back to LFS to be auctioned off too!

One of the very top live auction items was the beautiful shoe tree overflowing with sneakers and boots for little feet. King of Kings Lutheran Church filled the “branches” with 125 pairs of shoes for the LFS Centers for Healthy Families. It was auctioned off for \$3,500, then immediately donated back. This event is a crucial piece of fundraising for the Centers, which provide incentive programming and therapy to some of the most vulnerable children and families in our community. ▀



TJ Hodgson with emcee Mary Nelson



Honorary Chair Nancy K. Johnson (middle row, 2nd from left), with many of her friends at Fandango®: All-Stars.



Chip and Erin James, Michelle James, Dr. Lawrence and Mrs. Jeannette James, Deb Schaap and Allison James



Joy Stevens, John Fraser, Susan Westcott, Debbie Fraser, Mike Westcott and Spencer Stevens

Anthony Anderson presenting a \$5,000 check to Jessyca Vандеркоу of LFS Children Services.



Mary Malliard, Liz Barton and Dr. Mark Malliard



Nancy K. Johnson: Champion for Children

Nancy K. Johnson is a highly-respected real estate professional in Omaha with a heart for helping others, especially children. That is why Lutheran Family Services (LFS) was very proud to have Nancy serve as the Honorary Chair of this year's Fandango®: All Stars event. As president of the LFS Forever Families Guild, she inspires other women to support the life-changing human care of LFS.

Nancy has attended countless charity events, served on numerous boards and has dedicated a tremendous amount of her time to helping and empowering those in need. Nancy's passion for LFS programs is clear. She understands the value of the incentive programs at the Centers for Healthy Families. She believes in the LFS philosophy of teaching, empowering and encouraging healthy parenting as a community investment with powerful, long-term impacts. Most importantly, Nancy believes the Centers are a model worth championing, convinced that years from now, the babies, toddlers and preschoolers in these programs will go to school, ready to learn! ■



Nancy K. Johnson



THE GREAT PUMPKIN RISES AGAIN!



...and this time? It was the greatest Omaha's Great Pumpkin EVER.

In fact, for the first time in the history of the event, organizers actually ran out of carving pumpkins thirty minutes early. The beautiful weather brought hundreds of families to Village Pointe to enjoy the fun. Little ones gave their costumes a trial run and got a head start on filling up their candy buckets. High school athletes competed for the title of pumpkin pie eating champions...plus an amazing magician, superheroes and live music, all added up to one very positive way for families to learn more about foster care and adoption.

Omaha's Great Pumpkin was created six years ago to "Shine the Light on Foster Care and Adoption." Each pumpkin on the tree represented one child waiting in foster care, but eligible for adoption. Currently, 1,220 children need a permanent family, and over half of those children are over 12 years old.

The lighting ceremony of the pumpkin tree was especially inspiring. One guest said, "We have been thinking about becoming foster parents but didn't know where to turn – is there someone we can talk to?" Making that connection underscores the purpose of this event – raising awareness of the need for quality foster and adoptive families for Nebraska's children.

The event is organized by members of the Forever Families Guild, which provides year-round support to Children Services at Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska. ▀

Hilton Omaha embraces 'simple solutions' to welcome refugee workers

By Robyn Murray, Guest Writer

When Ubdi Qube came to work at the Hilton Hotel in Omaha, she knew she had a problem. Staff at Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska's Refugee Education and Employment Program referred her there for a housekeeping position, and when she arrived for her interview, she watched as workers crossed the gleaming marble floor of the hotel lobby, stacked towels in their hands. Bronze carts in front—each dressed neatly in trim black and brown uniforms. Qube knew the short-sleeved shirts and plain black slacks wouldn't work for her. As a Muslim refugee from Somalia, her religion and culture called for modesty in public spaces—long skirts, full-length sleeves, and veiled head scarves—traditional hijab.

She wondered how she would fit in.

Her interview went well. The hotel staff didn't mind that her daughter Aniso was by her side, serving as interpreter. After she got the job, she had to ask. "Could you please make my shirt a little bit longer, my skirt a little bit loose?" Aniso recalled her saying, "I have to wear hijab. Is that a problem?"

