



God at Work in Our Midst

Stories of the Called Ministries of Lutheran Homes Society
August 2015



On a daily basis, Lutheran Homes Society impacts hundreds of residents, clients and families. The stories told here reflect the mission of Lutheran Homes Society to care for needy youth and elderly with compassion. Sharing these stories lets you know your support is truly making a difference in people's lives.

FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES

By the age of six, "Justin" resembled a teenager. He was tall and built as if he was ready to join the high school football team. Unfortunately for Justin, with his size also came the inability to communicate his wants and needs efficiently and a lack of understanding of his own size and strength. In combination with the fact that he was very young and developmentally delayed, Justin's journey as he entered treatment at LHS Family and Youth Services would prove to be a very interesting one. Justin displayed such behaviors as stripping off his clothes, physically attacking others, and throwing temper tantrums. For Justin, however, these were not ways in which to really harm himself or others. In reality, he was trying to express himself, to test staff and their reactions, and even more so to punish himself as a "bad boy." When helping Justin through these hard times, staff reassured him by saying, "You are safe, Justin. We care about you." In response, Justin would always say, "No you don't. You no care." As staff continued to provide emotional support, reassurance, and consistency, Justin began to understand that he was safe and cared about. The foundation for Justin to learn to trust staff began to form, and behaviors decreased over time.



Approximately four years later, with a great deal of commitment from staff, Justin was able to transition from the Maumee Youth Center to a less restrictive setting at the Anthony Wayne group home. Now Justin is often heard saying "You happy with me?" When staff members express their happiness, Justin's smile is worth all the work.

SANDUSKY CAMPUS

"Susan" was admitted to Lutheran Memorial Home after a short hospital stay. She had fallen at home and fractured her right ankle. She has a history of multiple sclerosis that contributed to her fall. Susan arrived at the facility for skilled nursing care, as well as for physical and occupational therapy. Therapists helped her strengthen her upper and lower extremities. Staff also instructed her on how to use her walker safely while transferring, walking, and climbing up stairs in therapy. Susan was offered support and encouragement during the times she became disappointed with her progress. She often stated, "I wish I was able to do more in therapy." However, she was steadily progressing, even with the activity restrictions imposed by her orthopedic physician. Susan was ecstatic when her doctor upgraded her activity level to "as tolerated." This allowed her to utilize her right foot without any restrictions. The therapy staff encouraged her husband to come in to witness her progress. Before being discharged, the Life Enrichment Coordinator made sure Susan had all the equipment she needed to return home safely. Susan and her husband are appreciative of the staff's efforts to make her stay comfortable and therapeutic. She commented that every department, from nursing to laundry, helped her healing process by simply stopping in and saying hello when she was feeling down. "I know if I ever have to have more inpatient therapy I wouldn't hesitate to come here again," Susan said. "I'm thankful for all your staff did to help me."

TOLEDO CAMPUS

"Daniel," a rehabilitation patient in The Labuhn Center on the Lutheran Home at Toledo campus, is doing remarkably well, considering his recent ordeal. He had experienced two surgeries in two weeks for blood clots in his leg. When the surgeon came into his hospital room to discuss options, Daniel had told him to amputate, if necessary. He and his wife had already discussed that possibility, and Daniel stated that he was not troubled by it. "I guess we had prepared ourselves," Daniel said. "I have no regrets about the amputation, and I feel much better." He chose The Labuhn Center for his short-term rehabilitation, because it's close to home, and the hospital staff recommended it. When speaking about his rehab, Daniel explained, "Like any other thing, it's what you make of it." Daniel's positive attitude is inspiring. He appreciates a therapist with a sense of humor and almost seems to enjoy the challenge of rehabilitation. According to the therapy staff, he is doing well, having improved in strength and endurance. "My balance isn't bad," he stated. "It's a matter of how long I can stand on one leg." The hard work Daniel is putting in, combined with the great attitude he has, will go a long way toward ensuring an active future after he leaves The Labuhn Center.

HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES

As the manager of Luther Pines senior apartment community in Lima was walking through one of the buildings wearing a black leather jacket, a resident stopped and asked her if she rode a motorcycle. While the manager responded that she did not, “Mary” began telling her about how riding a motorcycle is one thing she really wants to do before she dies. This resident will turn 90 years old in September. As they talked, it became very apparent to the manager how much Mary wanted to experience a motorcycle ride. The manager was determined to make it happen. As it turns out, the husband of the Luther Pines’ housekeeper owns a motorcycle, and he was more than happy to make this wish come true. On a Sunday afternoon, he came out to give Mary her ride. It was quite an event – Mary’s children were present, residents came out of their apartments to watch, and the manager came to take photographs. After putting on a helmet, Mary eagerly climbed up on the motorcycle and was ready to go. The smile on her face said it all. Mary enjoyed herself immensely, and she is still talking about her adventure. She even says that she is ready for another, longer ride! It is such a joy to have been part of making a resident’s dream come true and to help Mary check an item off her “bucket list.”

NAPOLEON CAMPUS

“Albert” has been a hard-working farmer all of his life, but lately he has not been feeling well. He did not want to worry his family, so he kept his illness to himself until he was so sick he could barely function. His family took Albert to the emergency room, where he was directly admitted to the hospital. Tests were completed, blood was drawn, and surgery was scheduled to remove his gall bladder. He also had pancreatitis. Albert was gravely ill, and his family was very concerned that he would not make it. He pulled through, thankfully, and was admitted to Lutheran Home at Napoleon for rehabilitation. Albert was visibly weak, and staff could tell that he had been through a terrible ordeal. Therapy began working to help him become stronger through exercise and treatments. Daily, his caring and attentive family was there to cheer Albert on and to make sure his every need was met. Staff members even accommodated the family’s wish to remain with Albert at night. They provided a roll away bed for family members, so they could sleep near his bed each night. Albert and his family set a goal for him to be home by the Fourth of July. Staff members were not certain this was a realistic goal given what Albert had been through, but they diligently worked with him to achieve it. Through hard work, prayers, and the determination of Albert and his team of caregivers, he was able to return home on the holiday weekend, with home health services arranged for by social services. It took a team effort to meet Albert’s goal, but it was accomplished, and Albert and his family are back home on his farm.



WOLF CREEK CAMPUS

It was a beautiful, sunny day, and 48-year-old “Aaron” took his motorcycle out for a ride. While riding, he started to feel a pain in his head that steadily grew worse. Aaron was able to pull over and stop his bike before he passed out. Someone called 911, and Aaron was sent by life flight to a Cleveland hospital. He had experienced a brain aneurysm and went into a coma for nine days. He then underwent surgery. During this trauma, Aaron also suffered two strokes in his frontal lobes. At one point, doctors suggested taking Aaron off life support, but his family still had hope for his recovery. Eventually, Aaron was admitted to Lutheran Village at Wolf Creek for skilled nursing and therapy services. Aaron still suffers from short-term memory loss, but overall, is functioning well. He enjoys the activities at Wolf Creek and has met many people he considers his friends. A year later, Aaron is thankful each and every day that he is alive, despite the doctors’ grim prognosis in the hospital. Aaron is a miracle and is blessed to be able to spend time with his three children.