

the Messenger

SPRING 2023

A quarterly publication of Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio

CREATING HOPE THROUGH ART

**St. Ursula students paint mural
in Emergency Choice Food Pantry**



The Light You Shine

Not a week goes by at Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio that we are not thankful for those who contribute their time and give of their hearts as they volunteer in service to others.


Their assistance comes in many forms, and the success of LSS programs and services relies on this involvement. There's Sonia ... Amy and Kay ... John and Donovan ... and so many more, whose contributions as volunteers to the LSS ministry are much more than a helping hand.

Most recently, art students from St. Ursula Academy in Toledo spent weeks designing and painting a colorful mural which now adorns the walls of our waiting area in the basement Emergency Choice Food Pantry. Working as a team, these talented young artists not only brought their vision to life, but their work will provide thousands of food pantry clients with an uplifting and warm welcome area for years to come.

Through their work, LSS volunteers are helping those we serve feel a sense of belonging and empowering those that come to us in need to thrive and succeed.

Their work speaks loudly about the kind of community in which we all want to live. A community that is welcoming, respects all of our differences and cares for their neighbors.

In gratitude,



TERRI RODRIGUEZ
LMM President and CEO



Students from St. Ursula Academy worked on a mural in the LSS Emergency Choice Food Pantry in March.



LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES
of Northwestern Ohio

Strengthening People in Body, Mind and Spirit

**The Messenger is published quarterly by
Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio.**

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Staff, volunteers shine the light for LSS



TRACIA JAKSETIC

Vice President of LSS

Tracia Jaksetic

"AT TIMES, OUR OWN LIGHT GOES OUT AND IS REKINDLED BY A SPARK FROM ANOTHER PERSON."

This saying is what we strive to be each and every day here at LSS with the individuals we serve in all of our programming. When clients seek services at our agency, their light might be out, and the care they receive from our agency staff and volunteers brings light into their lives.

Our staff and volunteers are the heart of the work we do to help those who seek our agency's services.

We had a client recently complete his Abusive Partner Intervention Program 26-week program. He acknowledged that he didn't realize how detrimental he was responding to situations prior to coming into programming, and

after attending sessions, he was so grateful for the "tools" he now had in his personal tool chest — he's now able to recognize when he needs to respond in a more positive way so as not to induce fear or harm to another individual.

Housing instability has been in our programming for more than a decade and we've helped countless individuals obtain housing as well as remain housed. Our food pantry has become one of the backbones of our agency, serving hundreds of individuals every month. We've helped people returning to society after a period of incarceration, shining a light to show them a new path that doesn't lead back to life behind bars.

People come to us in their darkest hours, when the light at the end of the tunnel is so small they can no longer see it.

Our staff and volunteers work tirelessly with each and every client on an individual basis on their personal needs and goals to help them become stable at the completion of their time with us. We want to be a shining light of hope and love in an otherwise dark world.

LSS picked by City of Toledo, TPS to handle distribution of stabilization funds

It's time to roll up our sleeves and get to work helping more families in Toledo.

After successfully helping nearly 500 children in the Toledo Public School (TPS) system with rental and utility assistance, Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio is proud to once again partner with the City of Toledo and TPS for a new round of the TPS Family Stabilization Program.

The city has agreed to partner with LSS for an additional \$2 million in funding for rental and utility assistance for TPS families in 2023. The city is using federal money from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to fund the program.

"We are proud that the city and TPS have chosen our agency to be their partner in distributing these funds," LSS Vice President Tracia Jaksetic said. "It just shows the effort and dedication of our employees in the Financial Stability Program -- Megan Pickering, Jill Hunt and Katie Ramirez.

"Helping families with TPS students get on stable ground really is an investment in our future. We're ready to get to work helping even more families find their footing."

The program started in July 2021 as a partnership with the City of Toledo Department of Neighborhoods, TPS and LSS to help TPS families at risk of homelessness and those who were already homeless.

