



Grace at Work January 2023

LSS Launches VITA program for current and former foster youth

LSS of Northern California is thrilled to share a new partnership to provide free tax filing services to current and former foster youth in Northern California. Working in collaboration with United Ways of California, John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY) and the State of California Franchise Tax Board, LSS is now a host in the **VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)** program. Beginning February 1, we will have volunteers available to assist this population in preparing their federal income taxes AND receiving the tax credits for which they qualify. We have host sites in Sacramento and Concord, but any youth can participate through a remote option.



With little background in employment or tax filing, many transition aged youth either avoid filing taxes (much to their detriment later), complete them on their own or work with flawed guidance. The result is that many of them fail to secure all the credits allowable by law, including the foster youth tax credit.

"Our mission is to guide the youth we serve to live stable, robust lives," says Kate Hutchinson, Deputy Director of Inland Programming at LSS. "This opportunity is another critical way in which we can do this."

LSS is happy to provide information to our partners and friends to refer youth to this program (which runs from February 1 to Tax Day). Please contact us at info@lssnorcal.org. Or youth can go directly to [VITA Registration](#) to review the qualifications and register.

CEO CORNER

LSS partners with the community

By Carol Roberts, PhD



At LSS of Northern California, we are well aware that ending homelessness...for good is a community activity. Every day our program staff in our 36+ programs are providing the case management, supportive services, guidance and friendship to those who are unhoused, newly housed or at risk of losing their housing in our region. Additionally, members of the LSS team are engaging movers and shakers throughout Northern California—elected officials, colleagues and partners—to work together in every way we can to alleviate the distress, trauma and overwhelming challenges that many in our region are experiencing.

From January 22-25, Deputy Director of Inland Programs Kate Hutchinson and I attended the Lutheran Services in America (LSA CEO Summit in Arizona, where we discussed and addressed various issues faced by many social services organizations around the country. LSA is a national network of more than 300 nonprofits “dedicated to achieving a healthier, more equitable future for people and communities in the United States.” It is a partnership of service organizations like LSS of Northern California, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA and The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS. The regional ELCA Sierra-Pacific Synod and LCMS



Carol Roberts (center)



Kate Hutchinson

California-Nevada-Hawaii District are our direct partners. I participated in two panels at the Summit. The first was on *Innovative Partnerships to Advance Strategy* where I talked about how LSS develops and maintains good partnerships (pictured above. The second was on *Medicaid Managed Care, Medicare Advantage and Value-based Payments: How Do They Work and Are They Financially Viable*, where I was able to share the details and successes of our growing CalAIM program in partnership with managed care providers.

Among her many other activities, Kate Hutchinson is Chair of the San Joaquin County Continuum of Care, which connects all the homeless service providers in that county. She was also integral in Sacramento's receiving a \$6.5 million Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). More on that in a feature story coming soon. San Francisco Deputy Director JP Soto is a member of the San Francisco Interfaith Council (pictured), which, among other things, hosts the annual Winter Shelter. He is also on local and state-wide HIV service planning committees.



JP Soto (left rear) and the San Francisco Interfaith Council



In March, Program Manager Jason Sitar is speaking at the Health, Education, and Career (HEC Conference for high school youth in foster care to share with them the opportunities that LSS and other organizations have for them as they finish high school, leave the foster care system and move on in their lives. In May, representatives of our San Francisco HIV-services program team are presenting at the SF HIV/AIDS Provider Network.

Development Director Jerry Metzker regularly attends outreach events and meetings with our concerned neighbors and partners throughout the region.

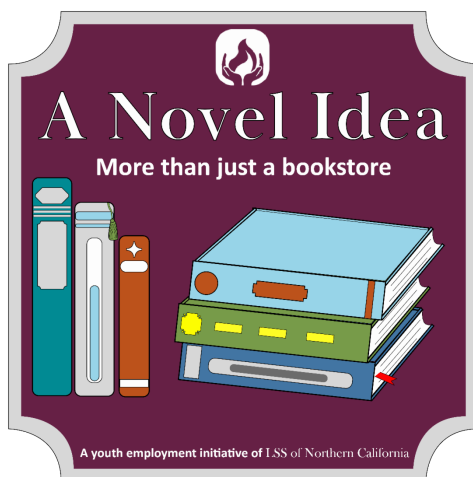
In December, he spoke to the members of Hope Lutheran Church in Walnut Creek and hosted an information table at a Sacramento Kings game. In January, he delivered a talk/sermon at Christ Lutheran Church in El Cerrito and met with members of the Concord Chamber of Commerce to talk about our new VITA tax preparation program for current and former foster youth. He is currently planning a monthlong series of activities at Lutheran Church of the Incarnation in Davis.



This is just the tip of the iceberg. LSS administration and staff serve on Boards, commissions and attend events and activities throughout our service area. We're also available to speak to your organization or join your team in strengthening the network of those who care about our vulnerable neighbors. If you haven't been to our website recently, check out our constantly growing list of partners [here](#).

Winter time is reading time

Get your books from A Novel Idea!



Winter has arrived, and who doesn't want to sit in a comfy chair with a hot beverage and a good book? A Novel Idea, the LSS of Northern California social enterprise in which the formerly homeless youth in our program have the opportunity to develop job skills while receiving a wage, has a collection of books online and ready.

"One of my favorite things about the books you have in your collection is that they are unique and hard to find," says one of our customers.

Check out our current and ever-changing sale list here: <https://anovelidea-lss.com/>. Make a purchase, support youth working toward self-

efficacy and stable lives and have a good book or two to read when the best thing to do is curl up and imagine.

Thank you, Holiday Gift Drive Donors!

A huge thank you to the wonderful and amazing churches, individuals, corporate groups, schools and service organizations who made our December 2022 Holiday Gift Drive an incredible success. Thanks to your overflowing hearts, LSS of Northern California was able to provide holiday gifts to more than 4,000 individuals throughout the region—toys for all the children in our program, warm scarves and hats for inclement weather (and we've had a lot of that this winter), warm blankets, hygiene kits and more. The joy as we handed out these gifts was palpable, and you can see for yourself the happiness you brought by checking out the picture gallery on our website.



Our Mission

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

DONATE



Lutheran Social Services of Northern California | 1465 Civic Court, Suite 810, Concord, CA 94520

[Unsubscribe development@lssnorcal.org](mailto:unsubscribe.development@lssnorcal.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by development@lssnorcal.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!