



CELEBRATING OUR 160TH ANNIVERSARY

Genacross Lutheran Services is celebrating its 160th anniversary in 2020. From 1860 to today, the organization has been growing and changing to meet the needs of society.

1860

August 6 – The Rev. Johannes Doerfler of Salem Lutheran Church and four members of his congregation established the Lutheran Orphans' Home Society. At about the same time, Pastor Doerfler and his wife welcomed two orphaned boys into his home to be raised with their own children.

August 15 – The founders formed a parent organization called The Society for General Work of Mercy in the Sense of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America. The ultimate vision for the Society was to provide a range of services to people in need, including a home for the aged, a home for the handicapped, a hospital and more.



The Rev. Johannes Doerfler

1862

July 7 – The Society dedicated the first orphanage building, a two-story wooden frame structure located near the present day intersection of Seaman and Wheeling streets on the border of east Toledo and Oregon, Ohio. Most of the labor and a great deal of the material were donated in order to make the home a reality.



The original orphanage

1870

The Rev. Karl Beckel became the second Director of the Lutheran Orphans' Home. He was also the pastor of First St. John Lutheran Church, and he had served as teacher for the orphans and the children of his parish – beginning a long and close relationship between the orphanage and First St. John that would benefit many.

1874

Sister Anna Lutz became the first deaconess to serve the Orphans' Home as housemother. The Society had sent Miss Lutz to the Deaconess Motherhouse in Neuendettlsau, Germany, for training. The Lutheran Sisters who followed her played an important role in the loving care provided to the children.

1881

The first of several additions to the orphanage was built at a cost of \$1,500. As the Orphans' Home served more children, space became an ongoing issue. For many years, the housefather and the older orphan boys lived across the street from the orphanage in the farmhouse. Working on the farm was a major part of the older boys' lives.



1879-1911 1913-1916
Unsere Waiseneltern,
Herr Pastor F. Schmeltz und Frau.

1894

The Rev. Frederick Schmeltz was elected as Director and housefather of the Lutheran Orphans' Home. He served from 1894-1911 and again from 1913-1916. The spirit of the Orphans' Home was very much like a family. In fact, Pastor and Mrs. Schmeltz were so beloved by the children that they came to be referred to as Papa and Mother Schmeltz.

1899

The Society passed a resolution at the annual meeting to build a schoolhouse, which was constructed just west of the Orphans' Home.

In Her Words:

"The Orphans' Home is only 2 and ½ miles from the center of the city, east of the Maumee River. Currently...there are 49 children. Owned are forty acres of land. The animal situation is comprised of four horses, seven cows, with milk from two going to the large orphans' home and that of three going to the house of the boys, about fifty pigs and about 100 chickens.

"Baking is done twice or three times a week, and each time 39 or 40 loaves of bread are baked. We buy soap three or four times a year. In spring, hard soap is made while at another time soft or white soap is made.



Sister Anna Lutz

"Mondays are usually wash day. Tuesday, probably ironing and Tuesday afternoon all the ragged clothing must be set aside. Each of the girls must patch three pieces of clothing, likewise also with the mending, and thus everyone helps together."

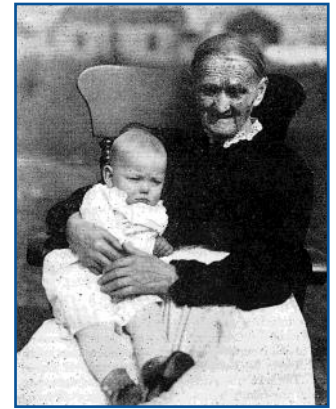
(Translated excerpts from an 1874 report written in German and sent to Neuendettlsau by Sister Lutz.)

1900

At the turn of the century, the Society was serving 99 children and two elderly in the Orphans' Home. The building was bursting at the seams.

1904

At the annual meeting, the idea of building a home for the aged was proposed and accepted. A committee was created to formulate plans. It was determined that the new home would be built next door to the orphanage. Records indicate that a dozen older people lived in the Orphans' Home before the Society built a separate building to care for the elderly.



An elder and child served by the Society.

1906

May 13 – The cornerstone for the new building was laid and construction proceeded at a rapid pace.

October 21 - The Society dedicated Das Altenheim, known in English as the Home for the Aged or Old Folks' Home. The brick structure included an office, reception room, spacious hall, kitchen, dining room, and 34 bedrooms. The cost to build it was approximately \$16,000.



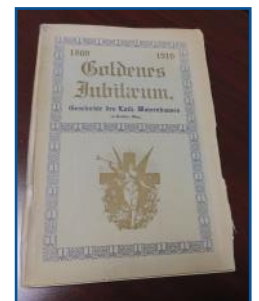
The original Old Folks' Home

1909

The Society's name was formally changed to the Lutheran Orphans' and Old Folks' Home Society of Toledo, Ohio. The new name reflected the organization's service to youth and the elderly.

1910

The Society celebrated its 50th Anniversary or "Golden Jubilee" in 1910. The August 6, 1910, issue of the Toledo Blade ran an article highlighting the milestone. The article included the following: "Set in the midst of a fruitful orchard, surrounded by cultivated fields and with the shadow of a church spire falling on it, the Lutheran Orphans' Home will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary August 7 under conditions that offer a striking contrast to its founding, when it was the first break in a stretch of unbroken forest."



1911

From 1911-1913, the Rev. Herman Brandt served as Director of the Lutheran Orphans' and Old Folks' Home Society.

In Her Words:

"...The spirit of the home on the whole is very much like that of a family, the hard and fast rules and formality of institution life are lacking. The children call Mr. and Mrs. Schmeltz 'father' and 'mother.' Mr. Schmeltz goes about the grounds with the children toddling after him, calling to him and generally expressing themselves as wanting to be petted. He is very gentle and affectionate.