Since the beginning of the program, more than 300 families have stabilized their housing in 2021 and '22, with \$1.8 million in rental assistance and an additional \$465,000 in utility assistance.

Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz had nothing but praise for the city's partner in this program, Lutheran Social Services.



Staff members from Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio stand with Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz, Toledo Public Schools' Dr. Romules Durant and Heather Baker during the announcement of a new round of rental assistance for TPS families.

"Lutheran Social Services is a fantastic organization," he said. "This is an organization that has been in our community for over 110 years. You think about all of the things that has changed in our community over 110 years, yet one of the constants has been Lutheran Social Services.

"They just constantly do the hard work that lifts up a community, and they've been doing it for 110 years.

"This program would not have been possible without the leadership of Mrs. Jaksetic and her team at Lutheran Social Services. They are really stepping up where there is a need."

Mural project inspires hope in LSS pantry

It started as a need to make the Emergency Choice Food Pantry more colorful and inviting to clients.

What it ended up as far exceeded anything the staff at Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio could have dreamed of.

At the beginning of March, a group of ten juniors and seniors from St. Ursula Academy started work on a mural adorning the walls of the food pantry. The mural project was a part of Caroline Jardine's Community Art and Production course at SUA.

The students first met with Pantry Coordinator Debbie Lisk and Mission Advancement Coordinator Jeremy Schneider in February, asking questions about the pantry and what Debbie and Jeremy wanted to see.

From there, the students researched different muralists suggested by Caroline, along with research on Toledo and the Old West End neighborhood.

"Working with LSS on this project provided my students with an opportunity to apply their skills as young artists in a professional setting," Caroline said.

"My students expressed how much they loved working in this community on a project they felt passionately about. They took great pride and enthusiasm in the mural, knowing that their vision and artwork will make a difference for years to come. I know they'll remember this experience forever."

The students put paint on the wall at the beginning of March, working during class times every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

To see more pictures of the St. Ursula students working on the pantry mural, follow us on Facebook.



A St. Ursula senior student paints an outline of the mural in March.

It was finalized late in the month, and a official unveiling was held on April 5.

According to Debbie, the mural has already been appreciated and commented on by pantry clients and volunteers.

"I can't express how grateful I am to the students and staff of St. Ursula Academy for the generous gift of our mural," Debbie said. "I have had so many wonderful comments from clients and volunteers stating that it is like a breath of fresh air walking into the pantry and seeing this beautiful piece of art. This has honestly given our waiting area new life."

The Emergency Choice Food Pantry is open from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday, and it's open from 2-4 p.m. on the last Wednesday of the month. Anyone interested in shopping during those hours is encouraged to call 419-243-9178 to register.



A St. Ursula student speaks with SUA teacher Caroline Jardine.



St. Ursula teacher Caroline Jardine, left, is joined by her Community Art and Production students. They finished the pantry mural project in March.

Board members elected during LMM Annual Meeting

Representatives from all three agencies as well as board members and congregational visitors came together in February for the Lutheran Ministries of Mercy annual meeting at The Pinnacle in Maumee.

More than 100 individuals attended the event, which included food and beverages, and gift baskets raffled off.

Charles Winters, the Chair of the LMM Board of Directors, hosted the night, with a special invocation given by Rev. Juli Lejman-Guy and introductory remarks by ELCA Northwest Ohio Synod Bishop Daniel Beaudoin and Rev. Jonathan Rusche of the Ohio District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

LMM President and CEO Terri Rodriguez spoke of the significant and important impact made by each agency and the dedicated work of the employees.

Each agency — Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio, Filling Home of Mercy and Luther Home of Mercy — gave a presentation on their services and the impact made in 2022.

LSS Vice President Tracia Jaksetic spoke for her agency, detailing the numbers from 2022 — 7,321 clients served in our food pantries; 832 individuals who received behavioral health care; 18,731 community members served in the Scott High School Community Hub; and the \$4.3 million distributed in rental and utility assistance.

