

# Grace AT WORK



[www.lssnorcal.org](http://www.lssnorcal.org)

## Our Main Office has Moved!

Please note our new administrative address:  
1465 Civic Court  
Building D, Suite 810  
Concord, CA. 94520

## Our Mission

Responding to the biblical mandates of compassion and justice, Lutheran Social Services of Northern California affirms the inherent worth of all people and strives to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

January 2015

## Generosity of Spirit Abounds

Each September many organizations and congregations encourage their communities to show the spirit of giving. Given special names such as "Day of Giving" or "Day of Caring," community members are inspired to share their time and resources with those who need it most.

LSS, and the clients we serve, partnered with several organizations to build a garden, provide backpacks and school supplies, and we even enjoyed an ice-cream social!

The United Way California Capital Region gave a grant to LSS to build a garden – and they provided the hardworking volunteers too!

Trinity Lutheran, St. Matthews, Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Zion Lutheran Church and Thrivent all donated backpacks and school supplies for the children of LSS.

LSS has graciously benefited from generosity this Fall!



Volunteers took a break from building a garden at Saybrook to pose for the camera



A heartfelt and handmade thank you card by one of our Folsom Dore children for the school supplies donated by Zion Lutheran



Thrivent and Lutheran Church of the Resurrection volunteers, Saybrook Program Manager, Amy Lawrence



Thrivent and Lutheran Church of the Resurrection volunteers, playing Bocce Ball with the children of Saybrook

## Glimmers of Hope *By Julie Kennedy*

After a whirlwind of visits to meet some of the clients of LSS, I was struck by the strength and hope that courses through their lives. Each with their own story, they are examples of overcoming obstacles that would stop most people in their tracks. Sidelined only temporarily, our clients provide evidence that the partnership of LSS staff with the endurance of our clients is a force to be reckoned with. These are the stories of some of our inspiring clients and how their lives have been changed through the compassionate care they have received from Lutheran Social Services.

## “I’ve Been Blessed, That’s the Bottom Line”

These are the words that Michael says when he talks about no longer being “displaced.” At LSS, he has found his home after being homeless for seven years, eleven months, and four days. Long in recovery from drugs and alcohol, Michael was a happily married father of six who owned his own home. Until the day his wife wanted a divorce. That is when he relapsed after fifteen years’ sobriety. Michael reports he “ran the streets until he literally could not run any longer.” Luckily, two women from Volunteers of America in the Sacramento area asked him if he needed help. He took their hands and the rest, as they say, is history.

When Michael speaks, he does not only speak for himself but for other homeless people. He is an advocate for others who still live the life he escaped. He has experienced firsthand the stereotyping of “the

homeless” and he didn’t like it.

“What you see is not always truth. We need to take away that stereotype. When we group people together and label them, we lose individuality. To advocate, you must know who you’re advocating for,” he says.

He also says that LSS was flexible enough to make the opportunity for him to change his life. Today, he has hope where before he didn’t and he loves himself enough to love others.



Michael



## A message from the CEO...

### Friends and Supporters –

As we ring in the New Year, we reflect on the year we put behind us. Our money management program in San Francisco made a big move after losing our lease due to the gentrification of San Francisco. The high-tech companies moved in and many nonprofits lost their leases. LSS was no exception. Though we have completed renovations and are settling into our new space, our fundraising efforts have not diminished. A special thank you goes to Pastor Jon and the congregation of Bethany Lutheran Church in Menlo Park for hosting a prime rib dinner to assist us in our fundraising efforts. Events such as these help us reach our fundraising goals; as well as provide the opportunity to share the wonderful work we do with our community.

Speaking of community, LSS was blessed to partner in several endeavors this fall. From building a garden, to collecting backpacks and school supplies, to enjoying ice cream, art, and sports on a warm fall day, all involved benefited from the generosity of those that

gave their time and resources so generously through organized Day of Giving and Day of Service efforts. Without support from our partners, the children of LSS would not be able to start a new year prepared for success!

In this issue of Grace at Work, we profile three of the clients at LSS. These clients, and all those we serve, are reminders to us all to count our blessings. Though it is possible to overcome trauma with loving hands and hearts, most of us are blessed to not have to experience the horrors many of our clients have faced. It is particularly difficult to select only one client to profile – so for this issue, we splurged and are sharing the lives of three with you, our friends and supporters.

As you celebrate the New Year, please know that the clients, staff, and board of Lutheran Social Services is grateful for your unwavering support.

Happy New Year!



