

GOD AT WORK IN OUR MIDST

Stories of the Called Ministries of Genacross Lutheran Services

HOME & COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

The service coordinator at Luther Haus senior community in Temperance, Michigan, met with “June” to complete her annual assessment. During the assessment, June shared that she was feeling very down. After the coordinator discussed with June some of the reasons for her depression, she asked if June had a therapist or counselor. While June stated that she did not really have anyone to talk to now, she did disclose that she was under the care of a psychiatrist. Together, the service coordinator and June decided having someone to talk to would be helpful. The coordinator connected June with a local mental health counseling center. The coordinator not only spoke with the intake department but also assisted June with the needed paperwork. Subsequently, a mental health professional was scheduled to come to June’s apartment to meet with her. June’s ongoing counseling would first be billed to her insurance, and if insurance did not cover any or all of it, then the counseling would be paid for by a senior mental health grant through Monroe County. Through this care, June’s quality of life is improving daily.

WOLF CREEK CAMPUS

Over a decade ago, “Sarah” and “Archie” heard a doctor’s tough words that Sarah had early-onset of a progressive, debilitating disease of the brain. Things changed for the couple: early retirement, travel to favorite places, and life maximized. Then, over time, things became both simpler and harder. A few months ago, everything changed rapidly. Sarah stopped walking and sitting up. Her appetite diminished. The hospital identified an infection, and Sarah was referred to the Genacross Lutheran Services-Wolf Creek Campus for therapy to combat weakness. Always determined in his care for Sarah, Archie found the staff at the Wolf Creek Campus just as determined to get her back on her feet. The therapy team had Sarah work with a “standing frame” to recover strength and coordination. But, just as importantly, they listened to Archie about the way he and Sarah did things. It all came together. Sarah began walking again – then longer distances. She was able to return home with Archie. “I didn’t think what she was doing now would be possible,” he reflected. He also consulted with Wolf Creek’s social work team on referrals to get help caring for Sarah. “It opened my eyes to realize I can’t do it all,” Archie said.



FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES

“Ruby” had been separated from her mother as a young child due to her mother’s incarceration, and later her father’s rights were terminated because of allegations of sexual abuse of Ruby and her older sister. Originally, the sisters were placed in the foster care system together, but the girls were separated after ongoing conflicts. Before her arrival at Genacross Family & Youth Services, Ruby had been in 19 different foster care placements where she displayed numerous aggressive and self-injurious behaviors. At school, Ruby would throw and damage property. Her academic level was that of a kindergartener, despite being 9 years old when she came to Genacross. The main goals for Ruby were to reduce self-harm and destructive behaviors through clinical treatment. Upon arrival at her Genacross group home, Ruby displayed intense crises and poor social skills, often including verbal and physical aggression toward herself and others. These behaviors continued at school as well, which forced Ruby to attend school part time for safety concerns. Clinical treatment was also difficult, as Ruby often refused any interventions.

Eventually, through the dedication and support of Genacross staff providing a consistent and safe environment for Ruby, she became more acclimated to the structured routines and began participating in clinical treatment. Ruby began to trust others. More importantly, she began to trust in her own capabilities and acknowledge her own self-worth. While with Genacross, Ruby was able to learn accountability, reduce negative behaviors, develop coping skills, increase positive relationships, and exceed academic expectations. She managed to raise her academic level by two grades and attended full days of school, with progress reports showing 100% success with managing behaviors. The greatest blessing, however, came when Ruby found a potential foster parent. Today, Ruby is placed with that foster parent, creating a family with two foster siblings, and adoption is on the horizon. Ruby also continues to have visits with her biological older sister. She receives Genacross after-care services and continues clinical treatment with a community provider. At 11 years old, Ruby leads a full life packed with fun, family and love.

FOUNDATION

Genacross Lutheran Services is excited to announce the launch of a brand-new volunteer portal on its website, created through the dedicated efforts of the team at the Genacross Lutheran Services Foundation. This innovative portal offers an easy-to-use platform where individuals and groups can explore and sign up for meaningful volunteer opportunities across Genacross communities. The portal makes it easier than ever to connect a volunteer’s passions with real community needs. Designed with accessibility and convenience in mind, the portal makes it simple for anyone to find a place to serve. Visit the Genacross Lutheran Services website at genacrosslutheranservices.org, click on Volunteers, and discover how your time and talents can make a difference. Whether you’re a student, a retiree, or anyone in between, there’s a place for you in the Genacross volunteer family. Join us in creating stronger, more caring communities — one act of service at a time.

NAPOLEON CAMPUS

One of the valuable services offered on the Genacross Lutheran Services-Napoleon Campus is respite care, which involves a short stay by a patient either to Alpine Village assisted living or the Health Center while caregivers take a break. These stays may be necessary for a variety of reasons, including caregivers taking a vacation, trialing the campus for a long-term stay, or a patient needing increased care on a short-term basis. Recently, “Beth” came to the Napoleon Campus because her family caregivers were taking an out-of-state vacation. The family wanted the confidence that Beth would be well cared for while they were gone, and they had heard through word-of-mouth about the campus’ great care. Beth arrived for her 10-day stay in assisted living. She quickly discovered that she knew many people in the facility, and she got involved in numerous activities. In fact, Beth said that she liked it so much that she might consider staying long-term. Staff members loved hearing that comment. Beth’s respite stay gave her family peace of mind that she was well cared for and had friends and activities to enhance her days. Beth chose to return home after her respite stay and may return in the future to the Napoleon Campus, after she shares her experience with her family and decides the next steps in her life’s journey.

