



LSA

Lutheran Services in America®

Together we can

a spirit of possibility

called to love and serve our neighbors

effective service and advocacy

a society that values generosity

in partnership with others

a society that values inclusion

a will that shapes the future

living out Lutheran identity

a society that values justice

with others

healthy, vital, engaged SMOs

a movement of hope and grace

Called to love
and serve
our neighbors

a system of integrated results-driven capacity

a society that values mutual care



CALLED TO LOVE AND SERVE OUR NEIGHBORS

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” John 13:34.

It is this call that has compelled and sustained Lutheran social ministry across centuries and continents. Each of the Lutheran health and human service organizations began when a faithful person responded to this call and invited others along on the journey. Those roots, in the United States, reach back more than two hundred years.

In 1997, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and their 300 health and human service organizations formed the alliance, Lutheran Services in America to create a more robust response to the call to love and serve our neighbors. In its first decade, Lutheran Services in America strengthened ties with and between social ministry organizations to enhance their work, deepened connections with the church, and created a shared voice for service and justice. The tenth anniversary celebrated the remarkable spirit of “Together We Can” and asked the question “Together We Can – “What”? – What shall we work on together in LSA for the next decade?

The year-long process spearheaded by the LSA Board of Directors and staff included:

- electronic surveys of over 700 people, including social ministry and judicatory leaders
- phone interviews with more than 60 leaders
- in-person meetings with Bishop Hanson, his staff and ELCA unit directors and with President Kieschnick and key LCMS leaders
- focus groups – formal and informal
- in-depth examinations of important trends and issues.

Discernment grounded in Biblical and theological reflection, prayer, and conversation was at the heart of the process. Careful listening to constituents and creative work sessions blended to create an exciting picture of possibilities for the next decade that builds on the foundations of the first decade and pushes the future in answer to the call to love and serve our neighbors.

The next decade beckons us. The future will be different. The question is, “How will it be different?” Lutheran Services in America is called to strengthen Lutheran social ministry organizations and their connections to the church and to one another. And this strong Lutheran system is called to embrace and shape the future with enthusiasm, savvy and resolve to create communities that are generous, inclusive, and just.

This booklet invites you to begin to imagine that future and how we, and a whole host of others, can build it together.

On March 5, 2008, the LSA Board of Directors adopted these ends policies:

- **LSA and its members, in partnership with others, are leading a movement of hope and grace toward a society that values generosity, inclusion, justice and mutual care.**
- **Lutheran social ministry expresses a spirit of possibility and a will that shapes the future.**
- **Lutheran social ministry organizations live out their Lutheran identities.**
- **Lutheran social ministry organizations are healthy and vital, engaged in effective service and advocacy.**
- **The Lutheran social ministry system has integrated, results-driven capacity.**

How can we, and a whole host of others, build the future together?



Love One Another

LSA and its members, in partnership with others, are leading a movement of hope and grace toward a society that values generosity, inclusion, justice and mutual care.*

LOVE ONE ANOTHER We know from Holy Scriptures and from the life and teachings of Jesus, that we are called to love God and to love our neighbors near and far. God's intent is that people will live in harmony, caring for one another. The face of God is mirrored in each person and each person is gifted and blessed by the Creator. We are called to work toward a vision of community that recognizes the worth of each person in God's eyes and assures that all people can meet their needs and contribute their talents. This vision of inclusion requires deep listening and significant change.

partnering together across generations, races, and the globe. We will spread the message of hope, of abundance, of a willingness to tend our common good. We will work with others of good will to insist that everyone should live in safety and dignity with the supports they need. We hold no illusions that human efforts can make the world perfect, but God loved us and so we love and serve our neighbors.

We resolve to work together so that people can experience the joy of generosity and the increased sense of connection, safety and freedom that come from knowing that neighbors will care for them, just as they care for their neighbors. The poverty of spirit and the deep hunger that status and material wealth cannot fill can transformed as people glimpse the power and grace of

*One of five ends policies approved by the LSA Board of Directors, March 2008, LSA Board Policy Manual, Section 1.2.1.



