

■ Making the Most of a Second Chance

Pamala has overcome many hurdles in her life: cancer, serious substance use and homelessness. Today she enjoys the love of family, has a job and her own apartment. She spends time exploring her Native American heritage. LSS accompanied her in the journey toward redemption and healing.

The 57-year-old admits that her priorities were all wrong for much of her life. Her childhood in Santa Cruz, California was challenging and left her and her three siblings with no sense of self-worth or responsibility. Her father, a police officer, was stern and abusive, and her mother struggled as a parent. The couple eventually divorced.

"Despite the best intentions, sometimes our families fail us," Pamala says.

Pamala got involved with drugs at a tender age, struggled with mental illness and heroin addiction. She ended up homeless and in jail multiple times. She lost custody of her son, which was crushing. Her last jail sentence, 17 years for possession and drug sales, was commuted after six years with mandated drug treatment, but not before she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Nothing prepared her for coping with stage-three cancer while in prison.

You know, it takes a special person to work with someone like me and to want better for me.

"I remember praying in the prison yard, asking for forgiveness and hope. That's when a power greater than me intervened," she recalls.

Fortunately, Pamala landed in a supportive housing program that connected her with a LSS case worker, Amber, who guided her through drug rehabilitation, cancer treatment, job training and basic life skills classes. Eventually she enrolled in the LSS Money Management Program and worked with Gabriela, another LSS case worker.

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GIVE BIG ON MAY 2!

Let's raise \$20,000 for our youth supportive housing programs during the 7th **Big Day of Giving**, aka, Big DOG, on Thursday, May 2. Stay tuned ... Woof!



OUR MISSION: To promote stability and honor the dignity of those we serve by providing supportive housing services that lead to self-sufficiency.

A Message from the CEO: Our role in disaster relief and ending homelessness, for good



The call to help others is central to LSS's mission and vision of ending homelessness by creating communities of hope and stability with a path to self-sufficiency. This means guiding individuals of all ages, including families with children, in rebuilding their lives after experiencing homelessness. We start with

stable housing, so they can focus on addressing the causes of their past homelessness. These causes can be complex – poverty, mental health, domestic violence, chronic disability or illness, substance abuse – and they can be catastrophic – surviving cancer or an accident or living through a disaster, such as the wildfires that have plagued Northern California.

In 2018, LSS received donations and grants exceeding \$250,000 to support those who lost their homes and livelihoods, along with friends and

family in wildfires across Shasta and Butte counties. A portion of your donations and grants from Lutheran Disaster Response provided immediate short-term assistance to hundreds in the form of \$100 VISA gift cards. Now we are working with each community as to how we can support their long-term recovery with the donated funds.

Funds contributed for wildfires in 2017 are still being put to use. After the initial immediate support of \$100 VISA gift cards, donations and grants have supported long-term emotional and spiritual care workshops for older adults and bringing Camp Noah to children in Sonoma, Lake and Mendocino counties.

Disaster relief remains a part of our work but it is not all that LSS does in its quest to end homelessness. We accompany the individuals that we serve in their journey to self-sufficiency and healing, which can take months or years. We manage supportive housing programs, not shelters, because it takes time to rebuild one's life and regain confidence and dignity after experiencing homelessness. We will be assisting the communities in Shasta and Butte counties for years to come as formerly homeless and newly homeless individuals and families struggle to start anew.

—Carol Roberts, Ph.D., CEO

Cover Story continued

Pamala's respect for her LSS advocates is evident. "You know, it takes a special person to work with someone like me and to want better for me. I appreciated the patience and tough love. It taught me responsibility."

Pamala is making the most of this second chance to get her life right. She reconnected with her brother and his family and visits them when she can. Her son found her and introduced Pamala to her granddaughter.

She moved out of supportive housing and lives in a quiet neighborhood. Her place even has a view, so the one year wait for a Section 8 voucher was worth it. She worked as a front desk clerk at 990 Polk Street, which houses many LSS senior clients, and recently got promoted to assistant manager at another building owned by the developer.

"I love the job, the work and being of service."



These band students at Evergreen High School, in partnership with Grace Lutheran of Evergreen in San Jose, held a concert to benefit those affected by the Camp Fire. They donated funds to LSS and Red Cross.

Your gifts to LSS help individuals such as Pamala to rebuild their lives. Visit www.lssnorcal.org and donate today.

Winter & Holiday Drives

LSS staff and Americore/NCCC workers wrapped more than 300 Christmas gifts for children, families and youth in our programs throughout Sacramento, Stockton and Concord.

The following congregations donated gifts:

Holy Cross Lutheran, *Concord WOH*

Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, *Granite Bay*

Trinity Lutheran, *Sacramento*

Faith Lutheran, *Fair Oaks*

Trinity Lutheran, *Pleasanton*



As part of the **One Warm Coat** initiative, students at **Grace Lutheran School San Mateo** gathered 200+ coats, along with sweaters, scarves and hats in all sizes for LSS program participants of all ages.

More than 300 coats, warm clothing and blankets were donated by:

prAna, *San Francisco*

Zion Lutheran

One Market Plaza

Resurrection Lutheran, *San Rafael*

Project Night Night secures donations of warm blankets, stuffed toy and books for children and pre-teens. The corporations donating to LSS this year were Facebook and Egon Zehnder.





Ending Homelessness. For Good.

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STAY CONNECTED



Board of Director Transitions

In December we gave **Becky Burad** a fond farewell in appreciation for her eight years on the LSS of Northern California board of directors.

We also welcomed **Susan Taylor, RN, of Sacramento**. She serves as Coordinator of Dignity Health's Mercy Faith & Health Partnership.



Becky Burad at her last board meeting

A large heart shape is formed by a dense collection of colorful, stylized icons. The icons include various flowers (blue, red, yellow), butterflies (orange, red, blue), light bulbs, gift boxes with red bows, and female symbols. The heart is set against a background of concentric, wavy lines in shades of pink and white.

LSS Wish List

Our staff is always in need of these items* for our supportive housing programs. Funding we receive simply does not cover all our costs.

Paper & Paper Goods

Reams of white copier paper
Paper plates and cups
Compostable or disposable flat ware

Kitchen Items

Plastic cutting boards
Slow cookers
Instapots
Deep Fryers
Pots and Pans
Metal kitchen prep tables

Emergency Items for Residents

Earthquake survival kits
First aid kits

Electronic Equipment for Community Rooms

Home WiFi kit (such as Google or Nest)
Mesh Router
Desktop scanner

Food Stuff

Folger's Instant Coffee
Bagged Tea
Day Old Baked Goods

**New or very gently used, please.*

LSS Volunteer Opportunities

Here are ways an individual or a group can support our work in helping individuals who are overcoming homelessness. We have programs in San Francisco, Stockton and Sacramento and volunteer opportunities can be one-time or ongoing based on your time and interest.

- Organize weekly food bank visits at housing sites
- Computer and mobile device instruction for seniors
- Gardening
- Assist with on-site events (e.g., family-style meals, bingo, arts and crafts) at our housing sites

Please contact Rachel Flores about volunteer opportunities or to learn more about our wish list.

rflores@lssnorcal.org or 925.825.1060 x20

