



GOD AT WORK IN OUR MIDST

*Stories of the Called Ministries of
Genacross Lutheran Services*



April 2017

FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES

“Julia” was adopted with her brother when she was young. She lived with her brother and seven other adopted siblings in a home, where she was abused by one of her adoptive brothers. Prior to her placement at Genacross Family & Youth Services, Julia displayed suicidal and homicidal actions, including threatening to stab her family. She had a long history of self-harming and aggressive behaviors. She had nine different diagnoses, and had experienced three previous residential placements and four hospitalizations. When Julia was first placed with Genacross, she was extremely anxious and had very low self-esteem. These items were addressed in individual and group therapy, but also on a daily basis by the direct care staff. Julia slowly started making progress. Her incidents of self-harm became fewer and fewer. Her anxiety decreased and her self-esteem increased. Julia has improved so much that she is now participating in a vocational program through school in which she works at a local hospital. Some days she works in the kitchen and other days she is a courtesy host. Her self-confidence is higher than it has ever been. She enjoys cooking meals at the group home, and she displays increased optimism about her future. Julia also actively participates in church, having led Sunday school twice and helped plan the church potluck. Julia continues to be a role model for the other youth at the group home, as she learns the skills that will help her to be successful when she transitions to independence.

SANDUSKY CAMPUS

When “Jenny” came to the Genacross Lutheran Services-Sandusky Campus at the beginning of March, she had never imagined her life within a skilled nursing facility. Prior to her stay, Jenny was a healthy, thriving, and energetic middle-aged woman. When she least expected it, however, she developed a severe infection that led to multiple surgeries and resulted in a significant loss of function. Jenny experienced several setbacks while at Genacross, from poor lab results to being readmitted to the local hospital. Staff members were determined not to let the setbacks get her down. The nursing staff worked extremely hard to determine the right solution. Finally, Jenny was stable enough to move forward with more difficult activities of daily living. “Right when I thought I couldn’t go on, someone with a smile came along to cheer me up!” Jenny said. The therapists worked gently with Jenny, but they knew that she needed to be pushed a little at the same time. “The therapy department understood when the pain was too much, but they never let me quit,” she added. Jenny is scheduled to return home in the coming weeks. “I really thought I was going to lose my life. Thanks to everyone at the Sandusky Campus, I can return home and resume a normal life.”



HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES

“Edna” had resided in a nursing home for over a year. She was initially hospitalized for loss of consciousness, but during the course of her rehabilitation at a local nursing home, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Since then, she has completed chemotherapy and radiation. Her hair is now growing back and her energy is returning. Edna has not lived on her own in about six years, but she recently moved into her own apartment. With the help of her Genacross Service Coordinator, Edna found a very accessible apartment that is located on the first floor a short distance from the laundry room and close to the front entrance. Edna purchased new furniture and is thrilled that the apartment comes with a dishwasher. In her over 70 years, she has never owned a dishwasher. “Without the help of my Genacross Service Coordinator and the nursing facility’s social worker, I do not know where I’d be – both have done so much,” she said. Edna is ready to start a new life in her new home.

Although pseudonyms are used in the above ministry stories, Genacross follows HIPAA guidelines and has either obtained permission from our residents, patients, or clients, or has sufficiently concealed their identities, thereby enabling us to use their stories of God’s grace.

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NAPOLEON CAMPUS

“Evan” came to the Genacross Lutheran Services-Napoleon Campus unable to control his blood sugar levels. He was diagnosed with sepsis and heart problems, and had a newly placed pacemaker and an open wound on his right heel. Evan was depressed and lonely, and did not feel up to making friends. At times, he was rude and negative with the staff members, who worked hard to offer Evan the foods he preferred, the therapy schedule he wanted, and the care he needed. Evan pushed back many times and refused therapy, activities, and a proper diet.

Staff began to realize that Evan was going to be a case that was going to take an intervention greater than any care plan. As staff often does during morning meeting, his case was brought before God in prayer. In addition, the chaplain made regular visits to Evan’s room, activities staff brought Evan items to engage his interests, wound care and psychological professionals were brought in to assist him, and staff kept Evan in their prayers while attempting to anticipate his needs. Before long, Evan’s wound began healing, and he was able to sit up in a chair for a few hours each day. He began to build relationships with staff members who would go for walks with him. Evan continued to make progress as the weeks and months passed, and he even began attending group activities. His family never anticipated him leaving the campus, but Evan did return home. Evan is a success story that will provide staff members with hope when they are confronted with other mountains to climb.

WOLF CREEK CAMPUS

The lesson from Matthew that was read during a recent chapel worship service began, “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John...” The following week, Bob, a resident of the Genacross Lutheran Services-Wolf Creek Campus, came into the chaplain’s office in his wheelchair. The Matthew account of John the Baptist baptizing Jesus had moved his heart, and he wanted to be baptized at this time. Bob related how, as a child, he had attended many different church denominations, but his mother had never arranged for this sacrament. As an adult, life got away from him and, consequently, baptism eluded him, but the spirit of God still burned as an ember within his heart. Now, as a resident in a care facility, recovering from medical issues, Bob felt the call to be baptized. On the Sunday of the event, Bob presented himself in his wheelchair. When it came time for the baptism, Bob struggled to his feet. Standing, shaking, hanging on to the chaplain by the arm, he leaned over the font and received the water of regeneration. Afterward, Bob said, “Do you know why I stood up?” He went on to explain, “I wanted to honor the Lord for sharing with me the wonderful gift of baptism!”



TOLEDO CAMPUS

Sometimes family isn’t about DNA. Sometimes it’s the people who “adopt” us into their lives that become our family. “Marge” and “Tom” became family through their stays in The Labuhn Center on the Genacross Lutheran Services-Toledo Campus. Marge, with her large personality and servant’s heart, was a resident first. Then she became a volunteer in The Labuhn Center and enjoyed bringing home-cooked lunches to staff. As time went by, Tom, with his quiet, humble, and always patient personality, also came to The Labuhn Center for rehabilitation. Tom’s condition worsened and he was hospitalized. Now it was the staff’s turn to be family to Marge. They made sure that she got back and forth to visit Tom. Some ran errands or made sure that Marge ate and was taking care of herself. They all stepped up to prevent Marge from becoming overwhelmed by the situation. Tom returned to The Labuhn Center, but his condition continued to worsen. In the midst of this, his son passed away. Again, staff surrounded them with love and prayers. This family that Marge had adopted stood with her as Tom also passed away. God definitely put Marge and Tom at the Toledo Campus for a reason. Their giving spirit and love pulled staff members into their family, and in their time of need, staff was able to give back and support Marge and Tom with love.