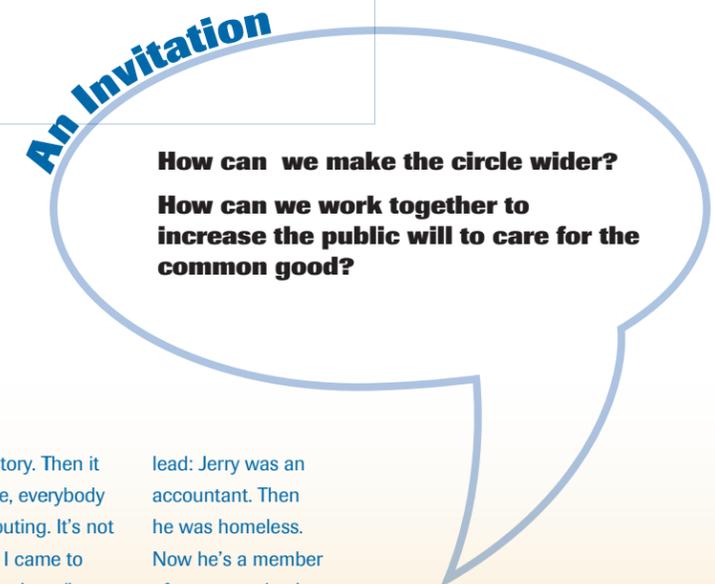
For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Galatians 5:14

Neighbor

Trust, Abundance, Community, Justice, Freedom, Inclusive, Hope, Belonging, Mutual, Generosity, Reciprocity, Momentum, Diversity, Curiosity, Grace, Complex

BE THE SPARK Lutheran social ministry can be the spark that ignites a greater public will to make sure all people can meet their needs and contribute their gifts.



**How can we make the circle wider?
How can we work together to increase the public will to care for the common good?**

Tales to Tell **A Picture of Possibilities for the Future**

A Reporter's Story
As a staff writer for *The Sentinel*, I've been on this beat for five years. It's a cliché, but I have become a bit jaded. So when I got the assignment about a new community experiment

in Highland Heights, I expected more of the same – the old Not In My Back Yard from the neighbors or "throw money at the problem" from the social service world.
When I got there, the first thing I noticed that

was different was the building itself. There were sections of odd shape to let people gather in different environments. The living spaces were pretty utilitarian, but still different, somehow. The other unusual thing

was that the Director of Community Programs, who was my contact, didn't try to sell me on the center. She told me to walk around and talk to anybody.
I met people who lived there, others who lived elsewhere, but

stopped by regularly, some who wandered in to see what was going on. I began to realize it wasn't the open spaces with lots of glass or the efficient living quarters that gave off that different wavelength. It was the people. I'd

approach someone I had pegged as a client. It turned out she was a staffer. The person I eyed up as a manager was a volunteer from the neighborhood. Everyone seemed to fit in.

Jerry, a middle-aged man who came to the community several years ago when he was homeless, put it this way, "Here I am just one of a group of people, not some needy person. That's a pretty new concept

in my world. I'm a regular person." Though recently down on his luck, Jerry has a background in accounting. So while he lives here as a "client", he also gets paid to do some of the accounting work for

the main facility and helps other community members balance their checkbooks or understand a budget.
Okay, I thought, Jerry is a ringer. But, no, almost everyone I met has a back story that is part of their

current story. Then it struck me, everybody is contributing. It's not the story I came to write – the have/have not imbalance. Even the chaplain has asked Jerry for accounting advice.
I think I've got my

lead: Jerry was an accountant. Then he was homeless. Now he's a member of a community that counts.

This is just one story ... What story would you tell?



