



God at Work in Our Midst

Stories of the Called Ministries of Lutheran Homes Society
September 2016



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

In our May issue, LHS Family & Youth first shared the story of Grace. Early in life, she had been diagnosed with numerous behavioral disorders and had displayed attention-seeking conduct that often led to such aggressive acts as spitting, punching, kicking, hitting, and the destruction of property. Initially, Grace was placed at the Maumee Youth Center, and her behaviors slowly and consistently improved and her aggressive acts became less common. She was able to apply the coping skills that staff worked so hard to teach her. Grace made so much progress that she was able to transition to the East Toledo Group Home. While she receives similar treatment there, it is provided in a less restrictive setting within a community rather than in the campus-based setting of the Youth Center.

Throughout her placement at LHS, her treatment has included hippotherapy (equestrian therapy). When she graduated from the hippotherapy program, Grace continued taking horseback riding lessons. It is an activity she loves and which gives her a sense of pride. This past August, Grace participated in two equestrian events at the state-level Special Olympics. Grace won a bronze medal for her competition in riding and a gold medal for her competition in leading a horse. It was a fantastic accomplishment for Grace and is one testament to how far she has come in her care and treatment at LHS.

NAPOLEON CAMPUS

Volunteers are a precious resource and a blessing in long-term care. "Julie" comes to Lutheran Home at Napoleon to provide devotions and sing hymns with residents. One day, residents were gathering out in the lounge area before lunch, and Julie went ahead and started her routine. Some residents sang and others hummed along. They closed their eyes as they immersed themselves in the lyrics. This day was different, though, as staff stopped to sing along, too. A resident who does not like to partake in group activities was in the background singing along to "The Lord's Prayer." Staff and residents, one by one, came out to sing together, until the whole room was packed. One staff mentioned to Julie that "we really needed this today." Julie could see the tears in some of the residents' eyes and the peace in their faces. God is in our midst daily, but He especially blessed the Lutheran Home at Napoleon that late August day.



WOLF CREEK CAMPUS

"Ellie" received rehabilitation services at Lutheran Village at Wolf Creek for about three weeks. During that time, she could not say enough about the staff. The therapy department was just awesome, even though they challenged her physically. The respiratory therapy team helped her to understand how to manage her breathing problems. Ellie noticed how much the staff did for everyone. In appreciation of the care she received, she wanted to give the physical therapists something that could help other patients while they were having fun. The gift she decided on was a homemade cornhole game. The game would help with balance, endurance, and upper torso strength. "As I prepare to go home, my feelings are bittersweet," Ellie said. "I love Lutheran Village at Wolf Creek, and I am going to miss everyone here. Wolf Creek is cozy and comfortable indoors and out. I spent a lot of time outside with new friends and even did some therapy in the beautiful courtyard. I'll be back for visits, with cookies!"

SANDUSKY CAMPUS

“Mike” came to Lutheran Memorial Home in July 2015, just a few short months after he experienced a stroke affecting his left side. He was unable to care for himself, had pain on his left side, and had a great deal of difficulty getting around in a standard wheelchair. While he was on the Sandusky campus, his power wheelchair arrived. At first, Mike was unable to operate it safely. He would run into the door frames and walls, and he became very frustrated with his inability to get around independently. Mike was determined to use his power wheelchair and, with the help of the therapy department, eventually he was able to operate it competently and travel safely throughout the facility and grounds.

Even though it has been more than a year since his stroke, Mike continues to make progress toward improved function. Just recently, he regained some movement in his left leg. He resumed physical therapy in order to maximize the newly gained skill and work toward a functional outcome. “It makes my day to come down to therapy,” Mike said. “They always treat me with respect and help me with whatever I need.”

TOLEDO CAMPUS

“I lost my balance and fell backward. I laid on the floor for five hours, inching a little bit at a time, until I could get to the phone. It crossed my mind several times that I might be on the floor all night.” Eventually “JT” reached the phone and called for help. At the hospital she was immediately scheduled for surgery. She remembers seeing the x-ray afterward, and there was “a pin, a rod and nail” in her leg. “I couldn’t move my left leg, and it hurt, hurt and hurt!” she said. JT came to The Labuhn Center on the Lutheran Home at Toledo campus for her rehabilitation. “I started with therapy – whatever they told me to do, I did, because I wanted to walk again,” she stated. “You get depressed because you don’t think you’ll be able to walk again, and it’s easy to get very discouraged.”

From therapy’s point of view, JT was “very motivated and had her priorities straight.” It didn’t matter if she was hurting, not feeling well, or had visitors. When her therapist arrived, it was time to go. She progressed from standing up, to transfers, to walking to the therapy room. She talked about the challenges of getting dressed and how she needed help with everything. After a while, she could go unassisted to the dining room to get a cup of tea and read for a while. This was an accomplishment that she really enjoyed. When asked about her experience at The Labuhn Center, JT has good things to say: “I was really, really surprised at how nice and kind, helpful and compassionate the nurses and nursing assistants are. It’s always nice to see their smiling faces.” She did not forget the therapy staff either, commenting that “they are understanding, kind and compassionate all the time.”



HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES

“Sherry” had recently been involved in a minor car accident where she rear-ended another vehicle. While no one was injured, Sherry still felt she should go to the ER to be evaluated. A short time after the accident, she began receiving letters and releases from not only her insurance, but the other driver’s insurance, as well. Sherry became very overwhelmed as she tried to understand her responsibilities and what she needed to do. The LHS Service Coordinator assigned to her senior apartment community worked diligently with Sherry and her insurance adjuster. Most of the bills Sherry received were resolved with the assistance of the Service Coordinator, and due to ongoing communication between the Service Coordinator and the insurance provider, medical payments were also sorted out efficiently.