Eating in the dining hall

"It is particularly gratifying to see the superintendent and his wife take their meals with the children. Before taking their seats, the children, led by Mr. Schmeltz, recite a prayer in German. After breakfast Mr. Schmeltz reads aloud a chapter from the Bible. Upon rising, the children recite another prayer before leaving the room.

"...the meal is made more than a mere time for feeding. It is to be regretted that more institutions do not inject into their life this combination of family with religious atmosphere."

(From a 1913 report by Esther Eaton, Assistant Director of the Ohio State Children's Welfare Department.)

1913

Following Pastor Brandt's brief leadership, Pastor Frederick Schmeltz returned as Director from 1913-1916. The following was written in December 1914 by Papa Schmeltz:

"We leave home with a large farm wagon as early in the morning as convenient, drive out into the country a distance of 5 or 6 miles, then turn around and collect on the way back, stopping at almost every farmhouse. When we reach home in the evening, or, as is sometimes the case, quite late at night, we generally have a large load of farm produce of the most varied description – wheat, oats, corn, potatoes, turnips, cabbage, carrots, fruit, etc.

"To unload such a harvest by lantern light is quite a treat for the boys, especially when there happen to be apples or pears among the contents, some of which, having escaped from the bag, are found among other things in the wagon.

"Some years later, with the acquisition of a truck, the 5 or 6 mile range of the trips was expanded to well over one hundred miles."



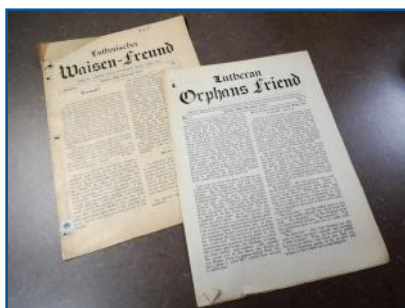
Unloading produce

The annual food trips connected the Homes with member congregations and farm families throughout northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan.

1914

The first issue of the *Lutheran Orphans Friend*, written in German, debuted in November 1914. The second issue, written in English, noted, "The editors fully realize that the arrangement of publishing one number in German and the next in English is far from ideal, but under the existing circumstances it is the best we can do. We feel that the old staunch supporters of our Homes

deserve to hear something about these institutions – and among these the great majority read only German. On the other hand, we know that the number of our young people who read only English is growing ever greater!" This alternating of language went on for the first five years of publication.



The first two editions of the *Lutheran Orphans Friend*

1916

With the orphanage filled to overflowing, a new building was needed to better serve the children. This was the major issue confronting the Rev. F.W. Dietz when he was called to direct the Society in June 1916. At the 1916 annual meeting, a Building Fund Committee was formed to raise \$100,000 for a new building, and the Society embarked on its first capital campaign aimed at the general public. As part of the campaign, Sunday school children carried around dime coin banks to collect funds.



Front and back of the Sunday School dime banks

1918

With the city of Toledo threatening to close the orphanage because it was inadequate and not fire safe, the Society negotiated for more time to design a new building and raise the needed funds to build it. On June 4, 1918, the Society broke ground for the new Lutheran Orphans' Home. Within 60 days, the cornerstone was laid by Pastor Schmeltz, who had faithfully served the Society as Director for almost 20 years.

During the ceremony, the Rev. Harry P. Long, Lutheran Inner-Missionary in Toledo, noted that the Society's Lutheran Orphans' Home was within six years of being the oldest institution of its kind in the United States. He also pointed out that as the original Home was founded in the dark and gloomy days of the Civil War; in like manner, the new Orphans' Home building would be built during the dark days of World War I.



Laying the cornerstone

1919

In January 1919, Chris Mahnke was chosen to succeed Pastor Dietz as the Society's Director. He served until February 1923. Previously, Mr. Mahnke had been Field Secretary for the organization, responsible for raising funds to pay for the new orphans' home under construction.



CHRIS. G. MAHNKE, SUPT.
DIRECTOR 1919 - 1923

One interesting aspect of his years in Field Secretary service was the assigning of the Texas District of the Iowa Synod to the responsibility of the Society, adding its support to that of the Wisconsin and Eastern districts of the Synod. Thus the territory assigned to the Society for provision of service and support included the states of Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, western Pennsylvania, and Texas. As Field Secretary, Mr. Mahnke spent weeks at a time away from home, visiting various congregations and living in members' homes. He would visit every parish family to share the Society's story and solicit gifts for its support. He spent almost half a year in the state of Texas alone, generating support for the organization.

1919

April 6 – The new Lutheran Orphans' Home building, also known as "The Dormitory," was dedicated. An estimated 4,500 people attended the festivities. The procession from the old building to the new reflected the Home's beginning. Society Director Chris Mahnke led the children, Board of



The Dormitory

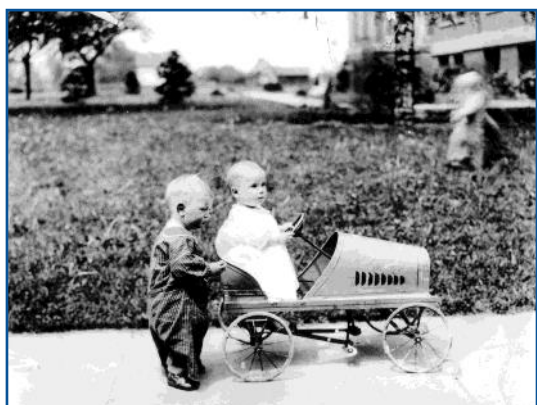
Trustees, the Deaconesses, and the entire orphans' family into the building singing "Jesus Still Lead On," just as Pastor Doerfler and his children had entered the original Home in 1862 singing the same hymn in German, "Jesu Geh Voran."

There are many photos of life in the new Lutheran Orphans' Home that show the children served in the new building. Hundreds of children passed through its front doors. By all accounts, the orphanage had a real family atmosphere, filled with happy children who were loved and cared for by Lutheran Sisters.



