Olivia was a wife and mother, and looked forward to a life of happiness and fulfillment in the years ahead. She had worked previously in healthcare, but gave up her career to be a stay-at-home mom. Then everything fell apart. Her husband left her, the result being depression, panic and no financial support.

In the midst of the most frightening moment in her life, when all the pathways to a solution appeared to be blocked, Olivia discovered an open door that offered her the chance to again embrace hope. She was referred and accepted into the Uplift Program in Ventura County, which is offered through Lutheran Social Services of Southern California.

The goal of Uplift is to encourage and mentor individuals and heads of families suffering from poverty, who are willing to make a commitment to work responsibly to move out of dependency, off public assistance, and into a life of meaning and productivity. Uplift is built on the premise that program participants (Protégés) who have support from citizens in the community (Allies) receive support and encouragement in creating a plan for their lives. The Allies help Protégés to set career goals, achieve those goals, and begin the journey of a self-supported life.

Uplift certainly worked for Olivia. She completed the program, was accepted for a business internship, while updating her professional skills. She received a certification program, and highlighting her strengths as a Spanish-speaking professional, thus increased the value she brings to a company and qualifies her as a candidate for a full time position.

This is one story about one woman in poverty, coupled with one Ally and one medical supervisor who produced, in time, one less recipient having to live on welfare. Your generous financial support (see Investment Options below), even if just one gift, will help others like Olivia achieve self-sufficiency.

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**LSS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA’S STRATEGY**

**EMBRACE**
Emergent Services
Serving 50,000 individuals and families with basic needs like food, hot meals, clothing, housing, transportation and more.

**EQUIP**
Program Resources
Operating over 50 specialized programs offering training that equips individuals and families with tools and resources that move them toward independence.

**EMPOWER**
Family Support Initiative
Surrounding families with the support they need to move out of poverty and initiating changes in the community that result in eliminating barriers leading to economic stability.
Today there are just over 7½ billion people living on the face of the earth. 325 million of them reside within the US. With staggering numbers like that, it’s hard to believe that one individual can make any real difference in society, at all. Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla fooled around with what some considered nonsense, but in the end he developed the phonograph, the motion picture camera and the electric light bulb. Henry Ford fiddled around with a “horseless carriage,” which led to the Model T—a vehicle that revolutionized transportation and American Industry. Martin Luther stood up in principle against the power of the Church, and almost 500 years later the Protestant Reformation is still preaching Christ, saving lives and sustaining souls.

That’s why people often say, “My vote doesn’t matter;” or “My opinion can’t change the outcome;” or “My contribution won’t push the goal over the top.” Statements like that sound correct at first hearing, but history teaches such is not always the case.

On Sundays, I visit congregations that support Lutheran Social Services of Southern California. Several weeks ago one parishioner told me of being involved at the very beginning of our annual Walk to Fight Poverty. Spending one weekend walking with a group of kindred spirits to raise money to fight poverty seems like a very insignificant gesture. But over the last 10 years, LSS has raised more than $500,000, which has assisted men, women and children who were hungry and marginalized. Our support, made possible by your generous gifts, transfers the love of Christ to each of them.

Our Walkathon is scheduled for October, and your presence—either in person or through your financial support, (see Investment Options) of someone else who walks—can make a huge difference in the lives of people in your community and beyond.

In Christ,
Ron Drews
PRESIDENT/CEO