



Lavender Courtyard in Sacramento Opens

On July 8, 2022, LSS joined our housing partner Mutual Housing, Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg and Councilmember Katie Valenzuela, SMUD, the Sacramento LGBT Community, Imperial Court of Sacramento Empress Taryn, the Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus and a host of others to celebrate the Grand Opening of Lavender Courtyard by

Mutual Housing. This beautiful new, 53-unit affordable/supportive housing community is located in the Lavender Heights District of midtown Sacramento and provides a safe and affirming place for low-income and formerly homeless LGBTQ+ seniors and their champions, age 62 and over. Twenty-four (24) of the units are dedicated to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Each unit comes with built-in cupboards and a patio/terrace. The campus includes a spacious community room, onsite laundry facilities, an outdoor courtyard and garden area, as well as onsite property management and onsite LSS staff.

This is LSS's second housing partnership with Mutual Housing. The first is Mutual Housing at the Highlands, which provides 66 permanent supportive housing apartments and townhouses for formerly homeless individuals with disabilities. LSS provides comprehensive case management for 33 single adults living there.

Jessie, a transgender woman, is one of the new residents of the newly constructed Lavender Courtyard. "For the very first time, I feel like I am home," she says.



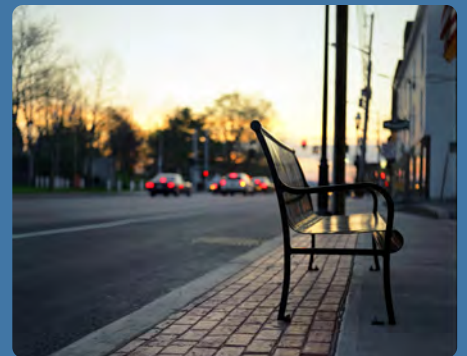
"I was living in my car," says Jessie, "and it got to the point where I absolutely didn't want to sleep at night, at all, because I was worried about things, being transgendered in a car, living homeless." For her own safety, Jessie returned to living as a man. "I felt like my identity had been stripped away."

Jessie's homelessness was directly connected to her gender identity. She experienced prejudice in housing and employment, as well as assault. She had to weather medical surgeries, including an urgent care need where she had to travel from where she was living in Colorado to San Francisco, because the Colorado medical staff did not have the expertise to address her need.

For five years of living mostly in her car, Jessie hid her identity.

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

CalAIM Continues to Grow

Earlier this year, LSS launched new programs in partnership with Medi-Cal and health insurance providers that address the health implications of homelessness. California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) is a new initiative overseen by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to transform and strengthen Medi-Cal, “offering a more equitable, coordinated, and person-centered approach to maximizing their health and life trajectory.”

We initially partnered with three health insurance providers (Anthem, HealthNet and Molina) to provide Enhanced Care Management (ECM) – whole person care services, and Community Supports (CS) –housing transition navigation services, deposits and tenancy, and sustaining services—in Sacramento, San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties.



We launched this program with the understanding that if all the partners remained engaged and worked together to serve the vulnerable individuals who needed these services, there would be tremendous opportunity for growth to serve more individuals in the community.

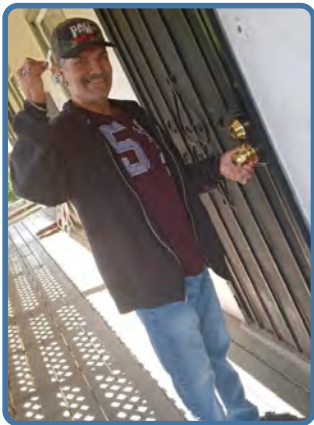
In its first few months, LSS has served 130 individuals, a number increasing every week.

And, in late July, we added a new partner—Partnership Health Plan—to provide Community Supports (CS)—housing services—in Shasta and Siskiyou Counties.

Individuals experiencing housing instability have limited access to preventative care and are more likely to have chronic health conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular disease. They are often undernourished or malnourished. Many cease renewing prescriptions that keep themselves medically regulated, and they are less likely to seek regular medical care, relying on expensive emergency care. Even those who are Medi-Cal patients with healthcare plans often fall into this because of the traumatic nature of their lives.