The Home family - 1922

Life in the Orphans' Home was filled with activity. Children played outside whenever possible to gain the benefits of sunshine and fresh air. We are fortunate to have many photos of everyday life from the early years of the orphanage.



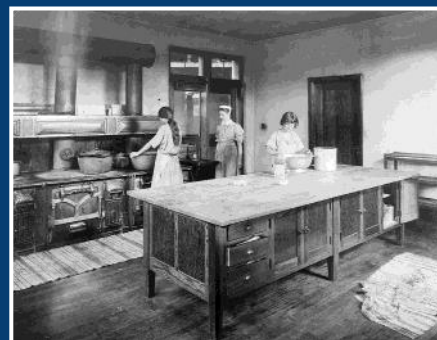
Riding on a push car



Laughing boys

The New Orphanage

The Dormitory was a 39,000 square-foot brick building that included a kitchen, dining room, laundry room, and furnace room in the basement; offices, a reception parlor, two school rooms, the Deaconesses sleeping rooms, and an auditorium with a seating capacity of 350 on the first floor; sleeping quarters for the smaller children, the teachers' living quarters, the open air play room, and the sewing room on the second floor; and the older children's sleeping quarters, the attendant's living rooms and a hospital section on the third floor. The building was designed to house 100 children and their attendants.



Working in the kitchen

Described as "modern in every way," it was completely fireproof with the exception of the roof. Floors were 24-inch thick poured concrete with two layers of sheet steel imbedded within. Interior walls were three layers of brick identical to the building's outer walls. Even after the orphanage closed in 1964, the building was still in good condition.

Tales of Daily Life

Snippets from early issues of the society's newsletter give a glimpse into the everyday happenings at the Home.

"Little Caroline threw the house in an uproar of excitement the other evening by producing her first tooth. Now the poor baby has no way of protecting herself from the numerous fingers being put in her mouth. Each of her dozen or more 'nursemaids' is bent on having the honor of finding the next one."

- July 1923



Riding in the wagon

"We sometimes wonder whether the average individual knows what spring means when he has not heard the cheery ring of children's voices accompanied by the rattle of roller skates, creaking swings and rumbling toy wagons and the usually boisterous voices of a gang of boys on the playing field. Perhaps the fields and woods and meadows have served the poet with the greatest inspiration in this season, but we want to recommend—at least for variation—a children's home."

- April 1929

1923

From March–September 1923, Dr. Charles C. Dreyer, the Home's physician, was appointed acting Superintendent/Director. As an interim Director, Dr. Dreyer had little opportunity to propose or complete any major project. After his interim service, he remained as the institution's physician for many years.



DR. CHARLES C. DREYER,
Chief of Medical Staff
and Acting Supt.
DIRECTOR, 1923



REV. A. C. HUETER
DIRECTOR 1923 - 1927

The Rev. Albert C. Hueter came to the Society as Director in late 1923 from his pastorate at St. Peter Church in Edon, Ohio. Along with the usual responsibilities of managing the Society's affairs, Rev. Hueter was especially concerned with the maintenance and improvement of the properties. Rooms in the Altenheim (Old Folks' Home) were freshened with new paint, the building's open porch was enclosed to make it serviceable for more months of the year, and four rooms were created in an attic area to provide more usable space for service provision. The Orphans' Home building was also brightened with newly painted rooms.



Updates to the Old Folks' Home included an enclosed porch.

1924

A powerhouse was built behind the orphanage and director's home. At one time, it heated the Orphans' Home, the Old Folks' Home, the director's residence, and even First St. John Church. The building also provided a large, modern laundry area for the Society. With the heating system moved to the new powerhouse, additional room was gained in the orphanage for storage and walk-in refrigeration.



This panoramic view shows (left to right) the Dormitory, the powerhouse behind the director's residence, the Old Folks' Home, and First St. John Lutheran Church.

1927

In October 1927, the Rev. Harry Schalkhauser, pastor of Epiphany Lutheran Church in Toledo, came to the Society as Superintendent/Director. Having served previously as editor of the Society's newsletter, he was well acquainted with the everyday workings of the Lutheran Orphans' and Old Folks' homes. Rev. Schalkhauser was to become the Society's longest serving director – serving for nearly 37 years.



Rev. Harry Schalkhauser

1945

With the end of World War II, the orphanage served several years as a stop-over for displaced children, primarily from Latvia, Lithuania and Germany.

By the Bell

After the opening of the new building in 1919, life in the Orphans' Home remained basically the same for many years. Duties and celebrations changed with the seasons, but daily life literally was lived by the bell.

A typical weekday began when the children were awakened at 6:15 a.m. The orphans made their beds, dressed, tended to personal needs, and perhaps completed a chore. By 7 a.m. the entire Orphans' Home family assembled in the dining room for breakfast. The meal was preceded by the saying of grace and followed by short devotions.

After breakfast at 7:30 a.m., there was time to finish a chore (or re-do it if not found satisfactory), complete homework, or relax before school, which started at 9 a.m. After morning classes, dinner was served at noon, with a half hour break before afternoon classes resumed at 1 p.m.

The bell rang at 3 p.m. to mark the end of the school day. While many of the orphans had free time then, older girls and boys often were assigned chores on the farm or in the kitchen. The sharing of chores helped the family function and taught cooperation and a strong work ethic.



Boys washing up



Evening activities in the "Big Girls" room

The supper bell rang at 5 p.m. to gather up the children. After supper, children could complete homework and participate in many different planned or unplanned activities. Bedtimes varied, depending on the age of the child. The nursery children went to bed around 7 p.m., and the younger boys and girls (age 6-11 years) went to bed between 7-8 p.m. An attendant or one of the older children might read a story or sing with the younger ones before their bedtime prayers. The older boys and girls were able to stay up until 9 or 10 p.m.

