



GOD AT WORK IN OUR MIDST

*Stories of the Called Ministries of
Genacross Lutheran Services*

October 2017

SANDUSKY CAMPUS

"Abraham" had worked many years on his farm in Castalia, Ohio, but shortly after turning 75, he and his loved ones started to notice that his mind was slipping. As with many families, it was their desire to keep Abraham in his home. Unfortunately, the family had no idea what the diagnosis of Alzheimer's would bring them. Once they realized Abraham was no longer able to stay at home, he came to the Genacross Lutheran Services-Sandusky Campus to live. His family visited often and complimented staff on the home-like atmosphere of the Sandusky Campus. "Dad grew up around this area and even though it's not his own home, it sure feels like it," Abraham's son said. As Abraham's cognition continues to decline, staff members have implemented several procedures to ensure he receives the best care. According to Abraham, "Sometimes I am forgetful, but I do know there are good people, doing good things here!"

FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES

"Georgia" has been through a lot in her young life. Due to severe abuse and neglect, she was removed from her biological home. Georgia bears physical and emotional scars from her traumatic past and suffers from numerous mental health diagnoses. She had been placed with several relatives and in foster homes, but her aggressive behaviors led to placement in a children's center. While there, she harmed multiple staff members, tried to run away, vandalized property, and refused to attend school. Consequently, the center gave notice for her removal, and Georgia was placed at the Maumee Youth Center at the age of 13. Almost immediately, she began to thrive in the structured environment.



Georgia attended the on-grounds school every day and started earning high grades. She has participated in both individual and group therapy. While she does not want to have contact with her mother, she does care about and want to see several of her siblings. Staff members help maintain these connections; even transporting her to and from Michigan for visits with them. Georgia has learned many coping skills from the Family & Youth staff that she can now implement to prevent poor choices and behaviors. In August, she began attending Liberty Center Middle School, where she joined the cross country team. She has been running well and is very happy to be part of the team. Staff members report that this has helped tremendously with her self-esteem. She has made friends and feels like she belongs. Staff members make sure that she is on time to practice and meets and has what she needs to be successful. She is making herself and the staff proud, as she works hard in school, with her running, and on her mental health.

WOLF CREEK CAMPUS

Every day, staff members care for the needs of residents on the Genacross Lutheran Services-Wolf Creek Campus, but sometimes that care takes unusual turns. When "David" came to live on the campus, he had to find new homes for his beloved pets. David's aide at Wolf Creek, who is an animal lover, stepped in to help David find homes for his two cats and two dogs. A couple of David's friends adopted his cats, but it turned out to be much harder to find homes for his mature dogs. David's aide did not want to see them sent to a shelter or put to sleep, so she decided to foster them until someone was able to adopt them. The dogs adjusted immediately to living with her, and both are well-trained, good-mannered, and loving. She often brings them in to visit with David. "We've become good friends and kind of like family," she said. "Esther and Pasha are with me, but David is still their real dad." As one might expect, David's aide ended up adopting the dogs. "I was glad that I was able to help David and that his heart can rest easy knowing that they are safe with me."

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NAPOLEON CAMPUS

Nancy Roynon was not even supposed to be in town when she received the call on her home phone from the Genacross Lutheran Services-Napoleon Campus, asking if she would be interested in the open Director of Nursing position. She was supposed to be on her way to Wisconsin to visit her grown children, but she had been unable to arrange boarding for her dog until the next day. She stated:

"To be honest with you, I was worn out. Nursing has become a tough industry, and the hours can be exhausting. I had just left a Director of Nursing job that I poured my heart into, only to be left feeling empty and drained. The only thing that tempted me was that the organization was built on Christian principles. I wondered if it was a message from God."

Nancy left the next day, but the Genacross name kept running quietly through her head during the entire trip. She remembers asking God for clarity, for a decision, for a compass.... She went to church with her family before she left to return home, and God gave her this verse from a hymn: "You need my hands, full of caring, through my labors to give others rest and constant love that keeps on loving...." "To think what we do in our jobs gives those we care for rest" spoke directly to Nancy. "I couldn't stop thinking about it, and I knew at that moment that God had plopped Genacross right in my lap for a purpose. So here I am."

HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES

"Tom" returned to community living after spending nearly a year in a nursing home. At 58, he has endured more trials and difficulties than most people his age, including an accident that resulted in a spinal cord injury. The injury left him with severe leg weakness, making a wheelchair his primary mode of ambulation. Even though both of his parents are deceased, he has siblings who are very supportive. With their help and that of the HOME Choice program, Tom began the transition to an independent living setting. The Genacross Service Coordinator assigned to help Tom stated, "God had to have his hand in this case for it to work out like it did." She explained that Tom needed a handicap-accessible unit, which normally has a wait list of years. Instead, he obtained an apartment in two months. On moving day, the movers were at the storage unit loading the trucks with his belongings as scheduled. Family members decided to go ahead to Tom's apartment and prepare for the movers, but the manager was not at the complex, as arranged, to give them the key and let them in. The movers waited patiently and even took their lunch break early to give Tom and his family more time. Just as the movers returned from lunch, a maintenance person arrived with a key to the apartment. The rest of the day went smoothly, and Tom is now settled into his home. He receives home health care services three times a day, home-delivered meals, and transportation services. Although moving day brought a few hiccups, Tom's transition to independent living has been a successful one.



TOLEDO CAMPUS

This past summer, the long-term care residents on the Genacross Lutheran Services-Toledo Campus enjoyed cookouts, raising tomatoes in the garden, going out for ice cream, and watching the ducklings in the courtyard grow up. Now fall is in the air. The residents are anticipating an outing to the zoo and the concert they will enjoy there. Another group will be taking a ride along the Maumee River to see the fall colors, while others will be visiting the apple orchard and going on a hayride. On the Toledo Campus, residents will be painting pumpkins, decorating cookies, making haunted houses, and enjoying cider and donuts and a scavenger hunt. They are also looking forward to the young children coming to visit them. The preschool children from First St. John's Lutheran Day School will come to trick or treat, and the youth groups will play Halloween bingo with the residents. It is shaping up to be a busy and enjoyable month.