Shape the Future

Lutheran social ministry expresses a spirit of possibility and a will that shapes the future.*

SHAPING THE FUTURE While some people struggle just to react to the rapid changes coming at them, Lutheran social ministry organizations together are shaping the future. With LSA as the catalyst, the strengths and imagination of 300 organizations will be mobilized to make a difference for individuals and communities. With the goal of ensuring that all people can thrive in and contribute to community, LSA and its members will borrow insights from a wide range of cultures, disciplines and industries and translate them into new possibilities.

as new audiences and new tools are employed. Collaboration with corporations, government, foundations and a host of uncommon partners will mobilize new resources to tackle multi-dimensional issues. Congregations and social ministry organizations can discover new ways to come together to share the Gospel in words and actions.

We will be leaders in seizing opportunities and solving problems, providing glimpses of the future we envision. This spirit of possibility and resolve stems from an unwavering hope in God and that has been a hallmark of steadfast and durable Lutheran social ministry organizations across many generations.

We will embrace innovation and new ways of working. New technology and social networking will enhance quality of life, independence and connectedness. New organizational structures, new partnerships, and new ways of understanding relationships will cultivate new fields. Advocacy, organizing and service will engage a broader base of support when infused with fresh language and ideas. Philanthropy will be energized

*One of five ends policies approved by the LSA Board of Directors, March 2008, LSA Board Policy Manual, Section 1.2.2.

Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:2

BE THE CHANGE It's about finding new partners and opening a new future, with new ways of thinking and acting.

An Invitation

What old ways of thinking and doing must we set aside?

How can we move toward ministry with people, rather than for people?

Tales to Tell - A Picture of Possibilities for the Future

A Coalition's Story
Li Young, whose efforts to change attitudes toward people with disabilities transformed the way communities respond to the needs of disabled

members, was the featured speaker at a dinner honoring Community Coalition for Change.
Following an accident that left her disabled, Li lost her job and battled depression

and isolation. Finding her voice as an advocate, Li wrote in her blog, "I was really depressed. Everything was negative. It was all about what I couldn't do. I couldn't walk. I lost my job. I needed help

to do the most basic, personal things."
While finding her personal voice made a difference, Li soon realized that change is slow if problems are challenged one voice at a time. And she felt a

lack of dignity in having to go before able bodied people and ask that her needs and rights be taken seriously. She developed a new vision of advocacy in which the strengths and expertise of both

"abled" and disabled people join together. Li reached out to Lutheran Services and a strong partnership was born. Lutheran Services reached out to local Lutheran churches. Many congregations

formed small groups with disabled individuals, LS staff and congregational members working together on problems. They spoke with local government groups and businesses

to improve access to public spaces. They spoke before legislative committees to change access to home care. They met with media executives, challenging the pervasive stereotypes

reflected on television and in print. Most recently, Lutheran Services collaborated with more than a dozen social services nonprofits and faith-based organizations to formalize their

partnership as the Coalition for Change. The Coalition has just won a grant that will make accessible to disabled people new assistive technologies that provide greater freedom.

What started as one woman's determination to be heard sparked the development of what is now a national model for change.

This is just one story ... What story would you tell?



We Are Lutheran

Lutheran social ministry organizations live out their Lutheran identities.*

LUTHERAN - WHO WE ARE Lutheran is LSA's first name and LSA is called to reinforce that which binds this alliance together. Each of the 300 Lutheran health and human service organizations is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), is recognized by The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) or has relationships with both. The Old and New Testaments, Lutheran Confessions and theology, Lutheran history, connections to Word and Sacrament ministries, and a commitment to live out a faithful witness to God's love for all people bind the members of LSA together as the body of Christ with a Lutheran accent.

relationships with other agencies and institutions of the church. And, LSA will be a faithful alliance partner to all its members with integrity and care, honoring differences and seeking understanding.

In this next decade, Lutheran social ministry organizations will ever more fully incorporate the hallmarks of Lutheran understanding into their daily work. LSA members will live out grace, vocation, neighbor, forgiveness, mercy and community. We will embrace the complexity of the human experience and will build on the gift of Jesus Christ and the gifts God has given each person. Lutheran social ministry will continue to be dynamic and active in the world on behalf of the neighbor – steadfast over time, yet forward thinking.

