

 Lutheran Family Services
of Nebraska, Inc.

BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU
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Connections

Spring 2017

- Providing a Nebraska welcome
- Expanding our Lincoln footprint
- 2016 event highlights

LFS 1892-2017
125

Investing in children & families for 125 years

Welcoming · Strengthening · Healing



Message from the President & CEO

Reflecting on 2016, I am struck by the commitment, courage and compassion of LFS staff and supporters who helped us serve over 17,000 clients! We saw incredible expansion of our human care footprint in Lincoln with the opening of the LFS/Health 360 Integrated Care Clinic, impacting over 8,000 lives. Nebraska and Western Iowa communities demonstrated outstanding support for our children's programs, and the LFS At Ease program began serving veterans inside Douglas County Corrections.

This year, LFS will face challenges including uncertainty around our refugee resettlement programs and state budget cuts that impact LFS children services. At the same time, I continue to be impressed with the moral courage and leadership demonstrated by both LFS staff and community supporters. In the following pages you will find stories of hope, of communities coming together, and of the incredible things that we can accomplish when we are committed to "loving our neighbor."

In 2017, LFS will celebrate several significant anniversaries—10 years of early intervention and prevention services for young children and families in Fremont; Nebraska's 150th birthday; the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation; and **the 125th Anniversary of LFS's founding!**

In preparing to celebrate this historic 125th Anniversary of LFS, we must not forget the long Lutheran heritage that has allowed us to serve with boldness, justice and commitment to our mission "to express God's love for all people." I hope you will join us!

Ruth Henrichs, President & CEO



Welcoming the Stranger

"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."

— Hebrews 13:2

Imagine starting over in a new country where you do not speak the language, do not know the laws, customs and culture, and have few possessions. Imagine needing to navigate the health system, enroll your children in school, and reach economic stability within 90 days. This is the experience of refugees who arrive in Nebraska and across the United States.

As people of faith, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska (LFS) stands in solidarity alongside refugees. We cannot forget who refugees are — they are parents and children who have lost everything. They flee discrimination, threats and violence in search of safety and a future of hope. Last year, LFS welcomed 1,020 refugees from 16 countries; 653 in Omaha and 367 in Lincoln.

LFS and Nebraska have long welcomed refugees and other "New Americans" to our state. In fact, LFS has resettled refugees since the 1970s when the first Vietnam refugees arrived.

This long history of welcome has been threatened by recent events. Executive Orders on refugee entry to the U.S. have significantly reduced refugee arrivals to Nebraska and the services that LFS provides. The Executive Orders paused almost all resettlement for four months and reduced by over half (from 110,000 to 50,000) the number of refugees who will be allowed into the U.S. this fiscal year.

While the number of new arrivals has been drastically reduced, the need for services for refugees who are already here in Nebraska continues. While we wait for the resettlement process in the U.S. to begin again, LFS will maintain critical integration programs—*cultural orientation, community integration activities, English-language and job training courses*—that create self-sufficiency for vulnerable refugee families.

Nebraska is better because of the hard work and contributions of the refugees who resettle here. They are customers in our stores and businesses, small business owners who pay taxes, and our neighbors who give to local churches and charities. Please go to LFSneb.org/supportrefugees to support refugee integration programs in Omaha and Lincoln. With your assistance, we can uphold Nebraska's commitment to welcome our new neighbors. ■

Candlelight prayer vigil at Omaha's Turner Park, January 31, 2017



Inextinguishable Spirit

James Chol and Dhieu Jok were driven from their villages during Sudan's 1987 civil war, fleeing death or induction into the army. They sought safety in refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya.

"We sometimes did not eat for three or four days," said Chol. "We watched our friends get shot by the militias, or get eaten alive by wild animals. Some died crossing rivers or from malnourishment."

In the refugee camp, Chol and Jok faced uncertainty waiting to be resettled. "We worked hard in school, even when we hadn't eaten in two or three days. We knew that this work was for our future," said Jok.

Both were resettled in the U.S. and eventually moved to Omaha. They shared their stories at an LFS *Global Conversations* event hosted by Creighton University. *Global Conversations* provide opportunities to meet refugees and hear their stories. To host a *Global Conversations* event, contact Lacey Studnicka at (402) 536-3500 or lstudnicka@LFSneb.org. ■



Homeland of the 1,020 Refugees Resettled by LFS in 2016



Connections

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

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.



