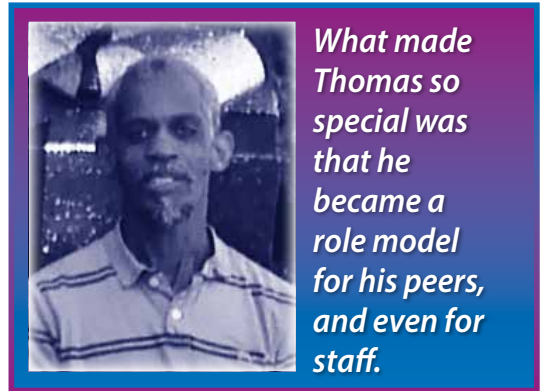


Voices OF Hope

DECEMBER 2017



In Memoriam Thomas Houston

Home for the Holidays.

That's what most people want during the month of December. Young people coming home from the university or the military; families coming home to see parents, grandparents, siblings and extended relatives; everybody catching up at home with old friends, and making new ones.

For over 70 years, Lutheran Social Services has reached out to those on the margins of society: men, women and children with no home in which to live, no food to eat, no clean clothes to wear, no work to earn a living, and no reason to think today will be any different from yesterday, with the same forecast in store for tomorrow, and the day after that.

Your faithful support of our programs is especially critical during this season, when the numbers of those in need increase, the days get shorter and the weather colder. But there is another population we have served for 37 years, and that's what we want to share with you in this letter.

Thomas Houston was diagnosed with mild retardation at an early age. He came to LSS at age 30 looking to enhance his quality of life. He had limited job and community interaction skills, and stayed very much to himself.

That is where Avanti really went to work. Avanti is our LSS program in Pasadena, for adults with developmental disabilities. We come alongside people with overwhelming challenges and help them discover their options for a improved quality of life. We help them feel at home because of how special they are to us.

Over the years, Thomas became a productive member of the community and an example to his peers. He worked with the staff to enhance his communication and work skills, and also to develop friendships and relationships within our community. He went from a quiet shy young man to a vibrant active member of the Avanti family.

Thomas passed out food to the homeless, delivered Meals on Wheels Monday – Friday to those who could not get out to shop, and who were unable to survive by themselves. He was a member of Avanti's acting group, portraying a tornado man in our presentation of the Wizard of Avanti, and a ghoul in our Halloween Avanti Thriller video.

What made Thomas so special was that he became a role model for his peers and even our staff. His charm, wit and attitude were so infectious that he was recently promoted to staff volunteer, an assignment in which he could help other clients maximize their contributions to their community. He was moving up to the next level. Unfortunately, shortly after his promotion, Thomas suffered a severe heart attack and died. His death was a shock to both staff and clients.

Thomas first came to Avanti on January 25, 1993. He died on February 2, 2017. He was an active participant at Avanti for just over 24 years. He was a wonderful example of how the Avanti program can develop a shy young man with challenges, into a strong and respected member of our community: a person who worked, played, volunteered, loved and became a social butterfly.

Thomas made friends wherever he went. He was the ultimate symbol of how persons with emotional and intellectual challenges can achieve a level of success in their work, and steward the gifts God has bestowed upon them.

Surprisingly, God called Thomas to his Heavenly Home. But the friends and staff he left behind remain committed to embrace, equip and empower adults with all kinds of limitations, so they can fulfill the possibilities God created them to discover.

Will you support this incredible ministry and help us provide compassion and dignity to men and women, who's unique gifts may take a little more time to uncover? Will you help Avanti continue to shower adults with love, who were born with more obstacles and fewer options than most of us could ever imagine?

Please give prayerful consideration to making a donation today, so that clients like Thomas can discover greater possibilities for living, despite the limitations they inherited and empower themselves into their greatest life.

Thank you, and God bless you for your commitment to those in need.

Ron Drews, President/CEO
Lutheran Social Services of Southern California



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.

Thank you for your gift!

Yes! I would like to donate to help people discover greater possibilities for living.

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

Direct my gift of: \$ _____ _____

\$ _____ \$ _____ Other \$ _____

Designate my gift to:

As needed CCLM Shelter Other _____

Name (as it appears on credit card)

AMEX VISA MASTERCARD

CC# _____ Exp. _____

Signature _____



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



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Our long-range plan is to expand services, while moving closer to those we serve. But we cannot do it alone. Without your financial support, some of God's children will be overlooked.