LSA will provide encouragement, opportunities for learning and discussion, resources, and stimuli for its members to understand and live out their Lutheran identities and church connections. We will identify and shape leaders who see the work as ministry. We will share congregation and LSA member organization partnerships that are working well. It will seek out collaborative

*One of five ends policies approved by the LSA Board of Directors, March 2008, LSA Board Policy Manual, Section 1.2.3.

For by Grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God--- not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Ephesians 2:8- 10



BUILD ON GRACE It's being able to translate Lutheran Christian beliefs and church connections into our daily lives and work.

An Invitation

How can Lutheran identity be lived out in your organization?
How might taking Lutheran identity seriously take us to some unexpected or uncomfortable places?

Tales to Tell - A Picture of Possibilities for the Future

An Employee's Story
Meet Benny. At our 120th anniversary celebration he will be honored for 10 years of service to Lutheran Home and Services. It's not the first time

he's received a staff award, but this one may mean the most. For someone who joined the LHS family reluctantly, Benny will wholeheartedly accept the Spirit Award.

Benny is the first to tell you that he didn't choose LHS; it chose him. "I live pretty far out in the county and jobs are scarce. Lutheran was hiring and I needed a job. I thought I would take the job for a few

months until I found something better." What has kept Benny with LHS for so long has to do with community and faith. Just not Benny's. "I'm not Lutheran, and my

job is really a pretty basic one, but the people I work with show me that I am actually needed, that there is real value to what I do. It's about how they treat me and how I treat the people I

work with." In the LHS mission statement that is expressed as "grace-full work." For Benny, it's "cool." "It seems like Faith Lutheran is not just

the name of the congregation that gathers here for Sunday services, but it's what people try to live out every day. It's pretty cool." LHS CEO Lisa Moreno believes Benny was

chosen by his peers to receive the Spirit Award because his attitude and work have come to embody that concept of grace. "We want people in our neighborhoods around here to see LHS as a place where hope

and grace are given a chance in people's lives. Benny will go out of his way to greet new residents or help someone hang a picture just right. He has a generous spirit that gets spread around. It is how

he lives out God's love for others in his daily vocation." Congratulations to Benny on receiving the Spirit Award. It's just one more way the LHS spirit gets spread around.

From the newsletter of Lutheran Home and Services.

This is just one story ... What story would you tell?



Each Part Thriving

Lutheran social ministry organizations are healthy and vital, engaged in effective service and advocacy.*

EACH PART THRIVING As part of a larger network, each social ministry organization has the opportunity to give and to receive, everything from knowledge and encouragement to procedures and programs. In the midst of expanding and ever-more-complex needs and opportunities, together we will find new efficiencies, new resources and new pathways to make a difference. Lutheran organizations will be employers of choice, will be preferred collaboration partners, will excel at effective, high quality services, and will adhere to high standards of transparency and accountability. We will be blessed with board and staff leaders who are highly skilled and who have a passion for ministry. We will have sufficient resources to meet needs and seize opportunities. We will link service and advocacy so that real change happens for individuals, families and communities.

LSA will work to ensure that its members not only survive, but also are able to move into the future healthy and strong. It will take the expertise, creativity and engagement of everyone to make this happen.

*One of five ends policies approved by the LSA Board of Directors, March 2008, LSA Board Policy Manual, Section 1.2.4.

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

Savvy Opportunities Skill
 Collaboration Serve Advocate
Partner
 Excellence Resources
 Change Organize Accountable
 Partner Outcomes Assets Efficient
 Leaders

BE A CATALYST It's each social ministry organization drawing from and contributing to the larger Lutheran network, so that each part can thrive and real change can happen for individuals and communities.

An Invitation

What does your organization have to contribute?
What do you need to become more effective?

