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Our Mission:
In response to God's love and grace in Jesus Christ, Lutheran Child and Family Services serves human needs with the support of the church and community by providing programs of compassionate care and counsel.

The Sharing Place in 2017

In the last five years especially, food insecurity has become a chief concern in the City of Indianapolis. In 2014, it was reported that food deserts, areas without a grocery store, in Indianapolis were the largest in the nation. Now, in 2017, the USDA's map of food deserts in Indy remains largely unchanged. As a city, we should count ourselves lucky to be home to a few very large food bank operations like Gleaners, Second Helpings and Midwest Food Banks. These leaders in the fight against hunger provide our hungriest neighbors with an indispensable, though small, safety net to combat food insecurity and without the work of those three organizations the Sharing Place would not be able to source enough food to feed the 51,405 hungry Hoosiers who relied on the sharing place in 2016.

However, the value and meaning of a raw statistic like the annual attendance of a food pantry is rather ambiguous. Helping more folks feed their families so that they can save their money for rent, medical bills and utilities is an inherently good thing, but the mere fact that the waiting room in the Sharing Place is bursting at the seams every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday also serves to imply just how much need is going overlooked and unmet.

From 2010 to 2015, the U.S. Census Bureau found that the number of households in Marion County below the poverty line increased by just over three percent, which isn't very alarming on its face. On the other hand, the Census Bureau also found that the number of Marion County residents under the age of eighteen below the poverty line increased just over six percent from 25.7% to 31.8%. If this trend continues, 2017 will likely see 1 in 3 children in Marion County below the poverty line.*

As the poverty level rises, but food deserts remain just as large, and as more people need help finding nutritious food to put on their table, we need more help

to meet the demand. The Sharing Place is always in need of a few extra hands and hearts to help us carry out our work!

Here's what some of our volunteers have to say about the Sharing Place:

"Volunteering at the Sharing Place is chance to give back to the community we live in. I enjoy the time that I spend with the clients as they shop for items. The conversing and listening to each individuals stories each week gives me a tremendous sense of joy."
- Wilma Young

"Personally, I consider community engagement a prerequisite for growing and improving the neighborhoods that we live in. I am just thankful that The Sharing Place is providing me the opportunity to be a blessing to other people who are less fortunate than I. It would have been easy to write out a check in support of the wonderful work this organization is doing, but volunteering, meeting and interacting with people has been much more rewarding."
- Milton Young

"I've been volunteering at the Sharing Place for about four years now. There is something about walking through the doors that gives me an indescribably good feeling. The people you work with are very special; They have a giving spirit which is contagious. Volunteering at the Sharing Place is a unique opportunity to give hope, show kindness, and demonstrate the love of He who first loved us. I hope that you who read this will consider joining us by volunteering, donating, or both. Clients and the volunteers will soon become your friends and you will be richly blessed."
- Byron Baldwin

*See for yourself: www.census.gov

Updates from the IMPACT Program

In 2016, thirty-three girls were admitted into the IMPACT program. This program, our joint effort with Ascent 121 to rehabilitate girls who have been victims of sex trafficking, saw several triumphs in spite of the incredible adversity faced by both the victims of trafficking themselves as well as the therapists who work with them. Due to the often brutal sexual violence these girls have experienced, their treatment is a little different than what Lutherwood is used to. Like the residents of the other dorms at Lutherwood, the girls of IMPACT undergo individual therapy as well as intensive home-based therapy. Because all of the girls in the program have run away from home at one point or another, re-establishing healthy relationships with family is especially important to ensure their successful re-integration to their homes.

The home-based therapy and the girls' individual therapy follow the same criteria; there are four phases which they must pass through: Engagement and Empowerment, Safety and Acknowledgement, Understanding, and Application of skills. It's all a little self-explanatory, but much easier said than done. In the first stage, therapists seek to help the girls open up about their experiences, so that they may deal with the trauma in a healthy, constructive way. While just talking about a difficult experience is a good first step, it's not enough to learn from. The next stage involves more reflection and self-awareness, which leads to the application of the new self-knowledge, during which they are meant to use what they have learned in therapy to decide to lead healthy, happy lives for themselves. The last two steps are at once the most important and the most challenging. All of the girls, having run away to escape their home life, found themselves swept up into the ugly human trafficking underworld, where many were convinced they now belong. These steps are crucial to undoing this psychological damage. The therapists' primary task is to guide the girls down the path to breaking their shackles for themselves; as all parents know, you can lead a teenager to water, but you can't make her drink.

