



GOD AT WORK IN OUR MIDST

*Stories of the Called Ministries of
Genacross Lutheran Services*



April 2020

In the last month, our world has changed dramatically because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Businesses and schools are closed. Daily updates are televised from the Governor. Families are sequestered together. Social distancing is talked about endlessly. Wearing masks has become the norm for many people. Through all this and more, the ministries of Genacross Lutheran Services continue to provide compassionate care and services to residents and patients.

That God is working in our midst we have no doubt. There may be some who question where God is in all this, but we see His presence every day in our ministries. We see how He works through our employees "to embrace individuals and families with compassionate care and services throughout life's journey." The care may look different during this uncertain time, but we see it every day in the selfless, compassionate service given by faithful staff members. We see it in the loving ways that family members and friends stay in touch with loved ones when all visitors to our campuses are restricted.

The staffs at our care campuses in Fremont (Bethany Place), Napoleon, Toledo and Holland (Wolf Creek) are working hard to keep our residents healthy and engaged. From nursing to activities and dietary to housekeeping, they are stepping up in amazing and creative ways. While communal dining rooms are closed, dedicated staff members are delivering meals each day. Activities for residents are continuing, with social distancing guidelines in mind. Easter was observed in many meaningful ways, and employees encourage residents to get outside in the fresh air as warmer weather permits. In addition, our Genacross at Home nurses and therapists continue to see patients in the safety and comfort of their own homes.



Window visits between family members and residents, like this one at Bethany Place in Fremont, Ohio, have become a new way to stay in touch with loved ones.

Toledo Campus residents play hallway bingo (right) and Napoleon Campus residents (below) exercise while practicing social distancing.



Wolf Creek Campus staff "clown around" to entertain residents and lift their spirits.



Napoleon Campus residents were happy to see the Easter Bunny as he hopped from room to room.

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With visitors not allowed at many of our locations, communication with loved ones is a challenge that our ministries have embraced. Window visits are one new way to stay in touch, as well as increased phone calls and video chats. Early on in this public health crisis, Genacross purchased 50 tablets to facilitate communication between residents and family members. Staff has been busy setting up accounts, teaching the use of the technology, and working to make sure video chats happen for those who want them. We are also grateful for the many cards, letters, and pictures that have been sent to the campuses.

While the daily lives of the older adults for whom we care have changed, so have the lives of the youth we serve in our residential settings. Staff members are working every day to keep youth active, learning, and engaged, while still providing the care and therapeutic services they need. Youth have spent time on many activities and crafts, and some have even created signs to cheer up residents of our senior housing communities in east Toledo.

Certainly, God is in our midst as our chaplains visit and offer prayers with residents. Prayer cards at the Wolf Creek Campus and inspirational placemats at the Toledo Campus are shared with residents. While at our Napoleon Campus, Sunday worship is held in the halls, and mid-week services and Bible studies are broadcast on in-house TV. Of course, many congregations broadcast worship that residents can access electronically. Spiritual support is critical, and all of our ministries are strengthened by all those who are lifting up our residents and staff in their prayers.

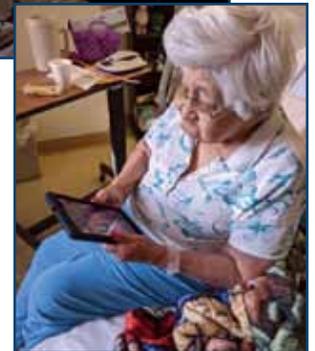
We also see God through the generous donations of much needed items for residents and staff. Many individuals have sewn masks and delivered them to our ministries, especially our independent living housing sites, to protect staff and the older adults who live there. In addition, numerous congregations have gathered paper products, toiletries, and food items and donated them to many of our housing locations. Residents (many who are hesitant to go out in public) are extremely grateful for the generous support. We have also had local businesses donate meals for our workers, as a tangible show of community support.

In other words, God is, indeed, in our midst and working powerfully through all of us. We are in this together, supporting one another. Thanks be to God!

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.



Families of Toledo Campus residents, like at all of our campuses where visitors are not allowed, are communicating with their loved ones by using signs, phones, tablets and letters.



Our youth in care made signs to send encouraging messages to some of our housing residents.



Genacross housing sites have received many donations of masks and needed supplies from local congregations.



These signs have popped up on our four care campuses, recognizing the hard work and dedication of our employees.