CalAIM seeks to remedy this—by connecting homeless and other vulnerable populations served by health insurance providers with service organizations like LSS, who welcome these individuals into our community, help them stabilize their lives, and reach toward the future.

We look forward to sharing how this new initiative progresses over the next several years. ■



CEO Corner: Diligence and Persistence



Every other year, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that Continuums of Care (these are regional, often counties or states) conduct a Point-in-Time (PIT) count of individuals and families experiencing homelessness (both sheltered and unsheltered). This occurs

every January and takes place on a single night. Volunteers walk through the community and count the number of people living in tents or shanties, as well as those sleeping in cardboard boxes or on park benches. The individuals and families staying in shelters on that one night are also counted. Some of them are interviewed for more details—age, cultural backgrounds, cause of homelessness, length of homelessness, etc. This data is then

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CEO Corner: Continued

compiled and shared publicly as a snapshot of the total number of people experiencing homelessness in an area.

Following its bi-annual cycle, the PIT Count was scheduled to take place in January 2021, but with the COVID-19 pandemic still raging, it was rescheduled to this year, and regions were given a little more flexibility in what night they chose.

The final reports are currently being issued, and to no one's surprise, across the United States, the number of individuals and families with children experiencing homelessness has increased drastically over the past three years. In the areas that LSS of Northern California serves, only San Francisco showed a decrease. In other areas, the increases range from 35% in Contra Costa County to 67% in Sacramento County. We all know that this is a crisis: an economic crisis, a health crisis and a humanitarian crisis.

At LSS of Northern California, we continue to pursue our mission to house and keep housed everyone we can—from families to single adults with children to youth and young adults to individuals with disabilities to seniors well into their 90s. Our remarkable program staff are diligent and persistent in locating and securing housing, in managing the finances of those whose income is far below the

poverty line, and in ensuring that those we house not just feel safe and secure, but also are safe and secure.

We not only accept opportunities to partner with other organizations to build and renovate housing, such as the newly opened Lavender Courtyard by Mutual Housing, but we also seek them out, as we are with our new CalAIM program. The increased numbers of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in our region means that we have an increased number of people to house and help stabilize. While we are currently tabulating the number of individuals we served over our most recent fiscal year (July – June), we already know that our numbers are going up. In the previous fiscal year, we served 4,200 individuals (up 200 from the year before), and we will continue to diligently and persistently serve as many more as we can. We appreciate your partnership to do this.

I am extremely grateful to LSS's amazingly dedicated, persistent and growing program staff—the program managers, coordinators and case managers who meet the people we serve where they are and lovingly guide and support them to becoming housed and/or remaining in housing. And I ask you, when you have the opportunity, to give a little word of thanks or appreciation to any of these dedicated individuals you come across—either LSS staff or others. Together, with diligence and persistence, we can end homelessness for good. ■



Zak's Closet

Empty your closet into Zak's Closet

Make a difference in the lives of transgender and non-binary youth in the Sacramento area by donating your unique and

fun lightly used clothing, jewelry and accessories. Every month features a different item. We accept donations on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00am – 1:00pm at 1219 S Street in Sacramento. September is for leggings and October is for jackets. For more information:

<https://www.lssnorcal.org/zakscloset>.

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“Now I get to be me all the time, 24/7. I get to be myself,” she says with a sparkle in her eyes.

“I consider Lavender Courtyard as my home, and I want to keep this as my home for a very, very long time.

“I hope to get another twenty years in this life, and I wouldn't mind spending them right here. I've already made friends. A whole bunch of us in here are getting along. We shop and have dinner together.

“It is so wonderful to be here. I am so happy. I feel like I won the lottery.” ■



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A Clean Start

A Clean Start, LSS's office and house cleaning social

enterprise, has expanded into Sacramento County. This youth workforce development program now serves the Stockton and Sacramento areas. Please contact us at 209.739.009 to schedule an appointment or for more information.

visit us online at www.lssnorcal.org

STAY CONNECTED