As it turned out, Qube didn't have to worry. "We're in the hospitality business and we want to be able to encompass all people here, make everybody feel welcome to work here," said Helen Nance, assistant director of Human Resources at Hilton Omaha. The staff soon found a simple solution: a three-quarter length skirt that could be worn over slacks. Perfect. "It worked for Qube, worked for us, everyone was happy," said Taleena Stanbrough, director of Human Resources.

Stanbrough said the Hilton is used to accommodating different needs of its workers, whether they are religious,

cultural or related to a disability. In the past, the hotel has found solutions for pregnant employees who needed alternative work to rest their feet, deaf workers who needed sign language interpreters during interviews, or visually impaired employees who relied on braille to work. It's all part of the job, Stanbrough said, and in fact it benefits the hotel in the long-term. "If you're showing that you're willing to make these accommodations for them, they just have that much more respect for you as an employer," she said. **"They're happier here, and then they refer people to work here. So you just have a constant flow of qualified, happy people."**

"They're simple solutions," she added. "It's nothing that detracts from the work that they do. They understand the expectation of the job, just like we understand the expectation of their religion, or whatever it might be."

The solutions may seem simple to Stanbrough and Nance. But to Qube, it meant more. "She really loves working there," Aniso said, adding she was grateful to work at a welcoming place that accepted her for who she is. Aniso said she hopes other employers in Omaha will be willing to make small adjustments to hire refugees.

"They can do the job," she said. "The only problem is they just dress differently or they lack the English. But at least give them a chance." ■



Halwa Sofe, LFS AmeriCorps member, modeling the Hilton's adapted uniform

Nebraska's Warm Reception for Afghan and Iraqi Interpreters

For those interpreters who worked alongside American soldiers during the Iraqi and Afghanistan wars, life actually became even more dangerous after the troop withdrawals. The futures of these brave men and their families were at immediate risk. Because of this, these interpreters qualify for Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) issued by the U.S. government. An SIV fast-tracks an interpreter into the United States with refugee status. In 2014, Lutheran Family

Services (LFS) resettled over 80 people with SIV status. Half resettled to Lincoln, half stayed in Omaha. All are working hard to get established in new careers so they can become self-sufficient as soon as possible. A special *Omaha World-Herald* article about the challenges these heroes face

in America prompted an outpouring of support, including employment — their most critical need.

Afghan interpreters risked all for U.S., struggle in Omaha

The Terps gather in a small living room inside a low-rent apartment on Maple Street. There is an Afghan flag hanging on a wall, but no paintings or posters or medals for service to two governments. There is only a pot of steaming Afghan tea, and a plate of sweets that sit untouched on the coffee table, and seven young Afghan men — the Terps — leaning forward as they sit on every available chair.

These men are bound by a single, fateful decision. At some point in the past 13 years, they signed contracts to become interpreters. "Terps," in military lingo — for the U.S. military in Afghanistan.

That decision forced these men to flee their hometowns.

It led them to live in fear, and with good reason. Bounties had been placed on their heads, and these men threatened the lives of their parents, wives and children. And finally it led them to a government program, known as the special immigrant visa, that in the past year has quietly

See Hansen: Page 8



COLUMNIST



Generous Donors Brighten the Holidays



(left) **AOI Corporation** in Bellevue employs a large number of veterans and military family members. Randy Larson, AOI's Warehouse Manager, nominated the LFS At Ease program for its annual holiday gift. The \$1,650 went to help make the holidays much brighter for active military, veterans and their loved ones served through At Ease. Thank you to AOI Corporation for its generosity!

(l-r) *Marlene Knight, AOI VP of Furniture Division; Randy Larson; Paul Greenwell, At Ease Program Manager; Kathy Seaman, AOI HR and PR Manager.*



Each Christmas, **Thanksgiving! Lutheran Church of Bellevue** provides wrapped gifts for the children served by the North Omaha Center for Healthy Families®. This year, they provided two gifts for each child, over 500 gifts in all! The congregation also rented the Hope Skate center and provided all the food and supplies for the annual Christmas party for the North Omaha Center's families. Karen Harned (*above right*), Outreach Coordinator for Thanksgiving!, took part in this year's celebration, which gave families the opportunity to share their personal appreciation for all Thanksgiving! Lutheran Church does for the North Omaha Center.

