



God at Work in Our Midst

Stories of the Called Ministries of Lutheran Homes Society
January 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.

TOLEDO CAMPUS

The Lutheran Home at Toledo chaplain reminds us that one promise from God is that He will never leave or forsake us. Only God is always with us, but people tend to see Him only in the unusual or unexplainable. Unusual incidents are just reminders that He is still present and working for the good of His creation. The chaplain recalled an incident a few years ago when "Beulah" was admitted to the care center as a hospice patient. The family brought her to the Toledo campus because of the presence of the chapel and chaplain, and they made sure she was able to attend worship regularly. Because of the faithfulness of God working through the nurses, nurse aides, and activities and housekeeping staff, she improved enough that hospice care was no longer needed. A couple years after this incident, "Chloe" was admitted for hospice care. Again, because of God being faithful and working through staff, she also ceased needing hospice services. Her health and well-being had improved dramatically. God continues to be present, accomplishing His will, as staff members fulfill their duties on a daily basis.

FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES

"Rachel" was referred to Children Services when her father refused to pick her up from a mental health facility. After her mother's death, Rachel's father had prevented her from having contact with family, including her half siblings. Rachel had made many allegations against her father in the past, but the cases were always closed. Her custodial agency placed her with LHS Family & Youth Services when she failed to make progress at previous placements. Initially, the goal was for Rachel to reunify with her father. As Rachel made progress, however, it became clear that this relationship was not a healthy one for her. Since being placed with Family & Youth Services, Rachel has continued to make steady progress in therapy and by improving her behaviors. She attends church and Bible study regularly and has done some volunteer work. Rachel also has reconnected with her older sister, "Rebecca," who is interested in gaining custody of her. Rebecca and her fiancé have been participating in the Partners in Treatment program with Rachel to build a relationship that, hopefully, will lead toward the goal of reunification. They are participating in family therapy to address Rachel's needs and to increase Rebecca's knowledge and skills for parenting. At Christmas, Rachel was able to have a home visit with her sister – taking one more step on her road to healing.



HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES

"Sandra" had been in a nursing home for eight months, waiting for the day she could go home. She had required surgery on both knees and was unable to walk for an extended period of time. Physical therapy improved her strength, balance and mobility. Once Sandra was strong enough, her son offered to take care of her in his home. The LHS Service Coordinator, who was assigned to help Sandra transition back into the community, arranged for everything that Sandra would need to be successful, and her son was able to set up his home in a manner that accommodated her limitations. The day finally came for Sandra to be discharged home. The Service Coordinator could tell that Sandra was very excited. Her entire family was there to greet her as she arrived at her new home. Sandra said that seeing all of them together made it one of the best days of her life.

WOLF CREEK CAMPUS

“Brian” has had many physical ailments – including a heart attack at age 59, a stroke, renal failure, and lung cancer. Eventually, he needed help with the activities of daily living and moved into Lutheran Village at Wolf Creek’s assisted living. He had good days and bad days, but throughout it all Brian always maintained a positive attitude and enjoyed life to its fullest. As his health continued to decline, Brian needed more help, and he moved to Wolf Creek’s nursing care center with hospice care. The staff loves Brian, and he loves the staff. He truly feels that this is home, and Wolf Creek is part of his family. To Brian, each day is a gift, and he is most appreciative of every day.

One of Brian’s goals was to live to the age of 72 (the age his father passed away); in mid-December he attained that milestone. Then, something else truly amazing happened to this special man. Brian loves the “Star Wars” movie series and knew he would not be able to go see the new movie at the cinema. Hospice arranged through their “positive memory” program for Brian to view the movie before it hit the big screen. J.J. Abrams, director of “Star Wars: The Force Awakens,” even called Brian and asked him if he would like a private viewing of the new release in his room. Brian was able to have one other person watch the movie with him, so his sister joined him for the showing. Guards escorted a laptop computer to Brian in his nursing care room, where he and his sister had to sign a confidentiality agreement not to disclose the movie’s content. The laptop was hooked up to his TV to watch the movie, while a guard stood by his door making sure no one came into his room. What an exciting day and memorable experience for Brian. As always, Brian is thankful for all that he has been given.



SANDUSKY CAMPUS

“Donald” was admitted to Lutheran Memorial Home from a local hospital. While there, he had had multiple surgeries to repair a leg fracture sustained during a work accident. His leg was placed on an external fixator with screws to help stabilize the bones. Donald was sent to the Sandusky campus to receive skilled nursing care and therapy services. When he arrived, he was unable to put any weight on his right leg and was experiencing a great deal of pain. The dedicated nursing and therapy staff instructed Donald on how to perform daily tasks while maintaining proper body mechanics, and provided him with different ways to cope with the pain. After multiple follow-up visits to his surgeon, Donald’s fixator was removed, and he was able to put partial weight on his foot. Donald was ecstatic, because all his efforts to follow therapy recommendations were “paying off.” He understands that in time, with continued therapy, and under guidance from his surgeon, he will be able to make a full recovery. At discharge, Donald thanked everyone for helping with his rehabilitation and enabling him to return home with the confidence he needs to resume his daily activities.



NAPOLEON CAMPUS

Many people have the misconception that Christmas is a lonely, depressing time for those who are living in long-term care facilities. They may observe residents sitting or sleeping in a recliner or wheelchair for the 30 minutes or so that they are visiting, and imagine this is the status quo for many hours of every day. In reality, visitors at Lutheran Home at Napoleon who make this assumption are missing the big picture, which contains many instances of God touching the residents. Instances such as the time a nurse aide kindly walked “Jack,” a 94-year-old resident, to and from the restroom and listened to him talk about his memories of the cookies his mother used to bake at Christmas time. Other moments may include “Eldor” singing along with tears of gratefulness to God for the gift of Jesus during a Christmas sing-along, or “Liz” laughing and talking to the Napoleon campus’ dog, Ricky, when he jumped in her lap. Ricky was as happy and excited to see Liz as she was to see him. These are examples of moments that happen every day, every hour. God is in our midst at Lutheran Home at Napoleon, and it does not matter if the person performing the act of kindness or caring is a Christian or not; God uses every heart to bring about His will. From spending extra time talking with residents to spontaneous caroling up and down the halls at Christmas, God IS in our midst every day and every hour.