The Church Ladies

From the early years of the Lutheran Orphans' and Old Folks' Home, the Ladies Visiting Committee provided a vital link to area churches.

These women acted as liaisons between the Homes and their congregations. They made the needs of the Homes known and held activities to satisfy those needs.

Committee members would regularly enlist the help of local church groups to do sewing and mending at the Homes. They also held many fundraising events.



Ladies help with mending.

In addition, the committee ensured every confirmand had new clothing for Confirmation day; provided household items for the Homes; volunteered at the Society's Annual Festival; and gave caregivers gifts each Christmas. Essentially, the Ladies Visiting Committee did anything and everything to make life better for the Homes' children, elderly or staff.

The Ladies Visiting Committee played a vital role for many years. It was the predecessor of the volunteer organizations at our care campuses today.

1952

September 28 – The cornerstone was laid for the new Old Folks' Home only a couple of months after ground was broken for the building. The Home had reached its capacity in the 1930s, but the hardships of the Great Depression and World War II forced the Society to wait.

1953

October 25 - A dedication ceremony was held for the new Old Folks' Home. Over 3,000 people attended the ceremony and many toured the Home, which provided a new standard of care for the elderly. The 83-bed Home featured private rooms, a large, beautiful chapel, and recreation areas. After the residents were moved to the new building, the original Altenheim was used by First St. John as a Sunday school center, before it was razed in 1959.



The new Old Folks' Home

1960

The Society celebrated 100 years of ministry. As part of the centennial celebration, a new auditorium/shelter house was



Centennial Hall

dedicated in the picnic grove during the Annual Festival. The new shelter house, named Centennial Hall, replaced the shed buildings and primitive sanitary facilities that had been there for many years.

1963

With an expanding elderly population and an increased need for nursing care, an addition to the Old Folks' Home was necessary. The addition, built to the north of the existing Home, was dedicated in November. The 60-bed nursing care facility, known as "the Annex," included 28 semi-private rooms, one ward, a living room, kitchen and dining room. In just over 10 years, the Old Folks' Home grew from the original 28-bed Altenheim to a modern 143-unit rest home and nursing facility.



Rev. Gerald Labuhn

1964

In July, the Rev. Gerald H. Labuhn, who was initially an attendant in the Orphans' Home, became Executive Director. He would serve in that position for 30 years, overseeing the expansion of services to youth and the elderly.

As adoption and foster care programs became the preferred methods of dealing with orphaned children, instead of congregate care, the Society reluctantly decided to "suspend work with children as currently being rendered." It then undertook a study to explore future models of service to children. When the Lutheran Orphans' Home closed its doors, the Society's new Executive Director Gerald Labuhn and his wife, Ilean, took four boys (two sets of brothers) into their home. This echoed the actions of founder Johannes Doerfler and his wife, who took in two orphans into their home 104 years earlier.

1966

The former orphanage building began a 10-year period as the site of a day nursery and preschool program in conjunction with the Lucas County Children's Services Board.

May 24 - The Lutheran Day Center opened its doors to older adults in the community. It operated every Tuesday in Centennial Hall, which was built in 1960 to celebrate 100 years of the Society and was located in the picnic grove across from the closed Orphans' Home.



Re-caning chairs at the Day Center

At its peak of service, as many as 125 older people from the community attended the program each week. The Day Center offered a variety of educational programs, crafts, service projects, inspirational activities, and social opportunities.

The Last Orphan

Charley, an 85-year-old resident of the Lutheran Old Folks' Home, cried when the little 5-year-old girl told him of her plight and asked, "Why doesn't anyone want a little girl?" It was 1964 and she was the last of the children left in the Orphans' Home to need a foster home. She was all alone. Staff had been extremely careful to find the right placement for her, but it took time. What the little girl saw was all the other children had packed their bags and left with new families. She felt alone and rejected.



Charley cried. No doubt he cried for the sweet, beautiful, and innocent little girl baring her heart to him, but he also may have cried for himself. He was alone, too. He could have been wondering, "Why doesn't anyone want you just because you are old, or poor, or sick?"

They comforted each other. Soon, the little girl would leave the shuttered Orphans' Home with a new family picked just for her. And Charley? He was taken care of by people who did want him and who cared about what happens to the old and poor and sick. He was not forgotten, either

1967

The Society began implementing a revised residential program of youth services.

1969

November 30 - The first community-based group home for boys was dedicated in Oregon, Ohio. The group home was designed to closely resemble a “normal” home in appearance and lifestyle, but with a structured environment promoting stability. A married couple served as house parents for the home, which served up to 10 youth. The children were part of the local community – attending school, worshipping at the local church, and playing with other children in the neighborhood.



Oregon Group Home



John Glenn talks with the Oregon group home boys.

1972

September 14 - Former astronaut John Glenn and his wife, Ann, were honored guests at the Oregon group home. Youth personally met the first American astronaut to orbit the earth and learned about the nation’s space program first hand. According to the October 1972 issue of *The Friend*, “All were impressed with the easy, friendly, direct manner in which both John and Ann Glenn could relate to the home family.”

1973

June 3 - A second group home for girls was dedicated in Millbury, Ohio. Children attended Lake Township Schools and worshipped as a family at Calvary Lutheran Church in Northwood, Ohio.

1975

April 27 - The Society dedicated a new building to care for the elderly in east Toledo. The construction included a 50-bed, 18,800 square-foot nursing care unit, as well as a third floor “shell” that would be completed later. The project also provided 25,000 square feet of office, activity, gift shop, dining room, auditorium, and kitchen space to serve the Home. The project cost \$3.2 million.



Nursing Care Addition to the Toledo Home for the Aging



Anthony Wayne Group Home

In August, the Society’s third group home was dedicated in Whitehouse, Ohio. The home, located on almost seven acres of land, featured stables and a pond for swimming and fishing. The children of the home worshipped at Community of Christ Lutheran Church and attended classes in the Anthony Wayne School District.