Tales to Tell - A Picture of Possibilities for the Future

A Board Chair's Story
I've been a board member of a Lutheran social ministry organization long enough to learn there are some givens ... there is never enough money, nor enough

human resource, nor enough time (or the right time) to tackle all of the things we need to do. But, three years ago we ran into a serious roadblock. We were in the middle of an annual planning

process and we had two scenarios on the table. The board was divided. The CEO didn't like either of them and finally said she couldn't live with them. She resigned. The staff was confused and embittered. Frankly,

we didn't handle things all that well. The organization's finances were precarious and changes in the state's funding jeopardized longstanding programs. We were on the verge of closing not just that program, but the whole

organization. I've faced a lot of tough business situations, but this was one of the most stressful periods of my life. Finally, we realized we needed some help and sought out guidance for

our board. A facilitator helped us realize how we didn't have clear role definitions for the board or for our CEO and that even though we were in a planning mode, we weren't planning for the future; we were only

managing crises. After a couple of nitty-gritty Board sessions, we were finally able to see a common vision. At the same time, two other consultants looked at our program portfolio and recommended closing one program

and making significant changes to another. Within about a year, we could see light, and financial stability, at the end of the tunnel. What had worked for use was not going this alone, but relying on those around us in the system of

Lutheran social ministry organizations. It took both help from peer organizations as well as help from professionals in our national alliance to get us where we needed to be. That could be our happy ending, but

there's more. Two years ago, we saw a new opportunity to develop affordable housing - and the chance to grow by 30 percent. Once again - but this time with a new CEO - we reached out to the Lutheran network. Peer

consultants suggested some local partnerships, while the human resource network helped us to work through organizational structure and staffing to accommodate rapid growth. Now, I'm interested in

sharing what we learned with others in the Lutheran system. It's the least we can do.

This is just one story ... What story would you tell?



Stronger together

In the next decade: The Lutheran social ministry system has integrated, results-driven capacity.*

STRONGER TOGETHER Lutheran Services in America is an alliance of the ELCA, the LCMS and their 300 independent social ministry, health and human service organizations. Each of these organizations has a unique mission, special strengths, valuable expertise and faithful boards, staffs and volunteers. Together, they touch the lives of more than one in 50 Americans every year and have operating budgets in excess of \$10 billion. Imagine the possibilities as those strengths come together!

Together in LSA, the system will grow more robust and become better integrated. LSA's members will collaborate readily with one another and with others. An "open source" participative culture will grow. We will use technology and new forms of convening to learn together, to share strengths, to collaborate, to speak out, to solve problems and to seize opportunities. The expertise, experience, effectiveness and

power of Lutheran social ministry organizations will be harnessed and connected for greater impact.

We commit to making the kind of difference that we can only make together. We commit to building a system that leverages individual strengths for a greater good. That bold picture calls for strong bonds that promote strong social ministry organizations. It calls for strong connections within the Lutheran churches and beyond. It calls for networked capacity and strong collective resolve.

*One of five ends policies approved by the LSA Board of Directors, March 2008, LSA Board Policy Manual, Section 1.2.5.

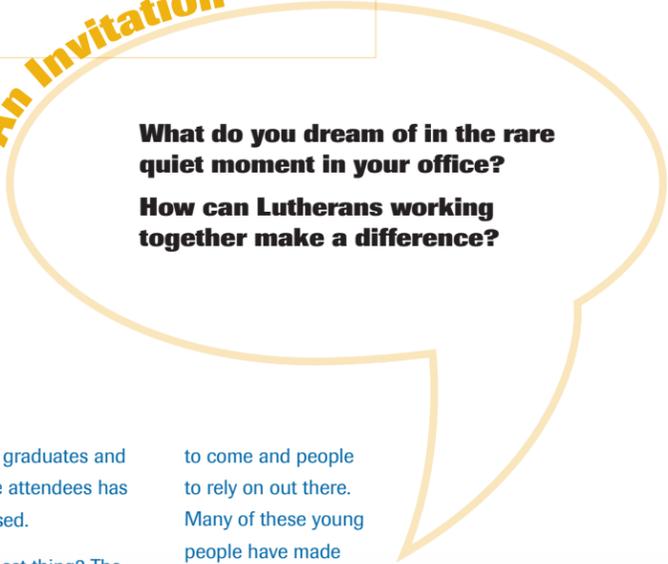
For as in one body we have many members, and not all members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

Romans 12:4-5



HAVE AN IMPACT
It's our tagline, "Together we can." As a system, we learn together and from each other, sharing expertise and experience internally in order to have greater impact externally.

