

## ■ A Profile in Courage

### *Manifesting His Future*

At LSS, our vision is to end homelessness and create communities that offer stability, hope and a path to self-sufficiency. Here is the story of a LSS youth client on his journey to adulthood.

After a conversation with Gabe, a resident at LSS' MiCasa supportive housing program for former foster youth, you sense you are in the presence of an old soul.

At just 21 years old, Gabe is calm, focused and steady in his gaze as he speaks to you. He is enthusiastic about his plans for the future and his demeanor and thoughtful conversation make it difficult to imagine all he has experienced: abuse, unstable foster care situations, gender-identity questions and homelessness.

A deep spirituality has helped ground Gabe in his young but tumultuous life. His search has drawn him to Buddhism and sometimes he attends Buddha Gate Monastery in Lafayette.

He states resolutely, "I am manifesting my path."

Gabe entered foster care at age three due to neglect and abuse. No one in his immediate family could or would take care of him or his two brothers. Early in his childhood, he questioned his gender-identity but found no support from his family, with whom he had little interaction anyway.

*"I am manifesting my path."*

Not surprisingly, Gabe developed anger management issues at a young age and battled depression and feelings of abandonment, as did his brothers. Throughout childhood and his teens, he lived in a series of residential group homes for children with severe emotional problems. He was prescribed strong psychiatric medications that sometimes made him feel like a zombie.



*Gabe, a resident at LSS' MiCasa  
supportive housing program  
for former foster youth*

*continued on page 2*

## ■ In This Issue

- A Profile in Courage
- Returning the Favor
- Why I Give to LSS
- Farewell
- CEO Corner
- Make Your Voice Heard



### **GIVE BIG ON THE BIG DAY OF GIVING, MAY 7TH**

Join us for a client art show  
at Maison Privee in Midtown  
Sacramento



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

## ■ A Profile in Courage (continued)

Over the years, counseling and therapy have taught Gabe coping skills, how to manage the ups and downs of life, as well as to advocate for himself and for others. Gabe has a strong desire to help others, especially youth in foster care. He has participated in the California Youth Connection's lobbying days to advocate for issues and laws important to the well-being of the state's large foster youth population, estimated at 62,000.

He left foster care at age 17 and moved from one transitional housing program to another, eventually ending up in a youth shelter after an unhealthy relationship ended. This experience makes Gabe especially grateful for MiCasa, where he has lived since early 2019. He has his own furnished room and access to a communal kitchen and living room. It's also clean, has a yard and offers easy access to mass transit. Most of the other group homes and the shelter lacked these modest features.

The MiCasa program provides Gabe with the stability and support he needs to build a future for himself. "I like the structure, which creates responsibility. And you learn to live with others."



*MiCasa community kitchen*

He maintains a full schedule, attending Gurnick Medical Academy four nights a week and maintaining a part-time job at PetSmart. Those earnings help him contribute his 30% share of rent, a requirement at MiCasa. When not studying, he meditates; exercises, practices mixed martial arts and Brazilian jujitsu, and hangs with his girlfriend.

He researched Gurnick before enrolling and found a strong sense of purpose – helping others – in his coursework and discovered a fascination with science. In the first half of 2020, he will complete his externship to become a Certified Nursing Assistant and Phlebotomist and may pursue a nursing or physician's assistant degree.

Gabe's growing resolve and focus on the good and positive things in his life leaves you with the sense that this young man will create a life that will allow him to remain stable and realize his dream to help others. Thanks to private support, he will receive assistance in renting his first apartment on his own.

## ■ I Am Simply Returning the Favor

Thomas was an LSS money management client for several years. He came to San Francisco in the 1990s to seek his fortune and seemed to prosper, calling home often. Thomas was an active day trader during the dot.com boom and lost a lot of money, including funds that belonged to his little brother, known as Chen. Relations with his family became strained, and Thomas stopped calling about five years ago. It was a shock when Chen received a call from LSS case worker Daniel Rosenberry about his brother's passing from cancer last October.

Chen recalled how important his older brother was to him. "My parents always worked, and it was Thomas and my sister who took care of me, even attending parent-teacher meetings. I drove to San Francisco twice in the mid-90s to visit him."

A software engineer with Citizen's Financial Group in Rhode Island, Chen visited the Money Management program and Thomas' LSS case worker to thank them and learn more about the program. Chen made a donation to LSS in his brother's memory and asked his employer to make a matching gift "You kept my brother from being homeless. I simply wanted to return the favor."