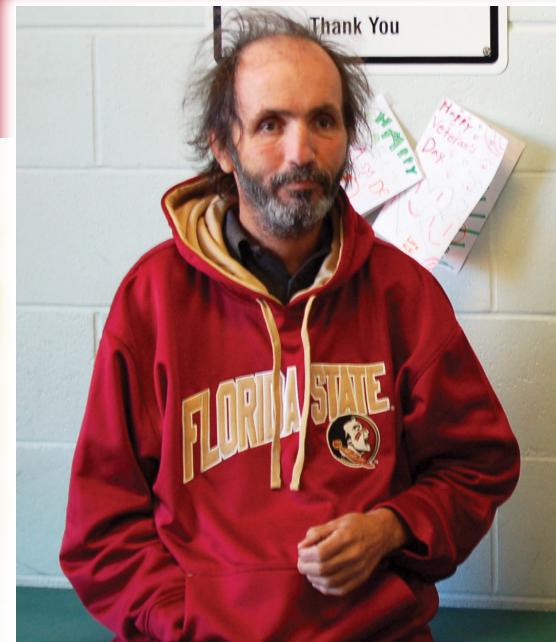


A BIG shout out to our friends at **CHI Health** in Omaha for again making sure that more than 100 vulnerable Omaha families had a turkey dinner on Thanksgiving. You can see the story by going to the LFS Nebraska YouTube page and searching "Thanksgiving" or by going to www.LFSneb.org/chi.



Christmas Angels delivered an outpouring of gifts, prayers and holiday spirit this year. Because of incredible volunteers like those at Lockwood Development, 313 children served by LFS were able to enjoy the season in a way they might not have had otherwise. One 17-year-old Burke High senior told her family she didn't want gifts for herself. Instead, she asked that all of her gifts go to a foster child. Children in foster care, as well as those being served in other LFS programs and the Centers for Healthy Families, all had much brighter holidays because of these Christmas Angels!

The vast majority of families served by LFS are trying to climb out of multi-generational poverty. They are working tirelessly to change their lives and break the cycle. Christmas Angels provided these families with the gift of hope!



Many Lincoln behavioral health clients benefited from an incredible outpouring of generosity and kindness when one client was featured on the front page of the *Lincoln Journal-Star*. Karl Hutchings (*above*) spent time with Cindy Kubrick-Lange as part of the paper's "Thanks4Giving" segment, which connected donors with those who could use their help. Karl hoped for a basketball and passes to play at the community center. Both requests were quickly filled. Others were gifted with warm pajamas and slippers, personal toiletry items and warm winter coats. Lincoln has a huge heart!

Giving Made Easy

There are three ways to give to LFS that are easy, painless and almost automatic. First, if you are a member of **Thrivent Financial**, you may have "Choice Dollars" that you can direct to LFS. To do this, you'll need to log on to Thrivent.com/choice or call (800) 847-4836 and designate your dollars to LFS. **Deadline is March 31, 2015.**

If you are an Amazon shopper, you should know that LFS is an "Amazon Smile" charity. If you shop through smile.amazon.com (*same shopping experience as amazon.com*) and designate Lutheran Family Services as your charity, LFS will receive a donation based on .5% of your purchases.

AND BRAND NEW! Baker's Supermarkets have a community giving platform called "Community Rewards." If you have a Baker's Plus card, you can log on to their website and choose LFS as your rewards recipient. **The LFS number is 11766.** Every time you shop with your card, LFS will receive a donation! ■





Addressing Childhood Trauma

Low-income children in Nebraska who need specialized trauma treatment will now be able to receive it at LFS, thanks to a \$30,000 grant from The Kim Foundation. The funds will pay for children who have witnessed or experienced violence or other trauma to receive EMDR (*Eye-Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing*), an approved and highly effective treatment for post-traumatic stress. ■

Untreated trauma can have life-long implications for a person's mental well-being. The earlier treatment can begin, the better. EMDR is used effectively with child abuse victims, including those who experience sexual violence. Statewide, LFS therapists are specially-trained to administer EMDR. The Omaha Community Foundation has also contributed \$10,000 to expand EMDR training to more of LFS' children's therapists. ■

Recognition for Best Practices and Accountability

Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska (LFS) recently received two new important accreditations. First, LFS is now fully accredited by the Better Business Bureau, meeting all *20 Standards for Charity Accountability*, which include criteria for programming standards, financial transparency and reporting, governance and board leadership. LFS has also become a *Best Practices Partner* of the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM), which recognizes the LFS commitment to non-profit excellence. ■



Ruth Henrichs with NAM Program Director Todd Mercural-Chapman



LFS Chosen for New Refugee Mentoring Program

Lutheran Family Services (LFS) was recently selected to pilot *Careers and Connections*, a Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) program. *Careers and Connections* will support long-term career advancement for refugees by deepening their social connections. LFS is recruiting 30 mentors for 30 refugees to act as a job coaches, equipping the refugees to develop skills, identify long-term career goals, and create a plan to reach those goals.

