



Lutheran Social Services  
of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Inc.

140 Years

Act · Serve · Lead

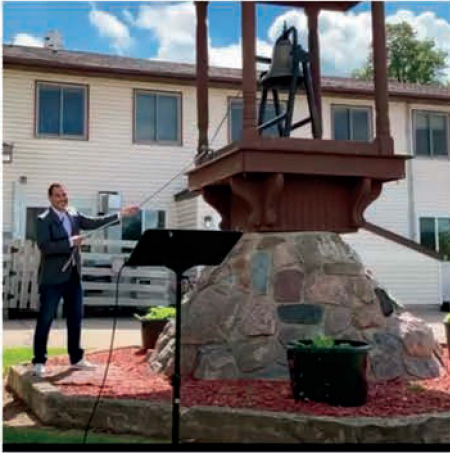
EST. 1882

## Community Impact Report 2022

*Your Love Transforms Lives*



# Your Love TRANSFORMS LIVES



2022 was a year of celebration for LSS as we commemorated 140 years of Servant-Leadership!

Just feet away from the original Homme Homes founded by Rev. E.J. Homme, we joyfully rang the large, on-site school/church bell fourteen times: once for each decade that our LSS family of supporters have shown mercy and love to the hungry, meek, mourning, and persecuted (Matthew 5: 3-12). As we look to our Sesquicentennial, one additional ring of the historic bell affirmed our shared hope and gratitude for the future LSS.



The many activities, events, and heartfelt stories that occurred over our special anniversary year have more than doubled the size of this year's impact report. We travelled our two-state reach meeting up with you, our donors, funders, community partners, volunteers, and friends. Thank you for sharing your personal experiences with LSS. We are in awe of the countless ways you have strengthened families, inspired recovery, and empowered independence and belonging.



We encourage you to find special time to page through and savor the pictures and stories in this report told by our clients, partners, and advocates. Your love is in every one of these stories.

Dear Friends,

**You are living proof of Rev. Homme's legacy of love!**

Thank you for your compassionate assurance that individuals and families in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan have safe and affordable housing.

Thank you for your belief in the infinite worth of all people, especially our clients who are elderly, and/or living with a developmental or physical disability.

Thank you for your immediate and generous response to the hundreds of Afghans forced to relocate from their homeland to Wisconsin.

Thank you for your help in reducing stigma around mental illness and substance use disorder throughout our two-state reach. We are most grateful for your collaboration around growing our residential treatment and School-Centered Mental Health programs.

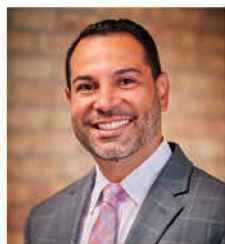
The state of LSS is strong. Our collective work in 2022 has forged innovative partnerships, solidified funder relationships, improved client outcomes, impacted colleague financial health and overall well-being, and activated our donor's extraordinary benevolence.

**Our mission carries on through your acts of compassion, humble service, and courageous leadership.**

A profound end to our anniversary year gave us the opportunity to honor and celebrate the life of Bela Maroti, Founder of the LSS Foundation. Bela died on December 13th leaving a 50-year-legacy of hope and impact on thousands of lives because of his "yes" to using his God-given gifts to serve others.

Bela was both a guidepost and a beacon for LSS and the LSS Foundation. He was advisor, advocate, and champion in helping to shape our programs. Through his visionary, Servant-Leadership, he recognized the need for long-term financial support of our mission work through planned gifts, investments, and endowment.

Thank you for your continued interest in, and love for, LSS and the nearly 30,000 people we serve each year. We are excited about the many ways we will grow our legacy of love together for future generations.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hector Colon'.

*Héctor Colón*  
President & CEO



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jose Olivieri'.

*José Olivieri*  
Operating Board Chair



Your  
Love

# STRENGTHENS FAMILIES



"Our son Dawson was diagnosed at birth with Trisomy 21 - Down Syndrome, and while we had known of the high likelihood since our genetic screening early in my pregnancy, that official confirmation came with a wave of fears.

"The minute we met Sue from Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin & Upper Michigan, our hearts calmed down. The LSS team became our anchor in a storm. They reminded us to celebrate Dawson's "terrible yet typical twos," taught us how we could help Dawson, and reminded us when we should step back and let him do things so he can move ahead.

"By the time Dawson graduated from the LSS Waukesha County Birth to Three program we felt specially equipped as parents to handle the needs that Dawson would have."

- Rhonda Schmidt, parent in LSS Waukesha Birth to Three program.





