

Voices OF Hope

MAY 2017

"Lutheran Social Services helped me get back on track, and I am honored to pass that on to those with whom I work."



Dear Friend,

As pronounced in our Mission Statement, three words best describe the programs offered through Lutheran Social Services of Southern California: *Embrace, Equip and Empower*. In one way or another, each of these terms point to avenues through which we respond to those individuals who are in need.

Two of the words get most of the attention: Embrace and Equip. Regardless of the situation, we greet everybody walking through our door, and Embrace them at the point of a particular need. It might be food, clothing, a shower, a place to receive their mail, or simply someone to listen actively to another's pain. A high percentage of our clients first appear at one of our food pantries. Many times, Embrace first occurs at a local congregation's pantry, whereafter the clients are referred to Lutheran Social Services.

Equip is the most unique of the two. What it takes to equip one person is not the same for the next person in line. Equip takes a different form with almost everyone we help. For more than 70 years, Lutheran Social Services has equipped thousands of people in thousands of ways.

Ultimately, our long-term goal is to have the clients become self-Empowered in significant ways. Our focus is to support (Embrace) and inspire (Equip), to help them in discovering new ways to accomplish self-Empowerment in their particular situations, and find greater fulfillment in, and accept more responsibility for, their lives. Larry is a good example of being self-Empowered.

Larry first came to our Community Service Center as a homeless man, who was referred to Lutheran Social Services by a Deputy Sheriff. After issuing a ticket to Larry for camping illegally in a public park, the officer suggested Lutheran Social Services might be able to assist him. The next day Larry checked us out.

After going through the intake line, he was given food to eat, and snacks to store away for later. He also took his first shower in a long time. Larry had been addicted to crystal meth for over 20 years and, as a result, had no permanent residence, and never held a full-time job. He was alienated from his family, hung out with the wrong crowd, and literally lived day-to-day. He hid his drug problem from law enforcement by sleeping in the hills. Larry came back regularly to Lutheran Social Services, getting food, a shower and laundry access. But he was still using crystal meth.

However, everything changed the day our staff member invited him to become a volunteer. He accepted that responsibility, and in the process noticed that everyone started treating him a bit differently; as if his life had unlimited potential. From that moment forward, it did!

Larry stopped doing drugs completely the day he became a volunteer. There was no therapy or rehabilitation. His commitment to help Lutheran Social Services give to others awakened something inside him that rejected the culture of drugs completely. The more he gave to others, the more there was in his heart to give away.

After 18 months as a volunteer, Larry was hired as a member of the staff. It was his first permanent employment ever, and today he is a Program Manager who works with former felons. As Larry says, "My reckless and criminal ways have taught me how to listen aggressively to our clients, and to push when I sense they are not being honest. That is a gift, which only I can give. I'm not proud of my past, but I know what people say, even if they don't use words."

Larry tells everyone, "Lutheran Social Services helped me get back on track, and I am honored to pass that on to those with whom I work." For Larry, self-Empowerment involves being given the chance to accept responsibility, and the possibility of helping someone else in the manner in which he had been assisted.

From being introduced to Lutheran Social Services by a police officer, Embraced and Equipped by a caseworker, Larry is a devout Christian and a responsible citizen, living his life Empowered by purpose and peace.

I am so proud of all that has happened in Larry's life. But we must keep in mind there are many others just like him, and your financial support will allow us to replicate that life-changing care for the growing numbers of men, women and children in crisis, who come to Lutheran Social Services.

Will you make a donation today so someone else is able to take that first step away from being homeless? Whether it's a case manager's personalized attention that creates trust, a hot shower to help someone feel really "human" again, food to fill an empty stomach, or a chance to give back to somebody else, your contributions keep our doors open, our pantries stocked, and our staff and volunteers in place to Embrace, Equip and Empower in every way possible.

Your generosity enables Lutheran Social Services to serve the poor in Christ's name, and on behalf of our clients, our staff and our board, please accept our most sincere thanks for your gifts and your prayers.

In Christ's Service,

Ron Drews
President/CEO



P.S. Attached is your LSS reply slip. Please check the box for the amount of your gift. No gift is too small, but please be as generous as possible. Return the reply slip in the enclosed envelope. Thanks so much.

Please take five minutes to make a difference today...

YOUR OPINION MATTERS!

As a member of our community, you are an essential part of what we do. *Together we served over 40,000 clients in the last year.* Surveys like these help us improve our relationships and stay connected with you, our valued stakeholders. Your opinion matters, please take a moment to share your thoughts today!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LSSValues>

Thank you for your gift!

Yes! I want to inspire hope
in the lives of others.

Make checks payable to **LSS**. Gifts are deductible from
taxable income to the full extent allowable by law.

Direct my gift of: \$ _____ _____
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Designate my gift to:

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Name (as it appears on credit card)

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Please fill out and enclose this form with your gift in the envelope provided.

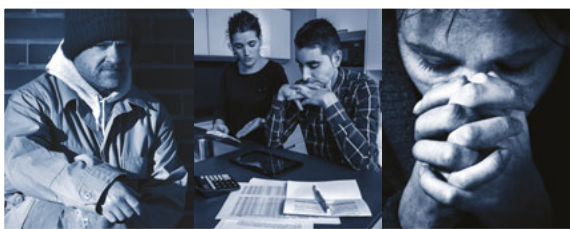


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