1978

The Board of Trustees created a subsidiary corporation, Lutheran Housing Services, as a means to provide senior independent living communities throughout northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan.

1981

April 26 - The third floor nursing care unit at the Toledo Home for the Aging was dedicated, adding another 50 beds to the campus.

May 26 - Luther Crest senior community in west Toledo was dedicated. This was the Society's first affordable independent living apartment community opened by its housing ministry. Financing for the 71 apartments came from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).



Luther Crest



Luther Pines

1982

May 2 - The Society dedicated 108 senior independent living apartments in Lima, Ohio. Since the affordable senior community was being built on a heavily wooded, 50-acre site formerly used as a nursery, it was named Luther Pines.

June 27 - The Society's third senior independent living community, named Luther Grove, was dedicated. The 51 affordable apartments for low-income seniors were located across the street from the former Orphans' Home building and adjacent to the Society's picnic grove.



Luther Grove

1985

The Lutheran Orphans' and Old Folks' Home Society celebrated its 125th Anniversary this year. To mark the milestone, numerous events were scheduled throughout the year, starting with the Annual Meeting on March 21 and concluding with a Service of Thanksgiving on December 1.



Napoleon Home for the Aging

April 28 - As part of the Society's 125th Anniversary, the Napoleon Home for the Aging was dedicated in Henry County. This project was the Society's first expansion of its elderly care services from the original east Toledo campus. The 100-bed Home for the Aging was built on 16 acres of land purchased years earlier on the south side of Napoleon.

May 19 - The Society dedicated Luther Oaks senior community in Norwalk, Ohio. The 45-apartment independent living community was financed with HUD funding.

Luther Oaks



1985

September 8 - The Society's housing ministry expanded to Gibsonburg, Ohio, with the dedication of Luther Meadow senior community. The 45 independent living apartments were built using HUD funding and served low-income seniors.



Luther Meadow

1991

March 29 - The Society's Foundation was incorporated to provide financial support and administration for the charitable activities of the organization. Later in the year, the Trustees approved the transfer of all assets of the Society's charitable trusts to the Foundation.



Bavarian Village

April 28 - The first four condominium-style homes at Bavarian Village independent living in Napoleon were dedicated. This was the Society's first foray into operating market-rate senior housing. Gradually more residences were built, and by 1998 Bavarian Village reached full capacity with a waiting list for re-sales.

1993

The Society's Children's Division, now known as Family & Youth Services, opened its fourth group home on Wynn Road in Oregon, Ohio. This home, like the re-organized Oregon and Lake group homes, served difficult-to-manage, multi-need youth, ages 8-18, who had histories of multiple failed placements. Part of the Wynn home was remodeled to serve as a Severely Behaviorally Handicapped (SBH) classroom for up to 10 youth.



Wynn Group Home

1994

In early 1994, Family & Youth Services launched its Partners in Treatment family weekends. The monthly, intense two-day sessions provided youth in care and their families with behavioral management training, family visitation, and individual and group therapy - with the ultimate goal being family reunification.

April 10 - The Society dedicated Luther Woods, a 52-unit independent living community located adjacent to the existing Luther Crest apartments in west Toledo. The apartments were built using federal tax credits, which allowed the Society to offer affordable housing to older adults with more moderate incomes.



Luther Woods

Learning a Skill

The care goals of the Family & Youth division have always included rebuilding lives and helping youth become productive adults. To that end, the division established a vocational training program in 1996 to provide youth with opportunities to learn valuable skills needed to become successful employees.

The program, called LHS Contracting and Employment Services, would provide youth with experience in such areas as the building trades, snow plowing, lawn maintenance, and retail sales.



The retail store where youth worked.

During the 1996 holiday season, the program operated a retail outlet called Personally Yours at the Southwyck Mall in south Toledo. The outlet offered custom embroidery and youth were trained in sales, customer service, and the routine of daily work.

1994

October 1 - David Roberts was appointed as the 12th Executive Director of the Society. Prior to his appointment as Executive Director, he had served since January 1990 as Assistant to the Executive Director, specializing in financial planning and management.



David Roberts

1995

Starting in 1995 and continuing today, service coordination is available to all residents of the Society's independent living housing communities. Each housing site's Service Coordinator helps residents face the challenges of aging in place by assisting them with obtaining services necessary to maintain a self-reliant lifestyle.

1996

June 9 - Luther Hills senior community in Oregon, Ohio, was dedicated. Funding from the federal tax credit program was used to build the 70-unit apartment complex on land that was part of the old farm where food was grown to support the Lutheran Orphans' Home. Luther Hills features 58 one-bedroom and 12 two-bedroom apartments.



Luther Hills

November 24 - The Society dedicated Luther Haus senior community, located on 20 acres of land in Bedford Township, Michigan. Luther Haus is a low-income, tax-credit financed senior community with 78 one-bedroom and 12 two-bedroom apartments.



Luther Haus

1997

August 24 - Lutheran Village at Wolf Creek was dedicated in Holland, Ohio. The retirement community, located on 46 scenic acres, was a joint venture of Lutheran Homes Society and St. Luke's Hospital. The partnership enhanced the scope of services available to residents and enabled the community to offer a complete continuum of care. Phase I included a 135-bed nursing center and 79 assisted living apartments. This was the first of the Society's facilities to offer an assisted living option of care. Phase II construction would include independent living condominiums.



Lutheran Village at Wolf Creek



Lutheran Home at Toledo

December 7 - Lutheran Home at Toledo, formerly known as the Old Folks' Home, was rededicated after a \$2.5 million renovation. The improvements to the three-story care center were a new façade, roof and windows, laundry room, wall coverings, storage space, and mechanical and electrical upgrades. Service enhancements included a designated therapy room, meals served in dining rooms, electric beds, and a new bus for residential outings. The renovations enhanced the Toledo Home's ability to provide long-term care services to the elderly.