Presentations were also given by Filling Home Vice President Carol Slight and Luther Home Mission Advancement Director Megan O'Brien.

New LMM board members were elected during the meeting as well. The board welcomed Nate Daniels, Leon K. Fitzpatrick, Marilyn Ford, Jeff Mires, Kathleen Winters and Becky Stewart.

Raina Dawson was elected to the Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio Foundation Board as well.



ABOVE: New LSS Foundation Board member Raina Dawson, left, speaks with board president James Morgan after the LMM Annual Meeting in February.

BELOW: LMM Board President Charles Winters, left, and LMM CEO and President Terri Rodriguez talk before the annual meeting.



Watch our video from the Lutheran Ministries of Mercy Annual Meeting, just scan the QR code!



Have You Considered Board Membership?

Lutheran Ministries of Mercy and its affiliates (Lutheran Social Services, Filling Home and Luther Home) are governed by an 18-member Board of Directors. The current Board is always looking for those with a servant's heart to assist in the organization's governance. If you would like to learn more about Board membership, please contact LMM President and CEO, Terri Rodriguez, at trodriguez@luthmin.org.



Fatherhood program gets started in Tiffin

Plans in motion to bring 24/7 Dads to other LSS offices as well

When George Dupay talks about the new Fatherhood Class being held in Tiffin, the Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio case manager brings up a story about starfish.

A man is walking down a beach, throwing starfish back into the water. When he's confronted by someone else, saying that he can't save them all, the man responds, "Well, I made a difference to that one, didn't I?"

George knows there are many needs in communities across northwest Ohio, and he can't save them all. However, it doesn't take that huge of a net to make an impact.

The 24/7 Dads class started last month at the Oriana House in Tiffin. The class is based off curriculum from the National Fatherhood Initiative, and topics include showing and handling feelings; what it means to be a man; men's health; children's growth and getting involved with them; and working with mom and co-parenting.

George said much of the classes is discussion, with questions to answer that bring up important topics. The group will also discuss the different parenting styles between mothers and fathers.

"Dads usually get the backseat. There are a lot things out there for moms," George said. "This is something for dads.

"Dads don't understand things. They don't understand the process. A lot of times, dads think, 'Well, I'm paying child support so I can see the kids.' No, it doesn't work that way. It helps them understand."

The class meets for two hours weekly for six weeks, with George as the facilitator. According to him, though, the most impactful part of the class is the relationships the men build among each other.

"When you get dads together, some dads have been down that road and this dad is getting ready to start down that road, so they can help each other," George said.



"That's the important part, for them to work with each other and respect each other."

According to LSS Behavioral Health Director Patty Hall, the program is using Oriana House as not only a referral source but also the physical location for the meetings. At the conclusion of the classes, some of the participants could stay on as case management clients for LSS due to their specific needs and access to resources.

While the class is beginning in Tiffin, the hope is to expand the services to Fremont as well.

"The better relationship the parents have with their children, the better and more secure the children grow up," Patty said. "Hopefully they come to us needing minor services, that we don't have an overload or society in general doesn't have this big, huge hole of traumatized children, not knowing where to put them and what to do with them.

"Some of those things could be undone by having the fathers as a bigger part of their lives. It's not just maternal guidance these children need; they need paternal guidance as well.

"Getting fathers to see how important they are to their children is huge for our society."

For more information or to register for the 24/7 Dads class, please contact our Tiffin office at 567-220-6495.



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

@LSSNWO

New clinician ready for cases in Fremont

Recognizing an outstanding need in the Fremont community, Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio has answered the call by hiring Johannah Lujan as a full-time clinician in its Fremont office.