At the program's formal launch on March 5, LIRS President and CEO Linda Hartke spoke of the importance of initiatives like *Careers and Connections*. "Refugees and immigrants are absolutely not a burden on our communities—they are an incredible asset," she remarked. "[The mentoring project] is really a superb opportunity for newcomers to learn from old hands in the community, and for old hands to see their city and their country through new eyes as well, and to build connections in the community that strengthen the fabric of our life together."

Thirteen matches have been made. During the event, these current mentee/mentor partners mingled and shared their experiences with others considering becoming involved in the program. LFS Program Development Officer Lacey Studnicka explained, "A lot of times refugees don't get a chance to dream, and this gives them that chance."

Do you have just one hour each week for 12 weeks? All eligible mentees speak English and have been in the US for at least three years. Please contact Lacey Studnicka with your interest (402) 536-3513 or email info@LFSneb.org. Thank you! ■



Sasse Family Supports Fremont Children and Families

Staff at the Fremont Rupert Dunklau Center for Healthy Families® were delighted to greet Senator Ben Sasse in early January. Nebraska's newest senator stopped by the Center with his 13-year-old daughter, Corrie, to drop off donations for the children and families served there. Senator Sasse and his family were preparing for their partial move to Washington (the family will commute between Fremont and Washington when Congress is in session) by delivering a crib, diapers and several other items that will be put to good use at the Center. "The Center has touched lives here in Fremont," said Sasse. "We want our kids to appreciate its investment in our community and see firsthand its work for others." The Rupert Dunklau Center is one of the three LFS Centers for Healthy Families that provide parenting education, support and incentives for families with children under the age of five. Its mission is to use early intervention and prevention programming to break the negative cycles that can lead to child abuse and neglect. ■

Rebuilding Homes and Hearts in Pilger

Generous donors made trauma treatment and therapy available for Nebraskans impacted by last summer's terrible storms, including the twin tornadoes that nearly destroyed Pilger. National organizations have been amazed by the community and statewide response to rebuild in Pilger, which has included thousands of volunteer hours and donations. Most recently the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Nebraska Synod designated \$100,000 specifically for construction. Donations to Lutheran Family Services were used to provide free therapy for those struggling in the aftermath. Through the end of 2014, individuals and families in six different counties requested vouchers and received the benefit of thirty sessions of professional trauma therapy. ■



Remembering Orphan Children in Fremont

A special section of Ridge Cemetery in Fremont is dedicated to the "Orphans of the Lutheran Orphans Home." Underneath the shading branches of a huge tree is the resting place for 56 boys and girls who lived and died in the early years of the orphanage (*the very beginnings of LFS*). Some are marked with just one name, "Mary" or simply "Infant 1912." Volunteers provide upkeep of this special memorial, and LFS is so grateful to students from Metropolitan Community College who took on the project this fall. The students spent three days (and their own funds) cleaning, digging, edging and placing new rock at the site. Our sincere thank you to these students who did such an excellent job honoring the memories of these children. ■

If you have a group who would like this as a regular project, please contact Christy Fiala at the Rupert Dunklau Center for Healthy Families®: cfiala@LFSneb.org or (402) 941-0075.



Communications Survey

Your response is very important!

Please return this survey using the remittance envelope in the center of this publication or take the online survey at www.LFSneb.org by April 30, 2015. Gathering this information is extremely valuable to us as we work to make wise decisions about our communications resources. THANK YOU!

1) Do you feel informed about LFS events and programs? Yes No

2) Please share a recommendation so LFS may better communicate with you: _____

3) How do you currently receive LFS information? (Please check all that apply)

- Email Connections Annual Report Church Website Other _____

4) Are you an LFS donor? Yes No

5) If you answered "yes" to #4, how often do you give?