1998

October 18 - A transitional group home for young adults, ages 17-19, was dedicated in east Toledo. The home's programming provided training and life skills necessary for independence. Youth who had been trained through LHS Contracting and Employment Services applied their skills during the construction under the supervision of a licensed building contractor.

1999

In July, the Society added another independent living community for older adults when it purchased an existing property in Fremont, Ohio, and became the owner of Bethany Place apartments. With the acquisition of Bethany Place, the Society now offered market-rate apartments for people who may not qualify for lower income housing. This senior living community offered 46 one- and two-bedroom apartments with the cost of meals included in the monthly rent.



Bethany Place

2000

May 7 - The Altenheim assisted living was dedicated on the Lutheran Home at Toledo campus. Extensive renovations to the building (first opened in 1953) provided 40 new apartments for older adults who needed help with the tasks of daily living, but did not need full-time nursing care. As the Society celebrated 140 years of ministry, the Altenheim name had been resurrected as a testament to the original Old Folks' Home.

2000

June 8 - The Board of Directors formally approved Core Values for the Society and recognized the practice of the values since 1860. These Core Values still guide the organization.

2001

February 4 - Creekside condominiums were dedicated at Lutheran Village at Wolf Creek. The 80 market-rate condominiums, located to the south of the existing nursing care and assisted living buildings, completed the continuum of care. The construction included one-, two- and three-bedroom condominiums and many common areas to enrich the lives of residents.



Creekside Independent Living

February 25 - The Society dedicated Alpine Village assisted living at Lutheran Home at Napoleon. The new assisted living center, which was connected to the west end of the Napoleon Home, bridged the service gap between Bavarian Village independent living and the nursing care center. Construction included 40 studio and efficiency apartments, a dining room, and numerous activity and lounge areas, as well as the addition of a chapel and office space, and renovations to the care center. By adding assisted living services, the Napoleon campus now offered a complete continuum of care for the elderly.



Alpine Village

Caring for Gertrude

Gertrude Hoover entered the Lutheran Orphans' Home with her brother, Herbert, in February 1929. Gertrude always fondly remembered the Orphans' Home and regularly kept in touch with many other former residents of the orphanage.

After graduation from Waite High School, Gertrude left the Orphans' Home in 1938. She married Carl Jaessing in 1942, and they were blessed with six children. For many years, Carl and Gertrude farmed land in southwestern Lucas County. When the Society was looking for land in that area in the mid-1990s to build a new nursing home, the opportunity came up to buy 46 acres of land that had at one time belonged to the Jaessings. This is the land where the Society would build Lutheran Village at Wolf Creek.

Gertrude was a long-time volunteer and board member, who served the Society in numerous ways. In her later years, Gertrude again called the Society home when she moved into the Creekside condominiums on the Wolf Creek campus. From the window of her new home, she would enjoy the view of trees she had planted many years before.



Gertrude Jaessing had many ties to the Society.

Bean Soup

John lived in a small apartment on his own and was having an increasingly difficult time taking care of his daily needs. Upon meeting John, our LINCS (Lutheran Interfaith Network of Caring Services) coordinator noted that he was determined to manage many of his daily tasks, but he struggled to clean his apartment and wash his clothes. The LINCS coordinator was able to identify several reasonably priced resources, and John hired a cleaning service to help him.

Eventually, John's declining health prevented him from leaving home. One of the things he said he missed the most was the meals from his local diner – especially the bean soup special on Tuesdays. As John's health continued to deteriorate, the coordinator talked to John about home hospice care services.

One Tuesday, the LINCS coordinator dropped in at lunch, bringing the bean soup special John had loved from his favorite diner. John disregarded his pain as he enjoyed the soup he had thought he would never eat again. The casual lunch in his home with his beloved bean soup was so rewarding for both of them that it became a treasured weekly event.

2002

In mid-October, Family & Youth Services opened the LHS Maumee Youth Center near Neapolis, Ohio. The 13-acre site included residence halls, a school, chapel, and other buildings. This residential treatment program would focus on helping youth with Asperger's, a disorder on the autistic spectrum.



Maumee Youth Center

The documentary titled, "Lutheran Homes Society - A History of Compassion" premiered on WGTE TV. The 30-minute program was part of the "Toledo Stories" series produced by WGTE Public Media.

2003

In January, the Society introduced a benevolent ministry called LHS Community Services. The ministry's initial outreach program was the Lutheran Interfaith Network of Caring Services (LINCS), which strived to "link" seniors living in their own homes and having limited resources with appropriate community services that would enable them to remain independent.

Later in the year, the Society's LINCS program partnered with WSOS (Wood, Sandusky, Ottawa, Seneca counties) Community Action Commission to form a senior center at the Luther Meadow housing site in Gibsonburg, Ohio. On weekdays, area seniors would join residents of Luther Meadow at the senior center for meals, activities, and educational/wellness programs.

July 29 - The Society dedicated Kettle Run senior community in Bucyrus, Ohio. Featuring 40 independent living apartments, Kettle Run was built using HUD funding and quickly reached full occupancy.



Kettle Run

A collaborative effort between the Society and the Oregon Career and Technology Center, a division of Oregon City Schools, established a satellite Adult Workforce Development Training Center. The center offered adult workers a wide variety of training programs for unemployed, underemployed or dislocated workers. The center was located in the Society's Centennial Hall, which was renovated to house the training center.

2005

January 1 - Lutheran Memorial Home in Sandusky, Ohio, officially merged with Lutheran Homes Society, after the boards of both organizations voted to join their ministries. The Society had been managing the Sandusky Home since July 1999 and had helped it achieve Medicaid certification. The 76-bed home offered assisted living and extended nursing care, including restorative therapies.