Tia\* has been living with an LSS foster family for a little more than a year. Like most children in foster care, Tia has suffered trauma and difficult times. But she is not letting the difficulties of the past define her future. Tia is embracing new beginnings and transformation!

Soon Tia will graduate high school and turn 18. She has been looking at colleges and already applied to a few that offered to waive application fees. She would like to pursue the social work field because of the LSS and school social workers who have been such a tremendous help to her. Tia is well on her way to a bright future in other ways as well.

Knowing that she will soon age out of foster care, her foster parents shared with her their plan to pursue adoption once she turns 18. Tia will have a forever support system and family, even after graduation.

*\*Name changed to protect client confidentiality.*



"Families who have children with disabilities have to navigate the resources available. To have a team come to our home, become our family and support system, to offer advice and guidance as we figured out the first few years, is an experience we will never forget."

*- Rhonda Schmidt, parent in LSS Waukesha Birth to Three program.*



# Your Love INSPIRES RECOVERY



When children returned to school post-pandemic, third grader, Tomás\*, experienced intense debilitating anxiety being separated from his parents. This made attending school and learning nearly impossible for him. Tomás would try to participate, but he was so overcome with anxiety he became physically ill and endangered his own safety by running out of the building into the street.

With the help and guidance of LSS therapists at his school, Tomás worked through a course of cognitive behavioral therapy, specifically exposure and response prevention treatment, which allowed him to face his fears in a gradual manner. In addition, our family coach provided translation services and called the family in between sessions to ask about progress on the therapy homework assigned. Our coach also provided recommendations from the therapists on how to support the exposure therapy at home and assisted the family in connecting with other community resources.

Today, Tomás fully participates in class and interacts with his friends again. At the end of treatment, he described himself as “happy” and “proud” of what he overcame.

*\*Name changed to protect client confidentiality.*

Jesse's\* drug dependency stripped him of his good judgement which affected his parenting ability. He sometimes took his children with him to buy drugs or he would leave them at home alone. His amphetamine addiction exacerbated his mental health challenges. Upon admission to the LSS Aspen Center Jesse embarked on an individualized treatment plan.

Eventually, he was able to reunite with his children during family visits and work on those relationships. By connecting with local 12-step programs, he started to build a strong support system. After reaching several milestones, Jesse completed the program and was discharged to a sober living facility. He is employed and remains actively engaged in his recovery. He participates in outpatient group therapy and attends to his mental health.

*\*Name changed to protect client confidentiality.*



"What brought me here? Drinking was the major factor. In the Air Force I was athletic. I never used any drugs or alcohol much. But I had an accident in Thailand during the Vietnam conflict. My fuel truck turned over on me during a bad rainstorm. I was trapped in a river of excrement. Afterwards, I would have bad dreams. I would drink to go to sleep. Now I work out and do art instead of lying on the floor passed out. I haven't drank or taken illegal drugs in over a year. This is a life changing place."

*- Lewis Boyles, LSS Veterans Homeless Services*



# Your Love EMPOWERS INDEPENDENCE AND BELONGING

Arif and his family were resettled by LSS when Afghanistan was evacuated. Arif, a quadriplegic, was in very ill health and experiencing severe bedsores. His extended family did all they could, but immediate medical care was needed.

The medical team determined that Arif would greatly benefit from a specialized wheelchair, which was quite expensive. Hearing about Arif's situation, LSS Mission Champion Kyle Weatherly vowed to help make it happen.

After months of red tape, Arif received his wheelchair. He and his extended family are living in an LSS residential community, and Arif is working as a translator with the LSS Refugee Resettlement team!



Mitch\*, an Upper Peninsula high school student, was living in a tent for two months, and missed his graduation. His temper and behavior were holding him back in gaining employment. LSS counselors found stable housing for Mitch, guided him to obtain his GED, and connected him to a community resource that assessed his job readiness and provided soft skill training. Mitch is now feeling less anxious, more confident and is in a much better place to navigate his path to adulthood.

*\*Name changed to protect client confidentiality.*



Your welcoming embrace of the families and individuals evacuated from Afghanistan eased their transition to life in the United States.

- In other parts of the country, some Afghans spent one to four months in a hotel, waiting for housing. Because of your generosity, every Afghan served by LSS had an apartment within one week of their arrival.
- Each household received a Chromebook to facilitate job searches and online courses in driver's education and English as a Second Language.
- Each household received two cell phones: one that can be taken to work, and one for the home in case of emergency.
- Many Afghan evacuees arrived with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Gift cards for new arrivals allowed recipients to shop for themselves, conferring dignity and respect.
- Rental assistance, dental care, baby formula, diapers and more – your support filled (and continues to fill) gaps related to bureaucratic wait times, the pandemic, and other unforeseen circumstances.