Growing Health and Hope in Lincoln



▲ Open House ribbon cutting 2301 O Street ▶

May 3, 2017 marks one year of expanded human care services at the new LFS campus at 23rd and O in Lincoln! The 23,561-square-foot building is home to Lincoln's LFS behavioral health programs for individuals struggling with mental illness; services designed to welcome refugees; and programs serving children and families.

As part of this growth, LFS is honored to be the lead organization of the Health 360 Integrated Care Clinic, an exciting new community health initiative. Health 360 is a vision developed by Lincoln leaders and the Community Health Endowment of Lincoln (CHE). Health 360 includes behavioral health delivered by LFS, primary care delivered by our partner People's Health Center (a Federally Qualified Health Center), dental services and a pharmacy provided by Genoa, a QoL Healthcare Company.

The entire campus is strategically situated for maximum impact on health outcomes. The location was chosen following a community mapping project conducted by CHE indicating the presence of negative health factors in the area—mental health calls, poverty, crime and lack of healthcare. According to the 2015 Lincoln Vital Signs study, in 2000, Lincoln had no neighborhoods in extreme poverty (40% or more living



below the poverty threshold). **By 2013, Lincoln had six neighborhoods in extreme poverty. The new LFS campus is surrounded by all six of Lincoln's "extreme poverty areas."**

Since opening, this new campus has become a catalyst for other innovative on-site collaborations: Community Crops provides a mobile pantry with access to healthy produce; Legal Aid of Nebraska and Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department provide professional services; and Community Action Partnership serves children and families through Head Start/Early Head Start programs.

We celebrated our grand opening July 2016 with a "standing room only" open house and ribbon cutting attended by over 300 people! The substantial support this project received was celebrated at the annual LFS Faith in Action®

dinner held in Lincoln in September. The event honored individuals and organizations who made significant contributions to the project. Awards were given to the following Lincoln leaders: **TMCO Inc. and Hiroko & Roland Temme Family** received the Douglas E. Parrott Faith in Action® award for extraordinary corporate leadership and

the Year award for outstanding vision and leadership to make Lincoln the "healthiest community in the nation." **Peter W. Zandbergen** received Volunteer of the Year award for galvanizing community resources to strengthen non-profit missions in Nebraska. **Vanja Pejanovic** received the LFS Lifetime Achievement award for 15 years of passionate service dedicated to welcoming and supporting refugees.

"Integrating mental health, substance abuse, and primary care services produces the best outcomes and proves the most effective approach to caring for people with multiple healthcare needs."

— Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Even though LFS has provided services in Lancaster County for 46 years, centering programs in the heart of Lincoln best positions LFS to effect change in health outcomes for Lincoln's most high-risk neighborhoods. We are thrilled to announce that with extraordinary donor investment, LFS has exceeded the \$1.23 million capital fundraising goal to complete the Lincoln campus. Because we met their challenge, the project received a significant matching grant from the Peter Kiewit Foundation. We thank everyone who contributed to this project which will strengthen the health futures of children, families and individuals in Lincoln and Lancaster County. ■

faith-filled generosity of time, talent and treasure advancing a globally rich Lincoln community. **Community Health Endowment of Lincoln (CHE)** received the Community Partner of



◀ Girl Noticed

New York artist Lori Pratico and photographer Elizabeth Sanjuan were in Lincoln Saturday, August 27th to "notice" two area women who they depicted in a mural at 23rd & N Street, on the south side of the LFS Lincoln campus. Both "noticed" women – Thuy Nguyen and Haifaa Al-Saadi – are refugees. ■



2016 Volunteer of the Year Peter W. Zandbergen
2016 Community Partner of the Year Community Health Endowment of Lincoln
2016 Faith in Action® Award recipients TMCO Inc. and the Hiroko & Roland Temme Family
2016 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Vanja Pejanovic

Measuring Integrated Care's Impact

LFS, in partnership with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, has been awarded a \$400,000 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant to study the impact of integrated care services offered through the Health 360 Integrated Care Clinic in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The clinic, a partnership between LFS and People's Health Center, provides integrated care by coordinating and offering behavioral health, primary care, dental and pharmaceutical services under one roof. The two-year grant will fund research to evaluate integrated care outcomes.