One of the thirty-three girls, after getting off to a rocky start and hurdling many obstacles during her treatment, became a role model to the rest of the girls in the program and has completed the program and moved back in with her family. We are proud to say, that after several months since going home, she is becoming a strong, independent young woman.

All of us here at LCFS, Ascent 121 and Community Behavioral Health are so proud of the girls and their progress. You can lend a hand, too! Go to www.lutheranfamily.org/donate to show your support.

Christmas at LCFS

In December, the air inside our administrative building was rife with Christmas Spirit. Our offices were crammed with toys, clothes, household items and books. They were all destined to be given to needy families at our annual Christmas Store at Gethsemane Lutheran Church or wrapped for all of the children who spent Christmas with us at Lutherwood.

As you might imagine, many of the kids at Lutherwood would rather be home for the holidays, but must remain here. Who could blame them? So, to make Lutherwood feel just a little more like home, church groups from Christ the Savior, Bethlehem Lutheran, Calvary Lutheran, Mt. Olive, Christ Church of Zionsville, and Epiphany Lutheran threw Christmas parties for each dorm the week before Christmas. On Christmas Eve, a group came to serve the kids a Christmas dinner and finally, on Christmas morning, the children got to open gifts from our gracious and generous friends all over Greater Indianapolis and beyond.

In addition to parties, presents and general merry-making, this year we were visited again by Celebration Puppeteers, a group from Old Bethel Methodist Church in Indianapolis. Using a myriad of puppets and props, they told the story of the birth of Jesus Christ, from Gabriel's annunciation to Mary to the shepherds watching over their flocks by night and the gifts of the Magi, complete with songs and impeccable choreography.

And just a few blocks away, near the corner of Shadeland and 10th Street, Gethsemane Lutheran Church opened their doors to us to hold the annual Christmas Store, where needy families came to pick out gifts for their children and homes.

Thank you to all of the churches that adopted a dorm to throw a Christmas party, to all of the families who gave gifts to our residents, and to those who donated toys, clothes and household items to the Christmas Store (Thank you Gethsemane Lutheran Church!), and to Celebration Puppeteers. Thank you for helping us to make Christmas bright for our resident and for local families in need! Without your support this holiday season, our work would be impossible.

Our lovely kitchen staff takes a break from slaving over Thanksgiving dinner to pose for the camera.



THE VOICE

Lutheran Child and Family Services

1525 N. Ritter Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46219



The Voice is published three times a year to share information about our ministries and programs with our supporters, who make our work possible, and impossibly enjoyable. Questions or comments? Email develop@lutheranfamily.org, or call (317) 322.4088.

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Winter 2017



TEG Architects rendering of planned Trinity House

Kicking off the 2017 Capital Campaign

This year, Lutheran Child and Family Services is set to kick off a new Capital Campaign to fund many new projects and maintain continuing projects on our campus. At the top of the list, we are planning to build a new Trinity House Independent Living Group Home. Trinity House is a program we offer to boys who have made significant progress at Lutherwood. The young men who live there hold down jobs and go to school, hold gym memberships and go grocery shopping, all in preparation to move on to their lives as healthy, well-adjusted adults. The new Trinity House, to be located at the Southeast corner of our property at 16th and Ritter on the East Side, will be large enough to give each of the ten young men who live there a room to himself, more space to study, designated spaces for meetings with therapists and caseworkers, as well as an expanded kitchen, to help teach the young men how to cook. In this age of microwaves, Ramen Noodles and gas station pizza, learning how to properly feed one self with stove and oven has become an important lesson. In the current Trinity House, the 10 young men are crammed into 1800 square feet and spaces to study fill up as quickly as the spaces in our parking lot (expanding our parking lot is another project in the Capital Campaign). The ten bedrooms and extra living space will serve to relax the tension of living so closely together, and make it easier to study without distraction.

Next on our list, we have planned a playground for the six, seven and eight year-olds of Center Six. Currently, our courtyard has plenty of open space for games of catch, a basketball court, a shelter house built by the Sertoma Club and a tree, but nothing on which to climb or jump. It is our hope, that in addition to brightening our courtyard, the playground will inspire joyful, spontaneous games of tag, and more running, climbing and jumping, as we continue to encourage the children to lead active, healthy lives.

Visit our website and follow us on Facebook as we divulge further information on our Capital Campaign!

Are you or your company interested in sponsoring a table?
Contact events@lutheranfamily.org for more info!
April 26th!
The Fight Against Hunger Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon is on