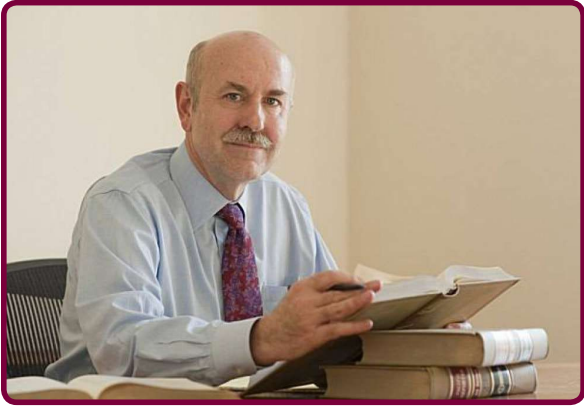


*This is the only photo of his siblings that Chen possesses (l to r) with Thomas, Paula and himself. It was taken Christmas Day 1986, not long after Thomas followed his family from China to Massachusetts.*



## Why I Give to LSS

Richard B. Ulmer, Jr., sees the large number of homeless who congregate in the Civic Center and UN Plaza areas every day on his way to San Francisco County's Superior Court, where he serves as a judge. He often wonders if all the government funds are making a difference. When he learned about LSS of Northern California's money management program, he recognized a real service. **"I see this program as effective in keeping people housed."**



The money management program, now 22 years old, serves 1800 formerly homeless individuals every month by making certain they can pay their share rent and utilities with their limited income. Case workers assist each person in managing whatever funds they have left – for the month -- to stay on budget. The system works. On average, **97%** of LSS San Francisco clients remain housed due to money management.

Judge Ulmer, a long-time member of Zion Lutheran in San Francisco, looks to his faith for guidance and believes that individuals should be the source of charity. **"We** have a duty to help those in need."

## Farewell

These LSS board members termed out in January. Thank you for your service!

Jeffrey Douglass

Tom Hurley

Michael Pavloff

Jon Yeh

## CEO Corner: A New Decade Brings New Opportunities



In 2020 we are redesigning our youth supportive housing programs, starting in Sacramento and Stockton, to create a stronger foundation for our youths' long-term success. We will place greater emphasis on educational attainment and supportive job

training to help youth obtain living wage employment that can lead to lifetime self-sufficiency and a healthier, more fulfilling life. This new program design is relevant and scalable, so we can replicate it in other communities we serve.

Why this approach, and why now?

For younger adults and youth 18-24 years old, we can help them address head-on many of the circumstances that resulted in homelessness. These individuals are coming to LSS with less basic education and fewer life skills than are

needed to live independently. Stable housing along is no longer sufficient.

We must increasingly examine each person's social determinants of health, those external circumstances that create obstacles to living a healthy, productive life. These circumstances create barriers that become the underlying causes of homelessness, such lack of education, job skills, where and how one grew up, race and gender. This requires patience, compassion and a long-term approach to helping a person rebuild their life so they may lead a healthy, productive, satisfying life after experiencing homelessness.

Generous investments from the **Walter S. Johnson Foundation**, **Del E. Webb Foundation**, **Anthem Blue Cross** and several individuals are helping make the initial work possible. We believe it may offer new opportunities for the older adults we serve, too. Our main goal has always been to preserve their dignity, keep them in safe, stable housing and as healthy as their life experiences will permit. In the future, we hope to have new options to enrich their lives and help them age with dignity.



Ending Homelessness. For Good.

1465 Civic Court Bldg. D, Suite 810  
Concord, CA 94520

## Become a **Partner for Good**

Monthly donations are an easy way to help us end homelessness for good. A gift of \$15 per month helps to purchase everyday essentials like hygiene products, food, cleaning supplies, etc.

Become a **Partner for Good** today and we'll send you an insulated mug or all-purpose bag as a thank you!



### 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 Ave.  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
Tel: 415.581.0891  
Fax: 415.581.0899

4390 47th Ave.  
Sacramento, CA 95824  
Tel: 916.453.2900  
Fax: 916.453.2904

4550 N. Pershing Ave., Ste J  
Stockton, CA 95207  
Tel: 209.323.5131  
Fax: 209.954.1715

2440 Hilltop Drive  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
Redding, CA 96003  
Cell: 530.921.2324

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sandra Hamilton Slane,  
Chair  
Brion R. Beetz  
Ridwana Bentley  
Chrislyn Carson  
V-Anne Chernock  
Elizabeth Donnelly  
Yolanda Gan  
Jayde Garcia  
Patricia Leslie  
Chris D. Nicolette  
Susan Taylor  
Mary Wolkenhauer  
Crystle Wong

### PRESIDENT/CEO

Carol Roberts, Ph.D.

### STAY CONNECTED



## ■ Make Your Voice Heard

### Annual Lutheran Lobby Day

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

9:00 am – 4:00pm

Sacramento, CA

Learn more at [www.loppca.org](http://www.loppca.org)

Email Director Regina Banks, Esq.

[director@loppca.org](mailto:director@loppca.org)



*More than 100 people participated in the first  
California Lutheran Lobby Day in 2019*

visit us on line at [www.lssnorcal.org](http://www.lssnorcal.org)