The research will include interviews, focus groups and surveys from both clients and providers. Health data from participants receiving integrated care will be analyzed and compared with participants receiving stand-alone care services. Findings will be shared with federal and state agency partners, national associations, conferences and journals. ■

LFS 1892-2017 125

Welcoming · Strengthening · Healing

This year, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska is celebrating 125 years of building and strengthening families. What began as two orphanages in 1892 – one in Fremont and one in Omaha – has become a statewide offering of human care services with areas of expertise including Children Services, Behavioral Health and programs for refugees, immigrants and other New Americans.

Throughout 2017, many events and activities will



- ▲ **Concordia High School students** in Omaha gathered at the LFS International Center of the Heartland to help clean and organize our warehouse filled with supplies needed to welcome refugee families.



- ▲ **Crystal Miller, Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) Nebraska North District President** (right), presented Ruth Henrichs \$60,000 from the National LWML to support the North Omaha, Fremont and Council Bluffs Centers for Healthy Families. The grant will fund incentives and services that teach parents skills to create healthy, safe and nurturing homes.

Celebrating 125 Years of Expressing God's Love for All People

highlight this milestone anniversary. A signature event, "125 Years of Faith in Action®", will be held on September 23, 2017, at Embassy Suites La Vista. We invite you to join us! Please visit LFSneb.org or follow us on Facebook. With your support, we look forward to another 125 years continuing "to express God's love for all people for providing quality human care services that build and strengthen individual, family and community life!" ■



- ▲ Each week **Creighton University students** arrive at the LFS International Center of the Heartland ready to assist in welcoming New American families through the Creighton Global Engagement initiative.



- ▲ For the second year in a row, **high schoolers from Saint John Lutheran Church in Council Bluffs** have prepared meals for families taking parenting classes at the Pottawattamie County Center for Healthy Families®. The youth create menus and cook the meals for the parents and their children to enjoy together.

125 Projects for 125 Years of Service

As part of our 125th Anniversary celebration, we are recruiting at least 125 LFS Ambassadors to help educate, engage and enlist support from people and organizations. It doesn't take a lot of time, just an interest in LFS services and a passion to serve! In 2017, our goal is for LFS Ambassadors to initiate 125 service projects to benefit LFS. See what two of our engaged stakeholders have already accomplished below! Possible projects could be:

- Schedule an LFS staff presentation at your church, workplace, or networking group.

- Host an information meeting in your home, where LFS staff can share stories to grow awareness of our services.
- Sponsor or support a refugee family.
- Join a team to help plan one of our amazing fundraisers for children's services.
- Lead a human care service project for one of our programs. (If you are a Thrivent member, you may have access to funds to support your project! Ask us to find out more.)

If you would like more information, please contact LFS Ambassador Liaison Alli Van Roekel at avanroekel@LFSneb.org ■



Children entering foster care often have few possessions. **Mrs. Nebraska USA Universal Amanda Reinert** spearheaded a drive to help LFS foster children through the delivery of care packages filled with toiletries and stuffed animals. Amanda challenged her friends and coworkers at Modis to participate in a Care Package Drive, and within weeks was able to collect 135 packages and 70 boxes of items for foster children!



- ▲ **Concordia University student Kari Stirtz** spearheaded a diaper drive at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Gretna. Kari collected 5,923 diapers, in addition to clothes, toys, books, baby wipes, bottles and other child safety items for the Centers for Healthy Families.

Celebrating 10 Years of Healthy Fremont Preschool Children & Families

While LFS is celebrating 125 years of service, 2017 marks another anniversary. Ten years ago, the "Fremont Area Building Families Boutique" opened its doors, providing support to families with children from pregnancy through age five by promoting, encouraging and rewarding participation in healthy child development activities. Nearly 200 families were served that first year.

Now known as the Rupert Dunklau Center for Healthy Families®, more than 3,500 families have participated

in program activities. The program works to prevent unhealthy behaviors that place children at risk of abuse and neglect by educating parents about child development, parenting skills and community resources necessary to develop a healthy family life.

You can join us as we celebrate 10 years of healthy families at the Fremont Family Friends fundraising dinner on June 13 at the Fremont Country Club. For tickets or more information, please call (402) 591-5063. ■



Investing in Our Communities' Children



▲ Fandango® and Wicker & Wine® Honorary Chairs Dan & Martha Peterson with Honorary Chairs Tracy & John Jerkovich



▲ Fandango® and Wicker & Wine® Honorary Chair Chip James with LFS President & CEO Ruth Henrichs



▲ Fandango® and Wicker & Wine® Event Chair Quinn Texmo and members of Omaha Metro Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) got into the spirit of the sports-themed event by donning matching bowling shirts.

