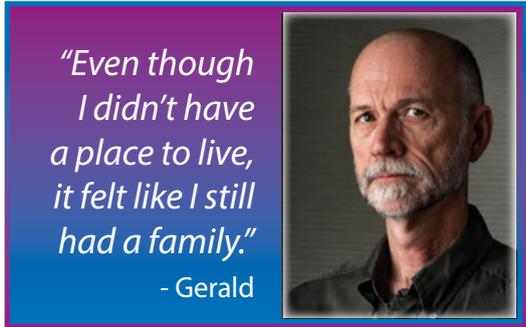


# Voices OF Hope

JANUARY 2017



Dear Friend,

**Embrace, Equip, Empower:** That's what your support of Lutheran Social Services of Southern California does on a daily basis.

As we embark on a new year, I want to thank you for your generous support throughout 2016. Your gifts have blessed many lives, and encouraged numerous human beings who were simply trying to make it through another day. I appreciate that you partnered with us last year, and pray you will renew your gift in 2017.

What looks like just another check to charity oftentimes makes the difference between life and death. Gerald was one of those people just barely hanging on in order to survive. He walked through our door because, literally, he had nowhere else to go.

Gerald worked for 37 years in the mortgage banking business, and was the primary caregiver for his parents until they died. During the recession in 2007 he lost his job, could not make the monthly mortgage payments, and had to sell his family home, where he had lived for over 50 years.

When he could not continue to pay the rent for a small apartment, he was eventually evicted. For the first time ever, Gerald was homeless, and lived mostly in his truck. A friend's wife had heard about LSS, and drove him to our Community Care Center in Thousand Oaks. Gerald said about that drive: *"I didn't know about Lutheran Social Services. But I was at the lowest point in my life. I wondered if LSS could actually help me, or if they even cared."*

We provided him with a large bag of food, referred him to an overnight shelter at a local church, and we actively listened to his story. The case manager explored options that he could consider, and the staff treated him with dignity and respect. Gerald said, *Even though I didn't have a place to live, it felt like I still had a family.*

Before coming to LSS, suicide looked like Gerald's only way out. Because of his religion, if he had committed suicide, he would not have been permitted to be buried next to his parents. He would have died without a home in which to live, and also without a place to be buried.

*"I am certain LSS literally saved my life,"* Gerald said. *"When I had no place to live and no way out of my situation, LSS embraced me with love and patience, and insisted I still had a future ahead of me."*

Gerald works every day as a volunteer at LSS, answers the phone, greets clients as they enter, and tries to be as compassionate to each of them as the LSS staff and volunteers have been to him. There is always something else to be done at LSS, and Gerald is generally the first person in line to make it happen.

Gerald is now making plans to get back into the mortgage business, since his license is still valid. He tells everybody he knows, *"I have no idea what my future holds. But I am so grateful that LSS gave my future back to me."*

I am really proud of the work LSS does—together with partners like you—when so many of God's precious children rediscover the hope they have lost, and the future they feared had vanished. But in order to continue providing these life-changing services, your support is needed today.

***Will you make a gift today so that those who fear that there is no help available, and no hope possible, will discover they are not alone?***

As you read Gerald's story, I hope you saw the huge impact you're having in people's lives. I am grateful for your dedication to those sisters and brothers living in poverty, as well as your commitment to Lutheran Social Services of Southern California. Thank you for your generosity.

In Christ's Service,

Ron Drews, President/CEO



*I want to provide a gift by:*

- Check** made payable to LSSSC
- Credit Card** in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 VISA    MasterCard    AMEX

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name as it appears on card

\_\_\_\_\_  
Card number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Exp. Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

*I want to provide sustaining support with an automatic gift!*

- Electronic funds transfers**  
Please send me an authorization form.
- Scheduled gifts** (credit card at left).

Gift should repeat:

- 15th day of every week
- 15th day of every quarter

Visit us at: [www.LSSCommunityCare.org](http://www.LSSCommunityCare.org) for more on how we help people in need.

*Thank you for your gift!*

*Yes!*

I want to inspire hope in the lives of others. Enclosed is my gift of:

\$25    \$50    \$75    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_



*Please fill out both sides and enclose this form with your gift in the envelope provided.  
Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.*



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LSS embraced me with love and patience,  
and insisted I still had a future ahead of me." - Gerald*