- Monthly Yearly Occasionally When I receive an appeal in the mail
 When I receive an appeal via email Other _____

6) If you answered "yes" to #4, what motivates you to give to LFS? (Please check all that apply)

- Programs are important to me. Please list which programs _____
 Reputation of the organization I know my donation is well-spent
 Other _____

7) If you wanted to call LFS, how would you find the number for your local office?

- Online search on my computer Online search on my mobile device I have the number saved in my contact list
 Yellow Pages phone book Other _____

8) Do you use a paper phone book? Yes No

9) If you answered "yes" to #8, how often do you use it? Daily Weekly Monthly Yearly

10) Do you know how to reach someone at LFS if you have a question or need help? Yes No

11) Do you use social media? Yes No

Which ones? Facebook Twitter Pinterest Instagram Other _____

12) Do you follow LFS on social media? Yes No

13) *Connections*, the LFS magazine/newsletter, comes out 3-4 times per year. If we created a weekly or twice-monthly email newsletter, would you sign up for it? Yes No

14) How often would you like to hear from LFS?

- Weekly Twice each month Monthly Quarterly I hear plenty now, thanks...

15) What are your suggestions of topics you would like to learn more about? _____

A Catwalk for Children

It was a full night of fun, fashion and fabulous design. Best of all, it was for a great cause: the children and families served at the North Omaha Center for Healthy Families®!

Admission to the November 6 “Spotlight on Fashion” event was a donation of essential items for children like new socks, new underwear, diapers or winter coats. Cash donations were also accepted. The show was the brainchild of Interiors Joan and Associates, with partners Nouvelle Eve and McLovin’s store for men. The design studio at Interiors Joan and Associates was packed, and the pile of gifts was huge. Guests enjoyed the latest men’s and women’s fashions while being inspired by the magnificent surroundings and home furnishing ideas.

“Marrying the fashion industry with the interior design industry to create a unique event was a natural choice. Our fields have much in common and tend to attract a similar audience. **We also knew we wanted the event to fulfill a bigger purpose, and when the opportunity came to benefit Lutheran Family Services, everything fell into place,**” said Lindi Janulewicz, Marketing Director for Interiors Joan and Associates.

Mary Nelson of KMTV served as emcee for the evening, and Cheryl Murray of Lutheran Family Services explained how the donations would be used: “These are young parents who have come to us, asking for help. They are coming to parenting classes. They are coming to programs that are teaching good nutrition and financial planning. When it’s needed and appropriate, they are bringing in their children for therapy. They are doing the work to break negative cycles and build strong children and families. Your donation really does make a difference.”

Some of the kids were around when the donations were delivered to the North Omaha Center, and they put on their own little “fashion” show. Parents and staff unanimously praised the event, saying it is wonderful to know how much people care.

Huge thanks to Interiors Joan and Associates, Nouvelle Eve and McLovin for their leadership in reaching out to some of Omaha’s most vulnerable! ▀



Seth McMillan (*Owner, McLovin - A Store for Men*), Diane Gernstein (*Owner, Interiors Joan and Associates*), Nancy Pesavento, (*Owner, Interiors Joan and Associates*), Cheryl Murray (*LFS Development Officer*), Mary Nelson (*Co-Host, KMTV's The Morning Blend*) and Susie Keuck (*Owner, Nouvelle Eve*)



Below: Children modeling their new coats at the North Omaha Center for Healthy Families®.



Mark Your Calendar



give
To Lincoln Day
Thursday, May 28
givetolincoln.razoo.com

OMAHA GIVES!
powered by the Omaha Community Foundation
Wednesday, May 20 · omahagives24.org

Fremont Family Friends

An event supporting the Rupert Dunklau Center for Healthy Families®

Tuesday, June 9

Fremont Golf Club, Fremont

June is LFS giving month in LCMS-NE District congregations.

World Refugee Day

Saturday, June 20, Benson High School, Omaha

Faith in Action® Dinner

Sunday, September 13, Embassy Suites La Vista

Omaha's Great Pumpkin

October 24, Village Pointe Roundabout, Omaha

Wicker & Wine® Basket Auction

November 5, Council Bluffs, IA

December is LFS giving month
in LCMS-NE District and
ELCA-Nebraska Synod congregations

Lutheran Family Services

of Nebraska, Inc.

"Safety, Hope and Well-Being for All People"

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