



**Lutheran
Social Service**
of Minnesota

**PATRICK
THUESON**
—
President

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota is a movement of 25,000 – 2,500 employees, 10,000 volunteers, and 12,500 supporters – all of whom are critical to our successful support of the individuals and families seeking to change their lives through our services. I am pleased to share with you a sampling of what this movement has accomplished in the past year in every county of the state and beyond. This has been a year of strength, growth and innovations.

In Duluth, we celebrated the grand opening of the new LSS Bethany – Services for Children, Youth and Families. LSS has evolved services as the needs of youth and families in the community have changed, from Bethany Children's Home in Duluth, an orphanage that opened in 1916, to the Bethany Crisis Shelter, which offered emergency shelter care beginning in the early 1970s. Today, as part of LSS' statewide services for children, youth and families, the beautiful new LSS Bethany touches lives throughout northeast Minnesota and beyond with safe emergency shelter for children, as well as new early intervention and prevention services. These early intervention and prevention services include parent education and coaching, behavioral health, family visitation, and reunification support.

In Crosslake, we gathered at LSS' Camp Knutson for the groundbreaking of a new dormitory. Located in northern Minnesota, Camp Knutson gives campers with identified needs a life-changing experience of community. The new camper cabin is designed to better-welcome campers who use wheelchairs and accommodate other needs.

LSS continues to grow services that meet individuals and families where they are, and provide what they need, to change their own lives. One such service that creates greater independence and self-sufficiency is LSS Meals. Over the course of this past year, we've added two new production kitchens that have expanded our delivery of nutritious meals to not only older adults, but also veterans and children living with food insecurity.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, most of LSS' employees continued to deliver in-person services – albeit with extra safety protections. Conversely, some services were most-safely delivered remotely. While the pandemic may not be over, we are transitioning to more in-person work as situations allow. It's been fun to witness the outpouring of warmth and joy between colleagues as they reconnect, or in some cases, eagerly meet newer coworkers face-to-face for the first time.

In another indication of the pandemic loosening its grip, for the first time in three years LSS was able to host LSS' Deaf & Hard of Hearing Family Services Minnesota Hands and Voices celebration. Families came together to celebrate acts of exceptional service and dedication aimed at breaking down barriers to full and abundant lives. LSS Deaf & Hard of Hearing Family Services is one of the newer additions to LSS' continuum of services. Like all LSS services, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Family Services create greater possibilities. Living with differences can be isolating. LSS creates life-changing connections with the people and resources needed to assure that all people can live and work in community with full and abundant lives, such as connecting families with deaf mentors who help deaf individuals and their parents see possibilities instead of limitations.

Fall of 2022 brought the in-person return of another great tradition for the first time since 2019 – the annual LSS Celebration for Changing Lives! The evening was filled with greeting old and new friends, sharing laughs and heart-warming stories of courage, and – most importantly – hearing stories of lives changed. We are deeply grateful for the outpouring of love and financial support at the event. It was good to be together again.

At the beginning of this letter, I mentioned our 2,500 employees – without whom services could not continue. Like all employers, LSS is working hard to attract and retain our workforce. And this year, once again, we are honored to be recognized by our employees as a 2022 “Top Workplace” in the annual Star Tribune survey.



It was a year with many highlights, and much for which to be grateful. Blessing upon blessing. Because of the trust placed in LSS, we are strong, resilient, and growing – connecting more individuals and families with brighter futures and bigger possibilities than ever before. Our teams are looking forward, innovating, and putting what we've learned to work to create even more effective and measurable outcomes for the lives we impact.

I hope you enjoy learning more about what the LSS movement is accomplishing in the lives of our neighbors this year and every year.

In gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Thueson".

Patrick Thueson
President