Investing in our children is an investment in the future. Prevention and early intervention provide great payoffs for children, families and our society. Research consistently estimates \$7 saved for every \$1 spent on these programs. At LFS, we provide early intervention/prevention parenting programs, treatment for child sexual abuse, foster care and adoption programs. But we don't do it alone. We are fortunate to have many friends who invest in Nebraska and Iowa's vulnerable children and families.

In 2016, two events raised over \$300,000 to support children in the greater Fremont community and Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area.

Fremont Family Friends, held last June at the Fremont Country Club, advanced programs at the Rupert Dunklau Center for Healthy Families®. The Center strengthens families through early childhood mental health therapies, parenting classes, support groups and an incentive program. Honorary Chairs were Hazel & Sid Dillon. Event Chairs were Cathy & Dr. Dwaine Peetz, Lori & John Sajevic, Patty & Sid Dillon, Jr. and Tanya & Blake Dillon. Advisory Chairs were Cathy & Brad Holtorf and Melissa & Dr. Mark Johannsen. In addition to these community leaders, over 300 supporters packed the Fremont Country Club, raising \$124,000 for the Center!

On November 4, 2016 LFS merged two historic events, **Wicker & Wine®** and **Fandango®**, into one successful evening of fun and fundraising to support all LFS Children Services programs in Nebraska and Southwest Iowa. Over

450 people attended the sports-themed event, which raised more than \$180,000. The evening featured Mrs. Nebraska USA Universal Amanda Reinert as master of ceremonies and guest speaker. Reinert shared her own personal story as a two-time survivor of child sexual abuse and highlighted how LFS programs were making a profound difference in the lives of children who have been traumatized.

"People didn't talk about sexual abuse, it was something that happened to bad families and it was something that you would sweep under the rug," said Reinert. **"I believe that the only reason I was abused a second time was because**

a program like (LFS) RSafe® was not made available to my family and me."

Honorary Chairs were Lawrence "Chip" James II & Erin James of Omaha, John & Tracy Jerkovich of Council Bluffs, and Dan & Martha Peterson of Neola, Iowa. Quinn Texmo served as Event Chair.

Please join LFS on November 3, 2017 at the Omaha Hilton to "Rally for Kids." Together, we can transform the lives of our communities' most vulnerable children so that each child is nurtured, secure and prepared to succeed in learning and in life! ■



Omaha's Great Pumpkin, held October 22 at Village Pointe, raised awareness for the hundreds of children and teenagers in Nebraska's foster care system who are eligible and waiting to be adopted. **Over 1,000 pumpkins donated from Lanoha Nurseries were placed on the pumpkin tree "branches." Each pumpkin represented a Nebraska child waiting for a permanent home.**

A New Location for Sarpy County Expansion

To improve operational efficiencies and access to human care, LFS consolidated its Bellevue and Papillion offices into the former SAC Federal Credit Union headquarters at 11515 South 39th Street in Bellevue. This new Sarpy County

office adds 1,200 square feet to the total combined space of both former LFS offices. Services include substance use counseling, medication management, sexual abuse treatment and LFS At Ease (serving veterans, active military and their loved ones).

Also provided are child and adolescent therapies, including Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) – treatment for children with emotional and behavioral disorders that builds positive parent-child relationships – and Teacher-Child Interactive Therapy, a school-based variant of PCIT. ■



◀ LFS Sarpy County office ribbon cutting. (l-r) Herb Barelman, Gwendolynn F. Edwards, Ravan Charles (United Way of the Midlands), Ruth Henrichs, Jim Ristow (Greater Bellevue Area Chamber of Commerce) and Hensley Stewart (Sarpy County Chamber of Commerce). Photo courtesy of the Sarpy County Chamber of Commerce.

