

GOD AT WORK IN OUR MIDST

Stories of the Called Ministries of Genacross Lutheran Services

HOME & COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

“Janet,” a resident of Luther Ridge senior community, needed a new phone, but could no longer afford the bills from her previous one. She reached out to the Genacross service coordinator at Luther Ridge for assistance. Her phone was broken, and this was causing difficulties, preventing her from contacting family and friends, making appointments, or following up with people. Not having an operable phone was causing Janet a great deal of stress. The service coordinator was able to share information with her about government programs available to help low-income seniors get free phones and discounts on other such items as tablets and laptops. When Janet met with the service coordinator, they discussed three viable options. Working together, they applied for the best option. Subsequently, Janet was approved and received her new phone a week later. The knowledge and assistance of the housing service coordinators is a valuable resource for the low-income residents who need ways to decrease expenses as the cost of living continues to rise.

GENACROSS AT HOME

Genacross at Home received a referral for “Fred” after an appointment with his primary care physician (PCP), where he reported feeling fatigued and dehydrated from being sick. His PCP prescribed new medication and made a referral for medication education from a nurse, aide services for showers, and physical therapy services to increase Fred’s strength. While caring for Fred, the Genacross at Home team saw great improvement, but they had conversations with him about needing additional help once he was discharged from skilled home health services. At first, Fred was reluctant, but soon began to realize that weekly aide services would be beneficial. The Genacross at Home transition coordinator helped him complete a Medicaid application and apply for PASSPORT waiver services. Fred was approved for Medicaid waiver services in his home, including assistance with cleaning, meal prep, and showering. These services will help him remain safe and living at home. On the day of his discharge from skilled care with Genacross at Home, Fred transitioned seamlessly to a non-skilled waiver home health agency to receive services in his home.



NAPOLEON CAMPUS

“Mary” had been a long-term care resident with the Genacross Lutheran Services-Napoleon Campus for a couple of months when she began having difficulty getting her shoulder pain under control. She regularly received shots in her shoulder to help with the pain, but it did not always last the entire time between treatments. Mary worked with the therapy team on different exercises, which yielded improved results for a while, but then the pain would flare up again. Eventually, her therapists decided to treat the shoulder pain with a diathermy device, which uses electromagnetic energy to generate heat that penetrates deep tissue, helps blood flow, and can decrease pain. After beginning treatment, Mary experienced less pain and more movement in her shoulder. Therapy worked with nursing to create a plan of care that included movement therapy, diathermy, as well as medication management. She is very grateful for the team coming together to look at different approaches to treat her pain. Mary was involved in her treatment plan every step of the way, and felt heard and cared for during the process.

WOLF CREEK CAMPUS

When “Amber” left her house on a mid-winter grocery run, she had no idea she would soon be in need of a rehabilitation stay. A slip and fall on black ice smashed her ankle. The same night she was in surgery, emerging with an external fixture holding everything together. Family members stepped up to care for her children, but Amber still needed help with the daily requirements – her leg cleansed and dressed twice daily – of her situation. On recommendation of family, she chose the Genacross Lutheran Services-Wolf Creek Campus for her recovery. Amber received care until her second surgery nine days later. Then with rods and pins replacing the external fixtures, Amber faced unwelcome news: it would be three months until she could bear weight on her leg. The stairs of her home were a barrier. “You don’t know how important your limbs are until you can’t use them,” Amber said. She had no choice but to reset her expectations. Back at the Wolf Creek Campus, she spends five days a week in therapy working on navigating stairs. She is able to use a walker to get to the bathroom, but nursing staff help her with safe transferring. Amber also credits nurses and aides with supporting her when she needs to “vent” and caring for her dry skin. Her best days, though, are when her children visit. “They make sure to bring flowers,” she said with a smile.



FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES

At just two years old, “Joanna’s” life had already been shaped by chaos. Neglect, abuse and constant instability followed her through the years, with Child Protective Services always in the background. By the time she was 16, Joanna had lived more places than she could count, each leaving new scars. She arrived at Genacross Family & Youth Services shy, withdrawn and unsure of herself. She had never learned how to regulate her emotions, swinging between silence and outbursts of anger. School had always been her escape, but she struggled making friends. Her poor hygiene and lack of confidence kept others at a distance. At Genacross, she was given structure to help her grow, and, slowly, she began to trust. The first time she had her hair done, she barely recognized herself in the mirror. She started believing in herself, just a little, and began smiling more. She spent time volunteering, finding joy in caring for cats at the local shelter. Instead of spending her free time lost in painful memories, she filled it with hobbies that she enjoys. Now, she is preparing for adulthood. Joanna has recently moved into a small house for girls who, like her, are learning to stand on their own. She is finishing high school, gaining independence, and building a future far different from the childhood that once defined her life.

FOUNDATION

Years ago, when a staff member lost her son in a tragic accident, Genacross co-workers donated funds for funeral costs. Following that initial need, the Genacross Lutheran Services Foundation established a Staff Benevolence Fund. This fund provides employees with financial assistance that aids in covering the costs of immediate financial needs following an unforeseen emergency. Over the years, the Foundation has helped employees with support ranging from assistance after a fire, help with the burial costs of a loved one, and temporary rental assistance following a catastrophe. None of this could happen without the generous support of donors who saw a need and fulfilled a call to action to make a difference in the lives of others.