## Super Mom

By all accounts, Terrica is a natural mother. Her motherly instincts are a gift she was born with because they were certainly not modeled for her by her own mother. On her own since she was twelve because of her parent's drug use, Terrica is a single mother of twin daughters. Terrica says that she had to let go of her parent's influences in order to move on. Move on, she did.

With the help of her case manager, Aimee, Terrica reports that LSS has helped her focus on her life. Referred to LSS by a family member, Terrica was not working and her twin daughters were not in preschool when she first arrived to our programs. Since her arrival, she has

skyrocketed. She got a job at Safeway and was quickly promoted from cashier to assistant manager in the deli department. That was no surprise to LSS staff because, as Aimee reports, "Terrica has a fantastic attitude and everyone loves her." As for Terrica's babies: They are thriving in a Head Start program and Terrica advocates for them the way no one did for her when she was a child.



"Whatever comes, I am ready" –Terrica

## Home is Where the Heart is

With a steady voice, Lauren begins to share her story. As she weaves her tale, I begin to notice she remembers intricate details of the countless homes she has lived in - the layout of the house, the color of the paint on the walls. When I ask her how she remembers rich details, she responds it was because she was happy; happy in spite of the traumas she endured.

Lauren's mother was an alcoholic married to an abusive man. Lauren, her older sister, and their mother all suffered at his hands. They moved all over the country before settling in California when Lauren was thirteen. That was when Lauren was pulled out of school by police who received a report her stepdad was sexually abusing both sisters. Rather than testify against him, Lauren's mother fled the state with her husband, leaving both daughters in foster care..

Lauren became homeless at eighteen. She became a client of LSS and began to turn her life around. Lauren says, "The stability of the program helps me feel safe and the open communication helps me feel like we are family." Finally, Lauren knows what it's like to be part of a family again.



Lauren with case manager, Aimee

## Thank you Joan, Pastor Jon and Bethany Lutheran!

LSS board member, Joan Hilse, has worked tirelessly to spread the word about the good works of LSS. She enlisted the help of her pastor, Pastor Jon of Bethany Lutheran in Menlo Park, and they generously sponsored a well-attended, lovely soiree to raise much-needed funds to support our In the City for Good campaign. This campaign was necessitated by our move to our new building. To find out how you too can help LSS stay In the City for Good, please contact Nancy at [nnielsen@lssnocal.org](mailto:nnielsen@lssnocal.org).

### Program Wish List

*Some of our clients have difficulty purchasing some of the basic necessities many of us take for granted and are reaching out for help. If you can help, please contact Julie at 916-453-2900 x 105 or [jkennedy@lssnocal.org](mailto:jkennedy@lssnocal.org).*

Finger/toenail clippers	Bar soap
Shaving cream	Shampoo
Deodorant	Backpacks
Lotion	Bath Robes
Toothpaste	Kitchenware
Mouthwash	Gift cards any type
Umbrellas	Flip flops
Rain ponchos	Slippers
Socks	Under clothes (all sizes)
Double or triple edge shaving razors	



**Lutheran**  
Social Services  
—of—  
Northern California

1465 Civic Court  
Building D, Suite 810  
Concord, CA 94520

## MAIN OFFICE

1465 Civic Court  
Building D, Suite 810  
Concord, CA 94520  
Tel 925.825.1060  
Fax 925.825.1061

## SERVICE OFFICES

191 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
Tel 415.581.0891  
Fax 415.581.0899

4390 47th Avenue  
Sacramento, CA 95824  
Tel 916.453.2900  
Fax 916.453.2904

8161 Palisades Drive #233  
Stockton, CA 95210  
Tel 209.937.0100  
Fax 209.937.9510



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Becky Burad, Chair  
Chrislyn Carson  
V-Anne Chernock  
Jeffery Patrick Douglass  
Joan Hilse  
Sterling Joe  
Marilyn Lapkass  
Joel Mjolsness  
Joshua Morgan  
Chris D. Nicolette  
Lois Peacock  
Jack Pease  
John Yeh

## PRESIDENT/CEO

Carol Roberts, Ph.D.

## CFO

Kulwant Asthana

## DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Nancy Nielsen

**Support Lutheran Social  
Services of Northern  
California when you  
shop Amazon.com**

*You Shop!*

*AmazonSmile Gives!*

Amazon will donate .5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Lutheran Social Services of Northern California.

It's easy to support us every time you shop at Amazon. Visit AmazonSmile today and choose Lutheran Social Services as your charity of choice!