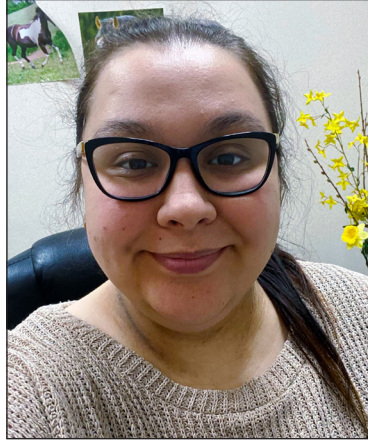
Johannah started with LSS in March. For Behavioral Health Director Patty Hall, bringing Johannah on board will help alleviate some of the stresses and burden felt in the Fremont office.

"Johannah will provide group and individual therapy for substance use disorders and individual mental health therapy," Patty said.

"Johannah's contribution to the Fremont office will reduce the waitlist as she acclimates and establishes a schedule that works for the community we serve and herself."

Johannah is a native Toledo, and she graduated from the University of Toledo in 2014 with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. She returned to school and received a Master's in Social Work from Spring Arbor University in 2019. She was licensed later that year.

During her career, she has worked and interned with different populations, including the homeless, criminal justice and substance-use disorder (SUD) populations, and



Johannah Lujan

most recently she has been working with families who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I would love to offer people in any stage of their recovery a safe and welcoming place they feel comfortable being at and receiving treatment at," she said.

"LSS has such positive relationships with different entities of the community — courts, churches, probation — that making these connections has been really great.

"People come to LSS because of the great things they've heard from others in the community. The staff and clients have all be very welcoming and willing to work with me. I am excited to really hit the ground running and build my clientele."

Patty said Johannah's addition to the Fremont office will be a seamless and clean transition.

"During her interview, Johannah demonstrated knowledge of treatment methodologies that align with LSS and a compassion for the populations we serve," Patty said. "Her experience and licensure along with her education are a wonderful addition."

Johannah said she is looking to build the SUD programming in Fremont and bring her skillset to those in recovery who need help in their journey.

"I know firsthand how hard recovery can be for individuals and their loved ones," she said. "I am hoping to make the journey a little easier while offering a positive community support that clients and their loved ones can feel comfortable utilizing."

LSS by the numbers

2023 thru March 31

1,690

INDIVIDUALS SERVED AT EMERGENCY CHOICE FOOD PANTRY

CLIENTS WHO RECEIVED HELP THROUGH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

312

4,776

COMMUNITY MEMBERS SERVED BY SCOTT HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY HUB

TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS IN EMERGENCY CHOICE FOOD PANTRY

445

49

INDIVIDUALS CONNECTED WITH 138 SERVICES THRU EMPLOYEE RESOURCE NETWORK

Planned Gifts ensure legacy, honor loved ones

Planned giving is perhaps one of the most rewarding gifts that you will make in your lifetime. At your direction, planned gifts can serve as a way to honor your legacy, serve as a memorial, or honor a loved one. And at the same time, you will be helping Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio strengthen our programs for generations to come.

When considering a planned gift there are a few things to remember:

All Contributions Have an Impact. No gift is too small. We understand there are family members and other charities to consider, so as you make your decisions, we would be honored to be included among your favorites.

You Have Options. You don't have to choose between giving a gift to your family or your favorite charity, because you can do both! As a donor, you can designate gifts to an area of personal significance and address a program or service that is near and dear to you.



Jeanette Hrovatich
Director of Planned Giving

We Are Happy to Help. Including our organization in your legacy decisions can be made very easy. As a life event such as marriage, a birth of a child or grandchild, prompts you to create or update your will or estate plans, remember a gift to Lutheran Social Services.

By God's grace, may you be blessed as you make your legacy decisions. If you have already remembered Lutheran Social Services in your legacy plans, let us know so we can say thank you.

Please reach out to Jeanette Hrovatich, Director of Planned Giving at 419-972-4373, to discuss your legacy and together, we'll make this a positive experience for you and your family.