Lutheran Memorial Home

June 8 - The Society's housing ministry expanded into Oak Harbor, Ohio, with the dedication of the first phase of Covenant Harbor senior community. A federal HUD grant had been extended to the Society to build 14 apartments for low-income seniors. The project was a collaborative effort between Oak Harbor United Methodist Church, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, the city of Oak Harbor and the Society.



Covenant Harbor



German dancers

2006

October 22 - Lutheran Homes Society celebrated 100 years of caring for the elderly. A "Century of Caring" was the theme, and nearly 500 people attended a special event held at the Toledo Home campus, near where the original Altenheim or Old Folks' Home was located. The event included worship, a German band and dancers, refreshments, and commendations from local, state and national government officials.

2007

In June, the Board of Directors established a formal Public Policy Advocacy Plan. Per the plan, the organization takes a non-partisan view in regards to political agendas, advocating for legislation that may affect the needs of the residents, patients and clients served, as well as those who "have no voice."

2008

November 19 - Luther Ridge senior community, which included 40 affordable apartments, was dedicated. Once again, a federal HUD grant had been extended to the Society to build apartments for low-income seniors. This time, the development was back on the Society's land in east Toledo, near the existing Luther Hills and Luther Grove senior communities. Like all the Society's housing sites, a social service coordinator helps residents age in place.



Luther Ridge

2008

October 14 - The Society dedicated a new Family & Youth Services school building, now known as the Blackmon Alternate Learning Center. The school was a collaborative effort with the Lucas County Educational Service Center that served youth with severe learning, behavioral, and/or mental health needs. The building was built using “green” design and construction to reduce energy costs and save natural



The re-purposed barn

resources. It also was built on property in east Toledo that was part of the old farm for the orphanage, and construction included re-purposing an 1860's era barn from the orphanage farm as the school's cafeteria.

The building was later recognized for its strong environmental performance when the Society received LEED® Silver Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

2010

April 29 - The Society dedicated Covenant Harbor II senior community in Oak Harbor, Ohio. The second phase of construction would more than double the size of the senior community with the addition of 24 one-bedroom apartments, a spacious community room with a kitchen, and other



Covenant Harbor II

common areas to enhance the lives of residents. The new structure was attached to the existing Covenant Harbor (opened in 2005) by an enclosed, heated corridor.

Throughout 2010, the Lutheran Village at Wolf Creek campus completed renovations to its care center. The updates replaced the traditional institutionalized setting with the



Wolf Creek renovations

warm look and feel of a lodge, featuring stonework, earth tones, and wood accents. The physical changes were accompanied by a culture change that embraced person-centered care, which provides more choices for residents in their daily lives.

150 Years of Service

To celebrate its 150th Anniversary, Lutheran Homes Society held a weekend of festivities from August 5-7, 2010. The celebration began on Thursday with the Society's 150th Annual Meeting of Member Congregations, held at the Stranahan Theater and Great Hall.



150th Anniversary festivities

The celebration weekend continued on August 6, the actual anniversary date of the Society's founding in 1860. An evening Concert on the Lawn was held at the Lutheran Home at Toledo campus, featuring German music and dancers, food, and tours of the former Lutheran Orphans' Home. A Festival Celebration and Silent Auction on Saturday wrapped up the festivities. The event included such activities as an entertainment tent, food vendors, vintage games, 1860s era craft displays, tours of the former orphanage, campus walking tours, a dunk tank, and a hot air balloon.

In addition to the weekend of festivities, celebrations were held over the year at all ministry locations so residents and employees had the opportunity to participate directly in the anniversary celebration.

The Murals

During the final construction of the new Family & Youth Services school building, a donor stepped forward to request that a series of murals be created depicting the former orphanage and the orphans' lives. The donor asked that the murals be hung in the barn-cafeteria of the new school. Four murals were created, showing a season-by-season, era-by-era progression. The murals were inspired by archival photos. A local art teacher led the mural project, and she worked with artistic children and youth in care and treatment through Family & Youth Services who would also attend the school.



The spring mural shows a tea party.



Summer features a pedal car.



The fall mural depicts a red barn from the farm.



This winter scene is based on First St. John, the orphans' church.

2011

The Society expanded the help its Service Coordinators could provide to its housing residents and community members by becoming PASSPORT and HOME Choice service providers. Both Medicaid programs help seniors age in place.

2012

Family & Youth Services expanded its use of the Individual Options Waiver funding source to include adults, primarily those who have aged out of our youth programming but whose guardians requested that we continue to serve them. Staff members provide homemaker/personal care services, as well as teach such life skills as budgeting, grocery shopping and cooking. The ministry also initiated day habilitation and adult day support programming to serve adults through paid work experience, planned volunteer service, classroom learning, and personal improvement training.

May 24 - The Labuhn Center for short-term skilled nursing and rehabilitation was dedicated on the Lutheran Home at Toledo campus. The building is named for the Rev. Gerald H. Labuhn, Executive Director Emeritus and Archivist, who served the Society in numerous ways for over 60 years. The \$4 million expansion added 27 private rooms, a dining area, and two therapy gyms for patients' recovery needs.



The Labuhn Center

2013

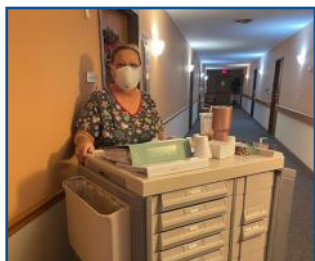
June 25 - The Society dedicated two new manufactured homes in Henry County to be used by developmentally disabled adults served by Family & Youth Services. Three adults can live in each home, and Family & Youth staff members provide homemaker personal care services (funded through the Medicaid Individual Options Waiver) to each adult.