LFS Snapshots

From 2015 and 2016



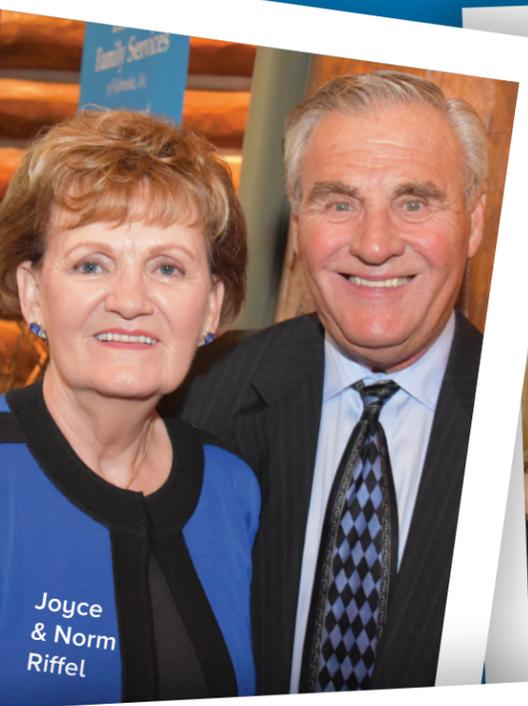
Kayla & Tyler
Peterson



Linda & Tim Daugherty with
Mike & Nancy McCarthy



Margie & James Timmerman with
James & Ann Timmerman



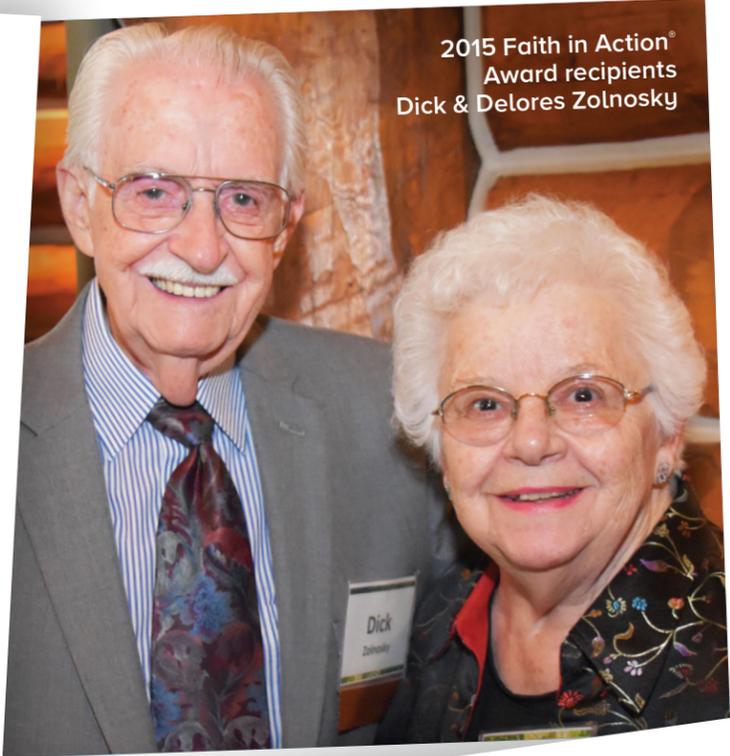
Joyce
& Norm
Riffel



Linda & Terry
McClain



Pastor Larry &
Sharon Arganbright



2015 Faith in Action®
Award recipients
Dick & Delores Zolnosky



2015 Volunteer of the Year Betsy Timmerman (right) with family & refugees



Toasting 10 years in Pottawattamie County at the
2015 Wicker & Wine® event



Cathy & Brad Holtorf,
2015 Event Chairs and
2016 Advisory Chairs,
Fremont Family Friends



Emily & Jane Tonniges, Betsy Gomez & Chris Tonniges



Dr. Mark &
Melissa Johannsen,
Event Chairs, 2015
Fremont Family Friends



Myrna & Darrel Puls
Honorary Chairs,
2015 Fremont
Family Friends

Mark Your Calendar

Go Big GIVE

(Grand Island)
May 3, 2017
GoBigGive.org

Fremont Family Friends

Tuesday, June 13
Fremont Golf Club,
Fremont

Fremont Area Big Give

May 9, 2017
FremontAreaBigGive.org

Celebrating 125 Years of Faith in Action®

Saturday, September 23
Embassy Suites
Omaha-La Vista

Give to Lincoln Day

May 18, 2017
GiveToLincoln.com

Rally for Kids

*(formerly Fandango®
and Wicker & Wine®)*

Friday, November 3
Hilton Omaha

Omaha Gives

May 24, 2017
OmahaGives24.org

Pottawattamie Gives

May 24, 2017
OmahaGives24.org/
pottawattamie

**December is LFS Giving
Month in LCMS-NE
District and
ELCA-Nebraska Synod
Congregations**

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Matching Gifts



Gifts of Grain

Call (402) 591-5063, email development@LFSneb.org, or donate at LFSneb.org

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Act



Organize your colleagues
or congregation to
support a refugee family



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aging out of foster
care or a refugee



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items for children
under five

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