



April 2009

Vol. 40.4



Rev. Mark Holmerud  
Sierra Pacific Synod  
ELCA Bishop

## TOOLS FOR CHANGE CONFERENCE

Showcasing 125 years of  
experience  
in Social Ministry



Rev. Robert Newton  
CNH District  
LCMS President

Lutheran Social Services of Northern California kicked off its 125th anniversary with a well attended conference on social ministry, Tools for Change. The conference, held at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Livermore, highlighted areas of need: homeless former foster youth, disaster victims, mental health, emergency services and financial management services. Over one hundred individuals participated in the conference coming from as far away as Pacifica, as well as in the immediate area.

Both LCMS President Rev. Robert Newton and ELCA Bishop Rev. Mark Holmerud opened the conference with Barbara Dröher Kline, President of LSS. All of the leaders commented on the need for dialogue with the community rather than telling people what to do. The focus is to have the affected communities make their own priorities. President Newton and Bishop Holmerud shared their experiences in traveling to areas of need. They were moved by the resilience and hope of the suffering. Lutherans now enjoy an "outsider position", a place where one can respond to the actual needs of people instead of dictating policy. The social ministry efforts will be enhanced as Lutherans learn to listen rather than lead.

Workshops were lead by outstanding experts in various fields: vulnerable youth, disaster planning, financial management, mental health, homelessness and emergency assistance. The conference was a successful event for social change. Attendees appreciated the hospitality and well organized event. *continued on page 2*

## CARING COMPASSION, FAITHFUL SERVICE

Van Gogh and Monet were painting in France, Democrat Grover Cleveland narrowly defeated Republican James Blaine and became the first Democratic Party President in 28 years. France was conquering Vietnam and the labor unions proclaimed the 8 hour work day. In Northern California, Lutherans of various nationalities gathered in this year of 1883 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth.

This potluck event served as the focal point for the first organized expression of Lutheran social ministry for the west coast as money was collected for a Martin Luther Children's Home. Although the institution was never built, direct financial aid was provided to California orphans by the association for over 50 years. The organization transitioned from the Orphan Home Association to the Lutheran Children's Friend Society and then to the Lutheran Child and Family Service agency.

In 1945, the Lutheran Welfare Council of Northern California was formed "to act as a common social service agency for the ALC and LCA churches of the area." By 1951, the Lutheran Welfare Council could claim a range of programs from institutional chaplaincy, casework, material relief, and immigration to a public relations department that expressed the call for social reform to help the needy. The Lutheran Welfare Service of Northern California (a name change of the Lutheran Welfare Council in 1953) developed an area structure of 14 distinct regions in 1955. *continued on page 6*

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## ✿ Dear Friends...

In several conversations recently, colleagues who are not Lutheran referred to themselves as being "lutheranized"!

Their explanation is that they have been exposed to and impressed by the Lutheran vision of social ministry and the Lutheran commitment to services for people who are needy. In this economic recession, many more individuals and families are experiencing economic stress combined with health issues, housing issues, educational issues, job training needs. In this environment our work is even more noticed and called upon by others. Non-profits needs are being covered by the media and reflect the economic challenges of this time.

Pressures on the social safety net are huge; your commitment and support is even more critical. Those of you who are able have increased their donations. LSS appreciates the support given in these hard times.

Our faith and hope are even more important to those who are losing or have lost hope. Our light must continue to shine.

In this season of Lent,

## ✿ Board of Directors

LSS welcomes new Board members!

Robert Bastien is a Housing Finance Specialist for the State of California and lives in Roseville.

Susan Thornton is a retired attorney and lives in San Ramon.

Paul Walker was elected the Chair of the Board of Directors.

Our thanks to the leadership of Jack Geistlinger who served as Board chair last year.

## Tools for Change - Continued

Conference evaluations included comments such as "The best workshop in decades", and "Great to have LCMS/ELCA here together with both leaders. Great lunch box! Great conference today, LSS! Thank you for all the hard work to put it together!"

Final remarks included requests for replication in other parts of the state, as well as making the event an annual social ministry gathering. Plans are underway for a similar conference at year's end in the central valley. Participants left the conference with enthusiasm and with tools to have a positive impact on vulnerable populations in our society. LSS was pleased to share some of the lessons learned over 125 years of social ministry in Northern California.



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The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.” (Isaiah 58:11)

LSS appreciates the support you have given us during these challenging times. Everything in this life that we have is a sacred trust from God and your gifts allow LSS to show God’s love in action.

*LSS relies on your generosity to achieve our mission of service.  
Thank you to these donors who gave between October 1 and January 31st.*

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### 125 Years of Social Ministry - continued

In 1966 a major assimilation was effected with the merger of the Lutheran Child and Family Service and the Lutheran Welfare Service into the Lutheran Social Services of Northern California to serve the combined ALC, LCA and LC-MS constituencies. The combined agency maintained the programs of its predecessor organizations and created local counseling centers with more community services. Reverend A. E. (Steve) Syverud, Executive Director of the Lutheran Welfare Service since 1955, was the first president of the newly formed organization and who served until 1970.

From 1971 until January 1978 Pastor Joseph (Joe) Belgum served as the Executive Director. Two additional service areas were established in Bakersfield and in Nevada, raising the total areas to 16. In 1975, the fall of Saigon and influx of Indochinese refugees led to the initiation of a major program effort for the agency in conjunction with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services. In the late 1970s, a restructuring of the agency into the present six areas laid the groundwork for LSS' development into its present form and size.

