

VOICES OF HOPE



DR. LASHARND A BECKWITH

Dr. LaSharnda Beckwith our new President and Chief Executive Officer of Lutheran Social Services Southern California, comes to our agency from California Southern University, where she was Provost and Chief Academic Officer.

Prior to her university experience, Dr. Beckwith worked 27 years in fiscal and executive leadership positions with the Army and Air Force Exchange Service. At the time of her retirement, she was Vice President of the Eastern Region, with responsibilities for profit and loss operations. But there is more to her career than educational and institutional organizations.

Dr. Beckwith is a devout Christian whose spiritual commitment impacts everything she does. She founded Professional Christian Women in Service in 2005, an organization that brings together women with business acumen and vibrant faith. She is devoted both to empowering women, and also preparing them in ways they can empower others.

“Everything I do is informed by what I believe my purpose and calling in the Body of Christ,” Dr. Beckwith said. Ultimately, she strives to live out the challenge of **Proverbs 31:8-9 (CEB)**:

Speak out on behalf of the voiceless and for the rights of all who are vulnerable.

Speak out in order to judge with righteousness and to defend the needy and the poor.

It’s clear her heart is truly aligned with the values of LSS Southern California. In a recent conversation, Dr. Beckwith reflected on her dreams for and commitment to our organization.

No looking back. Why? Because God gave us a bright and hopeful future, and God’s children must faithfully and forcefully walk into that gift. Dr. Beckwith sees the staff, board and donors of LSS Southern California as “the hands and feet of Jesus.” Our mission is to be spiritual prophets – catalysts of change – those disciples of our Lord who shake things up so God’s vision can be realized and concretized. That’s how we **embrace, equip** and **empower** those women, men and children whom we serve.

After visiting the LSS Southern California network of service areas and meeting with staff and clients, she has seen the cloud of trauma

hovering over every community in which we serve. Recognizing that COVID-19 has made our ministry more complicated, she commented that this pervasive trauma pre-existed the pandemic and our agency must implement new ways to respond to this perilous issue.

For over 75 years LSS Southern California has assisted and supported marginalized populations - those living on the edge. But a growing number of these souls lose all hope and literally fall off the cliff because there’s nowhere for them to turn.

Something creative and redemptive must be devised to reverse this crisis and empower these vulnerable children of God. That is LaSharnda Beckwith’s most critical focus.

MISSION

*Ignited by faith,
we live out God’s love by embracing,
equipping and empowering
vulnerable people in
Southern California*

VISION

*Sharing the love of Christ,
we are a community to care
and be cared for...*

*Where the vulnerable are
safer and stronger*

*Where the dependent
are self-sustaining*

*Where the isolated dwell in community
Where the weary will be given hope*

VALUES

*Compassion / Advocacy
Collaboration / Respect
Innovation / Stewardship*





COVID-19 IMPACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has created struggles at all LSS Southern California locations: the number of clients has grown 50% as the number of those who are unemployed has also increased; volunteer response has been reduced by fear of COVID-19, and more than half of our staff now work from home.

There is a shortage of perishable goods, a lack of funds to purchase food, not to mention the inadequate numbers of masks and cleaning supplies now necessary to operate. Despite these challenges, LSS Southern California continues to **embrace, equip** and **empower** every woman, man or child who comes to us. Garden Grove used two different grants from the City of Anaheim to provide relief to 107 clients, even though our service days and hours have been reduced.

CCLM has reduced shelter residents from 70 to 50 because of social distancing and cancelled almost all community classes. But the work continues. Staff still offer life-skills training, job readiness, money management, homeless prevention, communication and coping skills. Our After-School program is conducted by telephone, and homework packages, supplies, resources and food can be picked up once weekly at the mission gate.

Ventura County cooperated with the local government on Project Room Key, a program that provided housing for senior homeless people with underlying medical conditions. From March – June we placed 36 clients in temporary housing. A local Rotary Club donated a new washer and dryer and three restaurants delivered food to those we serve: Sage Brush Cantina, Olive Garden and Pizza Hut. New volunteers arrived to help, and new donors have stepped up to the plate.

Rural San Bernardino provides 98% of therapy through Telehealth: via computer or phone. This works well, except it is difficult to minimize distractions or to protect privacy. Two clients, a father and child, were in therapy but the other parent, refused to leave the room when therapy began. The staff responded by opening its office in **Trona**, where the family lived, so the clients could talk with the counselor in privacy.

