



God at Work in Our Midst

Stories of the Called Ministries of Lutheran Homes Society
June 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.

WOLF CREEK CAMPUS

For most people, three times is a charm, but for "Maggie" she hopes six times is her magic number. In the past three years, Maggie has come to Lutheran Village at Wolf Creek six times for rehabilitation to help her recover from different surgeries and injuries. Whether it was knee replacements, back surgery, a broken neck, broken legs, or mini strokes, Maggie has been a real trooper while she has dealt with a multitude of health issues. She is a hard worker in therapy and knows what it takes to get back home. She is also a champion for other patients, cheering them on during their rehabilitation. Maggie keeps coming back to the Wolf Creek campus, because she feels very comfortable here and has experienced firsthand how the quality therapy services have made it possible for her to return to the community after each incident.

TOLEDO CAMPUS

"I'm home." These were some of the first words that "Virginia" said after entering The Labuhn Center on the Lutheran Home at Toledo campus. She feels at home because she has received therapy here before; but Virginia's feeling of being home goes deeper than that. She and her husband, "Art," both worked at Lutheran Home at Toledo when they were younger. Virginia jokes that at one time or another Art had painted every inch of what was then known as the "Old Folks' Home." Virginia worked as an early member of the activities team. She talks fondly of how much she enjoyed planning parties for the residents. Virginia and Art are also good friends of the Labuhn family. "Everything about the Lutheran Home is special to me," Virginia said. Of her most recent stay, Virginia explained that "everyone was so kind and good to me." She was touched by all the hugs that she received from staff members when it was time to leave. Virginia hopes that she will not need rehabilitation services again, but if she does – she'll come back "home."



FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES

Julie suffers from mood swings and bipolar disorder, as does her mother. When placed with LHS Family & Youth Services, Julie self-harmed by swallowing non-food items and sometimes making superficial scratches on herself. She also had a history of suicidal ideations. She had been removed from her mother's home, because her mother was unable to provide her with proper care. Julie had multiple failed placements and was referred to LHS when no programs in her home state would accept her for treatment. She was very unstable when she came to LHS. In fact, she had to be taken to the emergency room hours after being placed, because she swallowed a battery. Initially, Julie required a great deal of staff attention. She was placed on suicide watch and received one-on-one supervision for long periods of time. Staff taught her coping skills to use when she was feeling suicidal or contemplating self-harm. Her therapist met with Julie two to three times a week to reinforce these skills and to improve her self-esteem.

Julie began making progress in baby steps. Eventually, staff members were able to trust that she could go off grounds without attempting to hurt herself. She was able to go to the movies and other fun activities, such as window shopping or bowling. Julie has been thinking clearly, coping well, and has not made any self-harming attempts in six months. She is very proud of this and smiles more than ever before. Staff also has spent time teaching her independent living skills to prepare her for living on her own, as it was decided that living with her mom was not the best place for her. In addition, Julie began working hard in school, and her most recent grade card reflected her efforts. She received all but two A's. She is now preparing to transition to an adult living setting, where she will share a home with two other women. They will receive some assistance with daily living skills, while Julie continues to finish her education and seek employment.

NAPOLEON CAMPUS

“Luella,” a 90-year-old woman with some memory deficits, resides at Lutheran Home at Napoleon. She is not always trusting of her caregivers, especially during direct care. To Luella, these caregivers feel intrusive. A great deal of patience and tact needs to be used by the STNA staff when providing Luella’s personal care. Her faith in God is something Luella still identifies with strongly, and a STNA adeptly used this knowledge to improve the delicate situation. The STNA took the time to find a CD player that she could play during Luella’s shower. Together, they hummed along to hymns that helped Luella relax. Before they knew it, the most difficult part of her care was complete. This is another example of a staff member tapping into a resident’s life story to create an environment that is individualized, comfortable, and, ultimately, dignified.

SANDUSKY CAMPUS

“Jeanette” came to Lutheran Memorial Home in April, as part of her recovery from a stroke. The home she and her husband live in is located nearby, so they were excited to remain close to each other while Jeanette was receiving rehabilitation services. Jeanette’s daughter often came to spend time with her and was helpful in her mother’s recovery. Within a couple of months, Jeanette demonstrated significant improvement, both cognitively and physically. Staff had recommended that she start taking a prescription medication to help with her memory loss. Jeanette’s cognitive functions improved so dramatically that she was a totally different person on the medication. In addition, she went to therapy each day to regain normal function, and she slowly learned to put weight on her affected side. Jeanette continued to work hard and will soon be discharging home to be with her husband. She is grateful for the helpful and friendly staff, the good food, and the therapy. According to Jeanette, “They really knew what I needed to do!”



HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES

“Nancy” had discharged to the community from a nursing facility through the HOME Choice program. An LHS Service Coordinator was assigned as her Community Support Coach. The Service Coordinator assisted Nancy with applying for energy assistance, arranging for her medications, and obtaining transportation to and from medical appointments. However, the biggest source of support Nancy ended up needing was an emotional one. One day, Nancy called the Service Coordinator with news that her son had attempted suicide and was hospitalized. The Service Coordinator was able to offer comfort and support over the phone in an attempt to reassure Nancy that she did not have to face the situation alone. Tragically, Nancy’s son passed away a short time later. The Service Coordinator attended the memorial service and has continued to assist Nancy with processing her grief.