

# Grace AT WORK

June 2016



## Main Office:

1465 Civic Court  
Building D  
Suite 810  
Concord, CA  
94520

## Our Mission

To offer dignity and stability to our communities by providing supportive housing services that lead to self-sufficiency.

## Our Vision

LSS envisions that our communities have hope, stability, and a path to self-sufficiency.

## Fire Victims Rebuild their Lives with Help of School Children

Victims in Northern California are still rebuilding their lives after valley fires claimed hundreds of homes in Lake County and Calaveras County last September. Thanks to many generous donors like the students at West Portal Lutheran School in San Francisco, victims have been receiving aid to help in the long-term recovery process.



West Portal Lutheran chooses a cause to donate their weekly chapel offerings to each quarter. After hearing about the fires that claimed the homes of hundreds of people in Northern California, staff at the school chose LSS to be a recipient of their collections. Kelly Still, Kindergarten teacher at West Portal Lutheran, discussed how excited the students were to donate to fire victims.

“The kids were super supportive. We described that the fires affected all kinds of people, families, young students like them, and that was very meaningful. I think it helped them have a sense

of purpose that they were helping those in need and were being servants, which is what we are trying to teach them. They were implementing the type of lifestyle that values being servants and sharing with others,” she said.

Ms. Still described that in order to get the students engaged, they created a visual for the fire relief efforts. For every \$10 raised, the school removed one of the flames from under the water hose, symbolizing one home that had been saved from the fires. LSS is very grateful for the donations from West Portal Lutheran, and all of our other congregations and donors who have supported fire relief efforts.

The need for disaster support continues. Victims need your help NOW more than ever! All donations received for fire relief go directly towards rebuilding homes, lives, and addressing the destruction of property that resulted from the fires.

LSS assists those whose homes and livelihoods have been disrupted by disasters. We are present from the time of crisis throughout all stages of disaster recovery. It often takes months or years to rebuild and LSS is there for the long-term. We are part of the Lutheran Disaster Response network, and will respond as needed for relief efforts. To donate to fire relief efforts, you can mail a check to our Concord location, or visit: <https://lssnorcalorg.presencehost.net/get-involved/>

# THANK YOU to our BIG Day of Giving donors!

Thanks to the loyal support of our donors, LSS raised more than \$10,000 on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Big Day of Giving! Despite numerous technical challenges with the Big DoG website, we more than quadrupled the amount we raised last year. In addition to tremendous support from our donors, our board members came together to help us achieve 100% donor participation in this event. We are so grateful!

These gifts help people across the life span reach their full potential and contribute to our communities. From children to seniors who were once homeless, LSS gives people the tools to build a stable future. Once again, thank you for helping our clients become the architects of their lives. We appreciate your generosity so much and hope to raise even more next year.

**BIG**  
**DAY OF**  **→**  
**GIVING** **MAY 3**

Dear Supporters -



A message  
from the CEO...

We hope you're all enjoying the transition from spring to summertime! Here at LSS of Northern California, our work is guided by a commitment to justice, human rights, and compassion for those that we serve. We provide supportive housing services that address the underlying causes of homelessness, including mental illness, addiction, trauma and poverty. Our compassionate and knowledgeable team works with people who are homeless or on the edge of homelessness in order to build self-sufficiency and a stable future.

In this issue of Grace at Work, we illustrate these values in action. We tell you the story of a group of young school children at West Portal

Lutheran Church and School in San Francisco, raising money to help victims of the Lake and Calaveras County fires as they work to rebuild homes that were lost last fall. We share with you some of the important educational opportunities we're giving our clients, including financial literacy classes for our Sacramento based transition age youth, through F&M Bank. And we are pleased to share our recent success in raising over \$10,000 to help our clients rebuild their lives, through Big Day of Giving held on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Thank you for supporting our work, and our clients. We invite you to join us in community while we make a difference, one life at a time!

Carol Roberts, Ph.D.  
President and CEO

## F&M Bank Teaches Financial Literacy to LSS Clients

When LSS staff member Latoya Swinney met with a representative from F&M bank about the potential to host a financial literacy class series, she knew the young people she worked with would benefit tremendously.

Young people exiting California's foster care system are rarely exposed to financial literacy topics. In addition to a lack of adequate life skills around managing money, former foster youth often encounter challenges, with documented cases of both biological and foster families using their social security numbers to open credit cards, start mortgage applications, have utilities placed in their name and more.

F&M bank taught a much needed financial literacy series to young people from Stockton's Project Hope, and presented information about loans, how to start and maintain a savings account, how to start a retirement plan, how to build credit, and how to buy a home. Latoya spoke about the impact the classes had on the youth:

"The youth learned a lot about financial stability...they were able to get the inside information about how finances work, and have someone sit down and do a credit repair plan for them. One of the youth had a mortgage in their name, and others had credit cards in their names and never knew about it until their credit report was run."

After the success of the first series of classes, both our Walnut Manor and Saybrook locations in Sacramento followed suit. Michael Langlois, an intern for LSS in Sacramento, was in charge of coordinating the financial literacy classes at our Walnut Manor location. Walnut Manor provides housing to young adults from several LSS programs, including Step Up Sacramento, the Adolfo program, and Connections, which all serve former foster youth or homeless youth between the ages of 18-24. Classes in Sacramento were scheduled every week for 8 weeks, and the youth committed to going to every class. Michael talked about how much he felt the class impacted LSS clients:

"The series planted seeds to get the language of financial literacy in their minds, and to bridge the gap between having money and knowing what to do with it. The classes got them comfortable with financial terms. They are just so unfamiliar with the language of money, so they didn't really know how to communicate the concerns they had."

LSS is grateful to F&M Bank for teaching this critical information to youth which will have a lifelong, positive influence on their lives. This partnership strives to provide our former foster youth and former homeless youth a foundation to rebuild their lives.



## Support LSS by Joining a Thrivent Action Team

If you're a Thrivent Financial member, you can lead a Thrivent Action Team to bring people together for a one-time project that supports LSS.

You can:

- Coordinate an educational event. Bring in a dynamic speaker to discuss a topic like homelessness. Teach a class on debate or coordinate a chess tournament for our residents.
- Conduct a service activity. Plant some flowers, beautify an area of one of our properties (with prior approval).
- Organize a fundraiser. Host an ice cream social or a BBQ after service on a Sunday with proceeds benefiting former foster youth.

Thrivent will provide:

- Resources to help you plan the event.
- Promotional items, including Thrivent T-shirts.
- Community Impact Card with \$250 of seed \$\$.

Learn more at [Thrivent.com/actionteam](https://www.thrivent.com/actionteam) and apply online.

Not a member of Thrivent? Share your service idea with LSS. Together, we can make a difference.

Contact the administrative offices for more information at 925-825-1060 ext. 15.



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## PRESIDENT/CEO

Carol Roberts, Ph.D.

## Support LSS of Northern California when you become a monthly Donor!

Monthly donors are a huge part of our fundraising success at LSS of Northern California.

When you sign up to be a monthly donor, your donation creates safety and stability for our families who need it most.

For more information on how to become a monthly donor, please visit [www.lssnorcal.org](http://www.lssnorcal.org), or call Cheryl Nickerson at 925.825.1060, ext. 15

