



God at Work in Our Midst

Stories of the Called Ministries of Lutheran Homes Society
February 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

Fourteen years ago, at age 11, "Shannon" was placed through LHS Family & Youth Services at the Oregon Treatment Facility. She had been removed from her mother's custody at age five because of her mother's cruelty and abuse. While living with her mother, she had received third and fourth degree burns and was in the hospital for a month. In fact, Shannon nearly died as a result of the burns and abuse. When she first arrived, Shannon had "temper tantrums" and exhibited odd habits and behaviors involving food. During Shannon's stay, she frequently ran away. She stole items from stores, usually food, and hid them in her clothing. She would have to be reminded often that she could not retrieve food from the trash can. She had been starved as a child, so she stole food. She had suffered deprivation, so she hoarded. It was difficult to take Shannon out in public, because she would throw herself to the ground kicking and screaming.

LHS Family & Youth staff carefully nurtured Shannon and provided meticulous treatment programming. After seven years in care and treatment, she graduated from high school and left the program. Today, Shannon is a 25-year-old young lady who lives independent of the public welfare system, holds a job, has her own apartment, and is expecting her first child. She continues to keep in contact with staff and recently told one staff member, "I am going to be the world's best mom, because I don't want my child to have to grow up without a mother."



TOLEDO CAMPUS

"Nancy," a Lutheran Home at Toledo volunteer in the Activity Department, went into the hospital and seventeen days later was admitted to The Labuhn Center for short-term rehabilitation, which included wound care and intense therapy. When asked about her stay in The Labuhn Center, Nancy commented that "they took good care of me, the way I wanted to be taken care of." When she joked with staff, they joked right back, and she enjoyed that. Nancy was especially appreciative of all the things that the staff had done for her while she was there, including exceptional, personalized nursing care, great food, and a well-stocked cart full of in-room activity options. Nancy also enjoyed socializing with other patients. After a busy day of therapy, she would relax and watch HGTV and Hallmark Christmas stories. When Nancy left The Labuhn Center, the Activity Department got their volunteer computer guru back. This made for a very happy ending for everyone.

NAPOLEON CAMPUS

"Ray" is a patient who came to Lutheran Home at Napoleon to receive rehab care with the goal of returning home. "When I think of the care I received from the Lutheran Home at Napoleon for my short-term rehab stay, I get very emotional. I would have never guessed you could find a facility with such caring, loving staff, and I struggle to find the right words to share the positive impact they had on my stay here." Ray cannot say enough about the team of professionals who took care of him. "The entire staff went above and beyond to make my stay as close to home as they could. Thank you for helping me to get strong again. Thank you for treating me like family. Thank you for helping me with home therapy to keep me strong. I will share with everyone to choose the Lutheran Home at Napoleon." Ray's wife, Lilly, who was a nurse in a skilled facility for 10 years, also commented on the "amazing" staff at the Lutheran Home at Napoleon and "appreciates the extra effort and care they give."

WOLF CREEK CAMPUS

The recipient of a hip replacement and two artificial knees, “Betty” was living independently in a condominium when she was involved in a serious car accident; two months later, she had triple bypass open heart surgery. Then this wonderful woman came to Lutheran Village at Wolf Creek for rehabilitation. She progressed very well in the therapy unit. Even though she wanted to return to her home, she and her family decided that moving into Wolf Creek’s assisted living would be a better, safer alternative. So, at the age of 91, Betty moved to the Wolf Creek campus. Due to her age and medical history, Betty’s hip has a tendency to dislocate when she makes awkward bends. Recently, she was in Wolf Creek’s rehab after experiencing a hip dislocation. She completed an intensive therapeutic exercise program to strengthen her hip. Betty is a self-motivator who was eager to rehab and strengthen her hip so she could quickly return to her assisted living apartment. Betty did return to her apartment and continues with the activities she loves, such as playing bridge and bingo and visiting the bookmobile when it comes to campus. She is a joy to the residents and staff. Betty, whose sense of humor is always shining through, greets everyone with a ready smile and a pleasant “come on in...”

SANDUSKY CAMPUS

“Marva” grew up in the Sandusky area with her family, but moved out of state after college and started her own family. On a visit back home, Marva was looking for an alternative placement for her aunt, because they were not happy with the care she was receiving at another long-term care facility. She called Lutheran Memorial Home, discussed the situation with the Life Enrichment Coordinator, and scheduled a tour. Marva and her sister were very impressed with the facility, the staff, and the atmosphere and placed their aunt’s name on the long-term care waiting list. A short time later, there was an opening, and the Life Enrichment Coordinator contacted Marva for placement. Marva was so excited about the opening for her aunt that she reserved a flight home and arrived three days later to start her aunt’s transition to the facility. Prior to the transfer of the patient, Marva was very impressed with the way the staff accommodated their needs by moving items and setting up her room. The Life Enrichment Coordinator even came in on Saturday to assist with the transition, which went smoothly even though the aunt was nervous about it. When Marva’s aunt saw her private room containing her treasured keepsakes and furniture, she felt like she was at home. Marva was able to return to her home with her mind at ease, knowing that her aunt was happy and in a caring and home-like environment.



HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES

“Marsha” has always been very independent and able to provide and care for herself and her family. Recently, she had some medical issues and experienced financial difficulty. Lutheran Homes Society was asked to provide benefits counseling services through the PASSPORT program to help Marsha qualify for programs to help pay her medical and household bills. Marsha and the LHS Service Coordinator set up a monthly budget and were able to pay down her bills. Unfortunately, Marsha had several overdraft fees, and the bank garnished her entire social security check for two months to pay them. The Service Coordinator worked with the bank to develop a payment plan or to forgive the overdraft fees. The bank did agree to forgive one overdraft fee. Marsha was unable to pay her utility bills for the month of January and was in jeopardy of having the utilities to her home shut off due to the bank garnishing her social security check. The Service Coordinator and Marsha spoke with several community agencies and requested assistance. The Salvation Army was able to provide partial assistance, but they were not able to secure the entire amount needed. The Service Coordinator spoke with the LHS Housing & Community-Based Services Executive Director, who arranged to have the remaining portion of the utilities paid by an LHS Foundation fund set up to help community clients in need. Marsha was very thankful for the help and support provided by LHS. She explained that she had never had this type of financial hardship before, and that her main concern was for her eight-year-old grandchild who is in her care. Marsha expressed that she did not want to cause her grandchild any more confusion or stress, which would have been created by packing them both up and finding somewhere else to stay until she could pay her utilities.