LSS Southern California has been impacted by COVID-19 throughout all six counties we operate, but we will continue to find alternative methods to assist those who are suffering. Operating for 75 years, LSS Southern California has persevered and responded to many challenges and COVID-19 is simply the most recent trial for us to overcome. With God's grace, and your support, we will be victorious in our mission.



FROM THE HEART

Mr. Young, age 30, was homeless for seven years and living in his parked car when he first reached out to our Long Beach office for assistance with his SSI benefits application. He was immediately connected to a benefits specialist who successfully helped him with his SSI application. But Mr. Young also suffered from asthma, schizophrenia, ADHD and memory loss. Our Psychiatric Emergency Team intervened and took him to MLK Urgent Mental Health for treatment.

Over time, LSS Southern California provided Mr. Young with transportation, clothing, food and gift cards (for groceries and personal items). We arranged a one-week hotel stay and facilitated a mental health referral for him at Long Beach Mental Health.

After additional nights at a motel, Mr. Young was approved for interim housing and was case managed by the LSS Southern California staff. Along with health and emotional care, he was instructed on budgeting and financial literacy.

In addition to the programs offered, Mr. Young will receive regular and ongoing check-ins to

ensure he is stably housed and that he is managing his mental and physical health. He has benefited from LSS Southern California advocacy and commitment to delivering quality care and service despite the challenges and uncertainties he faced.

LSS Southern California has always been present as the second wave of support for those in crisis. We aren't first responders, but we take victims of many different struggles and as a team **embrace**, **equip** and **empower** every client we meet. This young man obtained government benefits, found health-care and housing, consumed food from our pantry, and learned how to safeguard his money. He was counseled by professionals and is being followed up on by case managers. This was a team effort with many programs contributing to this positive and meaningful impact on a young man's life.

Mr. Young is just one illustration of the impact our programs have on vulnerable communities.

Thank you to the staff, board, and our donors who make this life-changing work a reality. With God's blessing and grace, LSS Southern California will continue to act as catalysts of change in our communities.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Long Beach Gives

- September 24th
- longbeachgives.org

Tee Off to Give

- Charity Golf Tournament
- October 2020
- lsssc.org/events

Give Thanks Holiday Food Drive

- November 2020
- lsssc.org for a location near you

Giving Tuesday Global Giving Event

- December 1st
- lsssc.org/giving-tuesday/

CCLM San Bernardino Christmas with the Homeless

- December 2020
- *Event for the Men in the Shelter. Donations of Men's Clothing and Shoes, new and gently used, Monetary Donations and/or Gift Cards.*

23rd Annual Winter Wonderland Christmas Celebration

- December 2020
- *For our Long Beach program participants and their communities.*

For upcoming event updates visit our website at lsssc.org

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Contact Debi Groom at dgroom@lsssc.org

COVID-19 Supplies: Masks / gloves / 70% alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

Anything Dry: Umbrellas / Sleeping bags / Blankets / Comforters / Tarps / Tents Shelter materials. **Paper Goods:** Bowls / Paper towels / Toilet paper / Plastic forks Plastic spoons / Napkins. **Food-to-Go:** Sack lunches / Fruit Cups / Oatmeal packets Muffins / Pastries, etc. / Lunchables / Salad bowls, etc. / Home-cooked & hot meals (*we'll place them into-go boxes*). **Anything Warm:*** Coats / Jackets / Gloves / Scarves Socks / Rain boots (**Please only new or lightly used*). **Canned Goods:**** Chili / Ravioli Spaghetti-O's / Tuna / Soup / Chef Boyardee pasta meals (***Pop Tops please*).

Hygienic Supplies: Wet Ones (*travel packs or singles*) / Disinfectant Cleaner Deodorant (*Men's and Women's*).

PLEASE VISIT: lsssc.org/covid-19-urgent-needs/ to find out more ways you can help during these challenging times.

MAKE *A* DIFFERENCE



Make a difference all year long with a secure and automatic monthly donation and become a champion of change in the lives of others. Your ongoing support ensures that your generous contributions will do the most good to support our mission.

SIGN UP TODAY! Through reliable monthly donations, LSSSC can help empower our community in a sustainable way to help those in need.

Go to: lsssc.org/donate/-monthly/ All donations are tax deductible in full or in part.



lsssc.org



@lssoutherncalifornia



@lssoutherncalifornia



Lutheran Social Services of Southern California
247 E Amerige Ave
Fullerton, CA 92832



EMBRACE



EQUIP



EMPOWER