Maumee Adult Program home
in Henry County

2014

March 3 - Staff members began treating patients in their homes through the Society's new home health agency called Northwest Ohio Home Care Partners. The agency, a joint venture partnership with industry leader Alternate Solutions HealthCare in Kettering, Ohio, was the Society's first time adding home health care to its service line. The addition enabled the delivery of care at the lowest cost and in the most independent setting. The newly formed home health agency provided skilled nursing and therapy services in the northwest Ohio region.



Assisted living nurse

Bethany Place senior community in Fremont, Ohio, added 12 assisted living apartments licensed by the Ohio Department of Health. This conversion of existing independent living apartments extended the continuum of care that the Society offers at this location, allowing residents to receive access to around-the-clock nursing care and help with activities of daily living, such as bathing, eating, and dressing.

2015

February 1 - W. Richard Marshall became President and Chief Executive Officer. He came to the Society from Christian Care Communities, Inc. in Louisville, Kentucky, where he had most recently served as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. He followed in the footsteps of President/CEO David Roberts, who retired on January 31, 2015.



W. Richard Marshall

September 1 - The Society expanded its ministry outreach with the opening of an Adult Day Center, located on the campus of the Warren AME Church near downtown Toledo. The ADC followed a medical model that combines expert health services with social and therapeutic activities for a complete, caring approach that is individualized for each participant. It's doors closed in March 2020 to comply with the Ohio governor's Stay at Home order to combat the spread of the coronavirus, and there are no plans to re-open the Day Center.

A Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program, under the direction of Dr. Hesham H. Elgamel, a prominent local pulmonologist, was implemented at Lutheran Village at Wolf Creek in 2015. The program consists of a multi-disciplinary team of specialists who provide evidence-based rehabilitative care to people with chronic breathing issues. To increase the program's effectiveness, the Wolf Creek campus hired a full-time Respiratory Therapist to oversee daily operations. The comprehensive program provides an individualized treatment plan that focuses on patient education.

2016

August 10 - The Society held its first ministry-wide Staff Appreciation and Recognition event at Fifth Third Field in downtown Toledo. Nearly 120 employees, their guests, and board members had the opportunity to enjoy dinner, an awards ceremony, and a Toledo Mud Hens game. At the event, 28 employees were recognized for their years of service, ranging from 15 to 40 years. Also recognized were LeadingAge Ohio Stars Award winners. To wrap up the evening, the Society introduced three new employee awards: Minister to Others, Servant Leader, and Employee of the Year.



Honoring employees

October 18 - Lutheran Homes Society changed its name to Genacross Lutheran Services. The name change was preceded by the unveiling of new Mission and Vision statements earlier in the year, and came about after months of research and planning. The new name acknowledged the fact that the organization, which began by serving orphans and then seniors, has expanded its care and services across many generations in order to remain a viable and effective provider in today's changing health care environment.

2017

In May, Trinity Lutheran Church, Fremont, began holding its services at Bethany Place senior community. Trinity members and residents of Bethany Place worshipped together, with pastoral leadership provided by Fremont's Living in Faith Together parish.

September 10 - An open house at the Napoleon Campus celebrated the completion of a \$1.1 million interior renovation project of the Health Center. The scope of work included updates to the lobby, activities office, admission office, chapel, and main corridors, as well as an expansion of the existing therapy space. In addition, the resident wings saw major changes that included the removal of central nurses' stations, creation of new work areas and medication rooms, complete renovation of central baths, and re-configuration of dining rooms. The results improved the health care experience for patients and residents using the campus' services.



Expanded therapy gym

December 1 - Genacross at Home began providing patients with in-home skilled nursing, therapy services, and medical social services. For several years, Genacross had operated Northwest Ohio Home Care Partners through a joint venture partnership, but after Genacross acquired the interest of the managing partner, the organization assumed full ownership of the home health agency and changed its name.

2018

2017

December 15 - The last resident left the Sandusky Campus, a little over a month after Genacross announced that it would be closing its Sandusky ministry, long known as Lutheran Memorial Home. Several factors, including a steadily declining census and an aging building, contributed to the difficult decision by the Genacross Board of Directors to close the campus. The organization was blessed to have served the Sandusky community for many years.

2018

February 1 - Family & Youth Services began offering supportive services for young adults, after being named a provider for the state of Ohio's new Bridges extended foster care program. Family & Youth served 10 young adults (ages 18-20 years old) in the first year. Family & Youth staff members had long advocated for additional services for youth aging out of the foster care system, which abruptly ended support at age 18. Through Bridges and providers like Family & Youth Services, young adults can get the help they need to live successfully on their own.



LDI's reinforce the Core Values.

December 3 - At its first Leadership Development Institute (LDI), Genacross introduced leaders to the Genacross Promise, an initiative to ensure that the Core Values permeate everything done by the organization. The Genacross Promise is about creating a culture that promotes the highest levels of employee engagement and customer satisfaction. The quarterly LDIs bring together leaders from all ministries to participate in training to ensure consistent practices throughout the organization. The leaders then take the concepts back to their ministries and share them with their teams.

2019

Genacross Lutheran Services, along with other members of Lutheran Services in America (LSA), developed the Senior Connect program, which links residents with services that allow them to age in place. Genacross, along with other LSA members, was a leader in developing this program. Service coordinators at our affordable housing sites implemented a comprehensive assessment tool that proactively enables them to address social determinants affecting residents. Social determinants generally fall into one of seven categories: access to transportation, food insecurity, social support, housing, health literacy, economic well-being, and crime/violence.

Recognized for their continuing focus on strengthening families, Lutheran Services in America and Genacross Lutheran Services were awarded a grant from Aetna Better Health of Ohio to develop a framework for a prevention program to keep families together across the state. Genacross Family & Youth Services was responsible for the first major step in creating a new and scalable Partners in Treatment Preservation Program (PTPP). It will build on Family & Youth's successful Partners in Treatment weekend program.