Jason\* had nowhere to live ... no family ... no one to rely on. He had recently been diagnosed with cancer. He was lonely and feeling desperate. Then he found LSS Gaining Ground.

"They've helped me get approved for housing and get bus passes to keep on track with doctor's appointments. I have been able to keep a positive outlook on life. This has come from having the support of LSS Gaining Ground. Having someone that genuinely cares makes a world of difference."

*\*Name changed to protect client confidentiality.*



# Your Love IMPACTS POSITIVE CHANGE

Every incredible story in these pages happened because of YOU! Each was the result of strong partnerships with donors, congregations, corporations and volunteers who believed in the infinite worth of every person and were committed to helping them to use their God-given gifts to serve. We thank our Boards of Directors, Partners Circle companies, and churches from the ELCA and other denominations which all gave generously of time, talents, treasure and ties to make miracles happen for so many in 2022. Truly, this could not have happened without you!



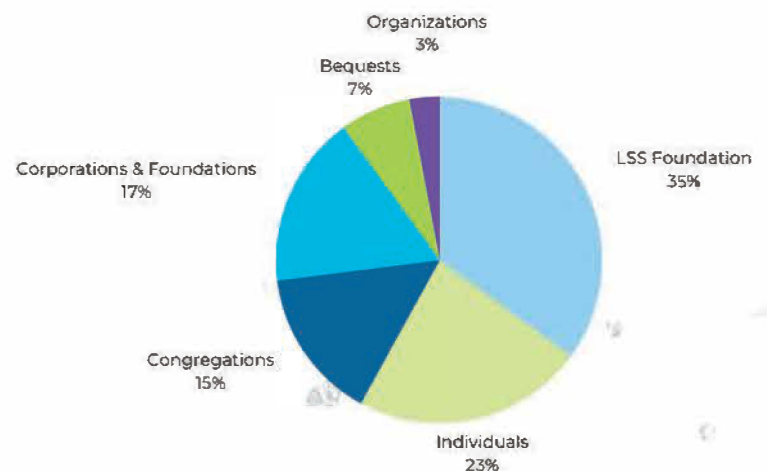


# 2022 FINANCIALS

Revenue	
Federal, State, Local Service	\$47,057,902
Client Fees, Insurance or Contracts	8,167,182
Bequests & Contributions	2,029,442
Other Income	2,360,314
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$59,614,840</b>

Expenses*	
Program Services	\$49,833,799
Administrative & General	8,519,212
Fundraising	817,638
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$59,170,649</b>

Contributions	
Individuals	\$799,207
Congregations	527,958
Corporations & Foundations	610,781
Organizations	100,543
Bequests	237,237
LSS Foundation	1,251,760
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>\$3,527,486</b>



*\*NOTE: This state of financial position is prior to audit completion*



# *LSS Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)*



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## *What is CLAS and why is it important?*

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The National CLAS Standards are a set of 15 action steps intended to advance health equity, improve quality, and help eliminate health care disparities by providing a blueprint for individuals and health and health care organizations to implement culturally and linguistically appropriate services. The 15 Standards are a comprehensive series of guidelines that inform, guide, and facilitate practices related to culturally and linguistically appropriate health services.

Though health inequities are directly related to the existence of historical and current discrimination and social injustice, one of the most modifiable factors is the lack of **culturally and linguistically appropriate services, broadly defined as care and services that are respectful of and responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of all individuals.**

Culturally and linguistically appropriate services are increasingly recognized as effective in improving the quality of care and services. By providing a structure to implement culturally and linguistically appropriate services, the National CLAS Standards will improve an organization's ability to address health care disparities.

In 2022, LSS established a CLAS workgroup comprised of several employees across business units to evaluate these 15 standards, assess areas of needed improvement, and to create an LSS specific CLAS Implementation Plan. In the coming months, the CLAS workgroup plans to highlight key aspects of these standards in an effort to familiarize staff with these requirements as we continue to provide services to our clients that are culturally and linguistically appropriate. As an employee of LSS, you will also start to see various trainings, material, & policies around CLAS as we begin to fully integrate and develop these standards. Should you have any clarifying questions, comments, or concerns around CLAS, please reach out to [Juli.Fugate@lsswis.org](mailto:Juli.Fugate@lsswis.org) or [Lindsay.Dahms@lsswis.org](mailto:Lindsay.Dahms@lsswis.org).





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*Your love grows healthy communities  
Thank you for being a trusted partner in ministry!*

**774 employees**

**Nearly 30,000  
clients served**

**96% overall client  
satisfaction**

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