**TOGETHER
TOWARD
TOMORROW**

All donations to LMM

December 16 through March 31

All donations are also online at Lutheranministriesormercy.org

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Bowling Green

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Maumee

in memory of Judith Gottschling

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in memory of Julius Helen Carolyn Yackee

Mr. and Mrs. Giles Molyet

Fremont

in memory of David Young

Mrs. Vickie Davis-Mahler

Sylvania

in memory of Paul and Iris Zeitner

Giving to LSS? Here are the easy steps to take

Supporting Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio and our variety of programs has never been easier.

Whether you want to donate food to our Emergency Choice Food Pantry or use your regular shopping at Kroger to benefit our agency or donate to us directly from your phone, we have the options for you!

We have set up a **Wishlist on Amazon.com** with a wide selection of food items that would benefit the hundreds of individuals who benefit from our pantry every month. To view or shop our list, please scan the QR code below with your phone.

LSS is also registered with the **Kroger Community Rewards**. The program gives shoppers the chance to select a non-profit as their beneficiary when they shop at their local Kroger store.

To sign up for Kroger Community Rewards, create a digital account on Kroger.com. If you already have a digital account, link your Shopper's Card to the account so all transactions apply toward Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio. From there, simply search for "Lutheran Social Services of NW Ohio" or enter the code UM645.

You can also head directly to our website lssnwo.org and donate directly from there. Simply click on the "Donate" button at the top of the page, which will take you to a separate donation page.

From now through July 1, LSS is also a beneficiary of the **Meijer Simply Give campaign**. Purchase a \$10 donation card at the Meijer store at 1500 E. Alexis Rd. in Toledo, and the donation will go directly to LSS. We also have donation cards available in our Toledo office on Collingwood Blvd.

If you choose to donate to the **United Way** during any of its campaigns throughout the year, you can designate your non-profit of choice to benefit from those donations as well.

You can also call any of our offices to stop by and drop off a monetary donation. Any amount is welcome and will help so many people in our communities throughout northwest Ohio.

We will also happily accept any donation of food to our Emergency Choice Food Pantry in Toledo. Please call Debbie at 419-243-9178 for more information or to set up a drop off.

You can also volunteer in our pantry! We are always looking for individuals or groups to donate their time in our pantry. Our volunteers help stock the shelves, clean, and help our pantry clients shop during distribution hours.



**SUPPORTING THE
LSS FOOD PANTRY
IS NOW EASIER
THAN EVER**



**SHOP OUR AMAZON.COM
WISHLIST!**



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 Findlay
Concordia Lutheran Church
 Toledo
First Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Findlay
Peacemakers of Grace Lutheran
 Elmore
St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
 McComb

St. Johns Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Findlay
St. John's WELCA
 Findlay
St. Stephen Lutheran Church
 Sylvania

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Augsburg Lutheran Church
 Toledo
Bethlehem Evangelical Church of Okolona
 Defiance
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
 Defiance
Bowling Green State University
 Bowling Green
Caresource Ohio Inc.
 Dayton
Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Bowling Green
Concordia Lutheran Church
 Toledo
Concordia Lutheran Church
 Findlay
ELCA Foundation
 Chicago, Ill.
Everence Foundation, Inc.
 Goshen, Ind.
Faith Community Nurses and Health Ministry Assoc.
 Toledo
First English Lutheran Church
 Wapakoneta
First Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Findlay
First Lutheran Church
 Galion
Frontstream
 Reston, Va.
Good Hope Lutheran Church
 Bucyrus
Grace Lutheran Church
 Toledo
Grace Lutheran Church
 Elmore
Hope Lutheran Church
 Ottawa Hills

Seneca START celebrates first completion

The Seneca County START program had its first successful completion in February. Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio is one of the agencies collaborating on the program.

START, a children services-led initiative that stands for Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma, has served 10 families by providing beds, household items, school supplies, children's clothing, bicycles, Christmas gifts, gym membership and family photography sessions.