An Invitation



What do you dream of in the rare quiet moment in your office?

How can Lutherans working together make a difference?

Tales to Tell - A Picture of Possibilities for the Future

A CEO's Story

I had been the CEO of a Midwest Lutheran multi-service social ministry organization for five years when one day I met one of our kids Marcus walking out the door. He shook my hand

to say goodbye. He was gone before it struck me: That was goodbye for good. Marcus turned 18 that week. With multiple programs for children and youth, we still saw kids dumped on the street at too young an age. Terry, Joy,

Anoka, Marcus As I sit here in my office, I can see them still. Child after child, moving from chaotic homes into tumultuous teen years and finally into young adulthood. Grown, but unfortunately, many not yet mature. Without

savings, supports, job skills and a map for their future. For weeks, that handshake with Marcus haunted me. Finally, I decided to call one of my colleagues in the Lutheran network. What

if our network could really push on this issue? Could we make a difference for kids aging out of foster care? Sue was intrigued, and suggested we bring it up during our next conference call. That conversation got us

moving. We connected with a whole host of foundations and child-serving organizations. We drew on the experience of Lutheran colleagues in other fields like

disabilities supports, job training, housing and healthcare. We gathered an advocacy network that included people in congregations and especially youth. It was amazing to be a part of this movement of creating a dynamic

system where everyone's contribution produced such a positive outcome. How far have we come? We've managed to get most states to provide supports for youth until they are 21. We've worked with

Lutheran colleges on scholarships and with congregations as "journey partners" that provide a kind of extended family. In our service areas the rate of homelessness has dropped and the percentage of high

school graduates and college attendees has increased. The best thing? The handshake is now part of graduation ceremony of sorts. It's an acknowledgement that there are good things

to come and people to rely on out there. Many of these young people have made commitments to mentor children in foster care - including Marcus. As a popular advertisement says, "That's priceless."

This is just one story ... What story would you tell?



Together We Can

The next decade beckons. The future will be different. The question is, "How will it be different?" Together we can shape the answer to that question and write so many stories with exciting new chapters.

Shape the Future

This strong Lutheran system, called Lutheran Services in America, is called to join with others, to embrace the future with enthusiasm, savvy and resolve. We will exercise creativity and will work together to find new solutions to complex problems. We resolve to tackle the future, putting aside our fears and stepping out in faith. We commit to living in hope and to pulling together to create new possibilities. How will you help us to make that happen? What are you eager to change? How will you shape the future?

Strengthen Our Connections to the Church and to One Another

Lutheran Services in America is called to strengthen Lutheran social ministry organizations and our connections to the church and to one another. We will share freely, participate actively, encourage one another, and listen to diverse voices. We commit to building on the strengths of all alliance partners and to engaging the strengths of those beyond the Lutheran community. How will you help us to make that happen? What do you have to share? How can we better be the church with one another?

Called to Love and Serve Our Neighbors

We believe that, with God's help, and that of so many others in our communities, we can create a movement of hope and grace. We can provide glimpses of the joy of generosity. We can mobilize others who care about justice. We can include all God's children, stirring up the power of diversity. How will you gather others to love and serve our neighbors?

We believe that we can build a spirit of possibility, that we can reflect a will that shapes the future. We believe that we can celebrate and live out our Lutheran identity in ways that invite others. We believe that we can grow together to be healthy and vital organizations, that we can grow together to link effective service with effective advocacy. We believe that the Lutheran social ministry system can be a recognizable force of integrated, results-driven capacity harnessed to make a difference in God's name.

We believe that we can shape the future together --- we can, and we will!

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a movement of hope and grace

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