In 1978, Richard D. Stahlke became the President and Chief Executive Officer. In the years that followed, LSS secured contracts for home management training, transitional housing, child abuse prevention and substance abuse prevention services. Turning Point Women's Center was developed in San Jose, providing a range of programs that included counseling, support groups, and services to women reentering the community after incarceration. Immigration and refugee services continued through June 1994. During the early 1990s an emphasis emerged for LSS in the form of services to people with AIDS. In 1996 money management programs became a major focus and a foundation for other support services for vulnerable individuals and families, such as case management and housing.

On October 1, 2003, Barbara Dröher Kline became the first woman President and CEO of LSS. As a former program manager in 1984 and 1985, she has a historical agency perspective, as well as experience in the public sector in local government in California and in Minnesota. LSS responded to the growing homelessness challenge by increasing permanent and transitional supportive housing programs in Stockton, Concord and Sacramento. LSS is one of the largest nonprofit providers of supportive housing programs for former foster youth.

Proud of its historic ability to respond to current needs, LSS continues to research and implement valuable social service programs. LSS is proud to be part of the rich tradition of Lutheran social ministry.

*40% of the people comprising California's homeless population are former foster youth.*

*Within two to four years after aging out of California's foster care system,*

- Over 50% of youth are unemployed;*
- Close to 40% of youth receive public assistance;*
- Approximately 25% of youth will experience homelessness.*



**SAVE THE DATE... Sept. 22, 2009**

# An Evening With Garrison Keillor



Lutheran Social Services of Northern California is bringing Garrison Keillor, radio host and world- renowned creator of *Prairie Home Companion* to the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium on Tuesday, September 22, 2009. LSS is presenting Garrison Keillor in celebration of our 125th anniversary as an event to bring the Lutheran community together to raise funds for services provided to former foster youth, families and vulnerable individuals.

Get the best seats now! Major sponsorships are available now and range in levels from \$50,000 to \$250. Benefits include a variety of opportunities for visibility, such as inclusion in display advertising in local newspapers, your display ad in the event program, your name on the on-site sponsor signage, and mentions in newsletters distributed electronically to a targeted audience of 3,000. Sponsors also receive premium seats and invitations to a private reception. Major sponsors can meet Garrison Keillor following his presentation. Churches are encouraged to become sponsors. The ticket price only covers the cost of the performance. Your sponsorship will raise funds for the LSS social ministry mission.

Your sponsorship is important to the people we serve. Your support will ensure a successful celebration of the compassionate care and faithful service provided to so many for 125 years. Your participation will make this a signature event for the Lutherans in Northern California. Please save the date and get your friends organized to attend. Preferred tickets can be ordered now for sponsors. For additional sponsorship information, contact Allan Shaffer at [alshaffer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alshaffer@sbcglobal.net) or Susan Hill at 925.825.1060x17, [shill@lssnorcal.org](mailto:shill@lssnorcal.org).

A big thank you to Rev. Ron Zielske and his committee for an outstanding job in promoting ticket sales to the Lutheran churches. Individual tickets can be ordered with a pre-sale code (**4LSS**) for LSS supporters at the Sacramento Convention Center, [www.sacramentoconventioncenter.com](http://www.sacramentoconventioncenter.com), 916.808.5181.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Lutheran Social Services is proud to present *An Evening with Garrison Keillor* on Tuesday, September 22, 2009 at Sacramento's Memorial Auditorium.

Your help is needed to make this evening a joyful experience. Allan Shaffer is the chair of this event and he is looking forward to your participation.

Assistance is needed with sponsor contacts and with advertising for the event program.

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*Hope Builder* **\$10,000+**  
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Bill Maki  
Rich Mullenbach  
Juliana and Arthur Schultz  
Sharon Seegmiller  
Rev. Ron Zielske



**Lutheran  
Social Services**  
OF NORTHERN  
CALIFORNIA

*compassionate caring, faithful service*

988 Oak Grove Road  
Concord, CA 94518



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*Lutheran Social Services responds when people are vulnerable because of homelessness, mental illness, drug addiction or disaster. Providing support services and compassionate guidance, we help individuals and families to stabilize their lives and become self-sufficient.*

### Calendar

- May Luncheon for current and former Board to celebrate the 125th anniversary
- June Meeting of the Board of Directors Phonathon to Friends of LSS
- July Keillor tickets go on sale to the general public
- August Deadline for Sponsorship and Program Ads
- September 22nd - Keillor Performance



### Your Will Be Done

There is a reason why the main estate-planning document that is used to distribute one's assets at death is called a "will". This single word encases the wishes of the deceased. Your intention is expressed – will you leave a legacy of caring for others by including Lutheran Social Services?

Do you have a valid, up-to-date will in place? LSS has helpful information we will send you free of charge. It includes important information about estate planning. You may contact Susan Hill at 925.825.1060x17, [shill@lssnorcal.org](mailto:shill@lssnorcal.org) or visit our website to request a copy or have more information sent to you.



Through a charitable bequest in your will or living trust, you can ensure that Lutheran Social Services will keep its doors open for another one hundred years. This thoughtful act, which has little or no current financial impact on you, may result in the largest and most lasting one-time gift you ever make to enhance our world. You can also transfer cash, stock or real estate to a charitable trust which distributes annual payments to you for life. This trust will never pay capital gains tax on the sale of appreciated assets and will provide you with an immediate charitable income tax deduction and ensure a future gift to Lutheran Social Services of Northern California. Our Legacy Circle of Love provides lifetime recognition to donors who have included Lutheran Social Services in their estate plan. All you need to do is tell LSS that your plan is in place and you are in the Legacy Circle. For more information, contact Susan Hill, 925.825.1060x17 or visit [www.lssnorcal.org](http://www.lssnorcal.org) and click on "Giving and Support" then "Planned Giving."