The voluntary program works with families with co-occurring substance use disorder and child maltreatment. Families choose START participation as an alternative to traditional children services involvement.

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Deshler
Kroger
Cincinnati

**Martin Luther King Center
Kitchen For The Poor**
Toledo

**Messiah Lutheran Church
ELCA**
Toledo

Network for Good
Southfield, Mich.

Olivet Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sylvania

Peacemakers of Grace Lutheran
Elmore

Solomon Lutheran Church
Woodville

Solomon Lutheran Women of the Church
Woodville

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
McComb

St. John Lutheran Church
Port Clinton

St. John Lutheran Church
Stryker

St. Johns Evangelical Lutheran Church
Findlay

St. John's Lutheran Church
Stony Ridge

St. John's Lutheran Church
Montpelier

St. John's Lutheran Ladies, Aid
Stryker

St. John's WELCA
Oak Harbor

St. John's WELCA
Findlay

St. Martin's Lutheran Church
Archbold

St. Michael Lutheran Church
Ottawa Lake, Mich.

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church
Clyde

St. Pauls Lutheran Church
Maybee, Mich.

St. Paul's Women of the Church
Toledo

St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church
Norwalk

St. Peter Lutheran Church
Martin

St. Stephen Lutheran Church
Sylvania

Sylvania United Church of Christ
Sylvania

Trinity Lutheran Church
Elmore

Trinity Lutheran Church
Delta

Yogaja Yoga LLC
Toledo

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
Lafayette

Zion Lutheran Church
Huron

Zion Lutheran Church
Edgerton

Zoar Lutheran Church
Perrysburg

PLANNED GIFTS: CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES

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Maumee

MEMORIAL GIFTS

Mr. Terry Bossert
In memory of Mel and Thelma Bossert
Maumee

Rev. & Mrs. Chuck Campbell
In memory of Lillian Lager and Mary Ann Diamond
Toledo

Ms. Kathleen Cannon
In memory of Mary Ann Diamond
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Mr. & Mrs. Mike Harasta
In memory of Stefanie Harasta
Temperance, Mich.

Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Herr
In memory of Jack D. Bigelow
Perrysburg

Mr. Kermit L. Hoesman
In memory of Doris Hoesman
Woodville

Ms. Ruth Kruse
In memory of Kay Lemmerbrock
Pemberville

**Martin Luther King Center
Kitchen For The Poor**
In memory of Mary Ann Diamond
Toledo

Mr. & Mrs. Donald Samuelson
In memory of Emma Westrand
Defiance

Mr. & Mrs. Todd Slight
In memory of Mary Ann Diamond
Napoleon

Ms. Lois Staber
In memory of Pastor RF Staber
Perrysburg

Ms. Joan Staib
In memory of Douglas Staib and Pastor Fred Grosse
Bowling Green

Mr. & Mrs. William Staib
In memory of Logan and Nathan Staib, in honor Mason Staib
Walbridge

Ms. Janice Wagner
In memory of William Wagner
Findlay

Mr. & Mrs. David Raszka
In honor of Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Peter's 50th Wedding Anniversary
Sylvania



This historical photo from the late 1940s shows Dr. W. Carl Satre during the Sunday Evening Meitations program on WSPD radio.

About LSS

Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio provides mental health counseling, a food pantry, financial coaching, and an array of other services. With multiple service sites throughout Northwest Ohio, we serve all ages, faiths, races and economic status with professional and confidential services.

LSS Administrative Office
2149 Collingwood Blvd.
Toledo, Ohio 43620

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the Messenger

SPRING 2023

A quarterly publication of Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio

INSIDE THIS EDITION



LMM Annual Meeting
New board members elected during February meeting.



Fatherhood Program
A new program just for dads kicked off in Tiffin last month.



LSS takes the lead
City, TPS name LSS to distribute new round of funding.

