



God at Work in Our Midst

Stories of the Called Ministries of Lutheran Homes Society
May 2014



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

When an out-of-state caseworker called wanting to know if LHS Family & Youth Services would work with 14-year-old "Danny," staff knew they wanted to help. For three years, Danny had been living in a secure (locked) facility, and he had been rejected for placement by every facility in his state. His files were filled with reports of aggression and property destruction. It was clear that Danny could not be around other youth for any extended period of time without an altercation taking place. He refused to go to school. He was heavily medicated and spent much of his time in his room. Danny arrived at the LHS Maumee Youth Center in an ambulance. He was wary of staff, and his distrust of others showed in his facial expressions. But as time went by, Danny warmed up to staff, and his trust in them increased. The behaviors staff had expected simply never materialized; there were virtually no instances of property destruction or acts of aggression. Subsequently, his medications were decreased. Danny explained that he knew Family and Youth staff cared about him and expressed that he was beginning to feel good about himself. Now, Danny goes on frequent outings off grounds and enjoys walking the trails at area parks. He likes walking around campus and looking at the birds and trees, something he could only do through a window for the past three years. With each passing week, he is opening up more and is increasing his peer interactions. Danny is responding to the help that staff gives – consistency, structure, nurture, and effective counseling. His life is turning around.



WOLF CREEK CAMPUS

"Beatrice" was her mother's caregiver, worked contingent at St. Luke's Hospital since retiring, and volunteered as an usher at the Stranahan Theater. She led a very busy, active life and enjoyed every bit of it. One cold, wintery morning, while going outside to get the paper, Beatrice fell on the ice. She was hospitalized and had surgery to repair a broken left femur. Beatrice needed rehab and chose Lutheran Village at Wolf Creek. During her stay, she met many positive and helpful people. Beatrice worked with two wonderful therapists, who motivated her to work hard. They worked on increasing her upper body strength and strengthening her left leg. Her exercises included wheelchair push-ups and strength training with bands. Therapy was hard, but Beatrice saw progress. She wanted to drive and walk again. When it was time to be discharged, she initially stayed at a friend's house to determine if she was ready for independent living again. Beatrice now enjoys life in her own home. She can put weight on her right leg and walks with a walker. While she cannot drive yet, she is looking forward to the day when she can. Beatrice doubted that she would walk again, but she knows that will happen, too... thanks to her rehab at the Wolf Creek campus.

SANDUSKY CAMPUS

A huge birthday bash for Agnes was being planned by her daughter. She planned to hold the party at Lutheran Memorial Home, but, due to unforeseen circumstances, was unable to continue with the preparations. Knowing how much Agnes was looking forward to the party, staff members pitched in and purchased the decorations, snacks, cake, and ice cream. They sent invitations to Agnes' close friends from her assisted living community and her bowling league. Agnes was happy that all of her friends came out to celebrate with her, and staff members were grateful that they hosted the birthday party for Agnes.

HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES

“Ben” was referred to Lutheran Homes Society through the PASSPORT program during a difficult time in his life. At the age of 61, Ben had gotten very sick, was evicted from subsidized housing, was living in an unsafe neighborhood, and was accumulating bills he could not afford to pay. He was ready to say goodbye to the negative aspects of his old life and plan for the positive. Ben welcomed the help LHS could provide. His Service Coordinator helped him find more affordable housing in a safer location. The task was not easy, and application denials made it seem almost impossible at times. The Service Coordinator and Ben jumped through hoops to find a place for him to live. After months of hard work, they were able to secure housing for Ben, after pleading his case at a local apartment complex. On the day of the lease signing, Ben was smiling from ear to ear and was beyond grateful for all the help. He now spends his days listening to old records in his “penthouse suite overlooking the city,” shooting pool with neighbors, and planning a trip to visit his daughter out of state.



NAPOLEON CAMPUS

Lutheran Home at Napoleon received a call from a family in a panic over the care of their parents. “Ruth” and “Jim” have been married for more than 55 years and have not been apart in the last 15. During much of that time, Jim was Ruth’s primary caregiver. One day, when family members stopped in to check on them, Jim was not acting right. His speech was slurred, and he did not really respond to questions. The daughter called for an ambulance, and both parents were taken to the hospital. Jim was sent to a Toledo hospital for further evaluation, and the family had to decide quickly how best to care for their mother. After many tears in the emergency room, the family decided to separate their parents. Napoleon staff worked quickly to accommodate Ruth’s emergency admission, knowing that it was going to be difficult for the family. Chaplain Genter supported Ruth with prayer and comfort. Jim was monitored at the hospital and was then referred to the Napoleon campus for rehabilitation. Initially, staff wanted to separate the couple so that Jim could focus on regaining his strength; however, he insisted on sharing a room with Ruth. In the beginning, it was a bit difficult because Jim tried to care for his wife. After staff explained that they were there to help, Jim began focusing on getting well and allowed others to care for Ruth. Jim continues to receive therapy services with the goal of returning home with his wife, and he is making great progress. The family is unsure if going home is the best choice, but staff has explained that it is important to allow their parents to try to reach that goal. If Jim and Ruth are able to return home, a home visit will be set up before discharge so everyone will know what to expect. The children expressed gratitude for the staff’s care and commitment in working toward their parents’ wishes.

TOLEDO CAMPUS

“Cindy” entered Lutheran Home at Toledo after extensive back surgery. The surgeon who performed the operation gave a rather pessimistic prognosis for a full recovery, much less any chance of returning to work. This prognosis only made Cindy more determined. As a result, she worked closely with the clinical team at The Labuhn Center to create a treatment plan. Her plan consisted of therapy and nursing care to meet her goals of going home and eventually returning to work. As a result of this planning and the skillful care of staff, Cindy not only met the goal of going home, but her pain is well managed. Cindy has signed up for outpatient therapy and anticipates returning to her job at the end of May or early June.