

The FRIEND

GENACROSS LUTHERAN SERVICES



VOLUME CXI NO. 3 2025



*Now may the God of hope fill you
with all joy and peace in believing,
that you may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

(Romans 15:13 NKJV)

Merry Christmas!

NEW GROUP HOME ENABLES GENACROSS TO SERVE MORE YOUTH

After months of planning and anticipation, Genacross Family & Youth Services opened a new group home in November, meeting a need to serve more troubled youth in a residential setting. The home has the capacity for eight youth to be placed there, both male and female, ages 6-21 years old.

The first youth was placed in the Garden Group Home, as referred to by staff members, during the second week in November. The group home's Supervisor Espie Schneider was there to welcome the first occupant and since then has seen more children enter the home for care and treatment.

"We continue to see a need for youth requiring residential treatment, and we have been turning away youth on a



The group home will provide care for male and female youth experiencing social, emotional, behavioral and/or learning issues.

daily basis," said Katie Zawisza, Executive Director of Genacross Family & Youth Services. "To continue our mission, we felt called to open another home to serve as many youth as possible."

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OUR MISSION

Inspired by the Christian faith, we embrace individuals and families with compassionate care and services throughout life's journey.

OUR VISION

Through our faith and work, we strive to be a forward-thinking, compassionate organization that improves the lives of current and future generations.

OUR VALUES

Faithfulness to Christ
Equality and Justice
Wholeness of Life
Integrity
Quality of Service
Stewardship of Resources

OUR MINISTRIES

Genacross Lutheran Services
Napoleon Campus
Genacross Lutheran Services
Wolf Creek Campus
Genacross Home &
Community Based Services
Genacross Family &
Youth Services
Genacross Lutheran Services
Foundation

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A note from Rick Marshall

President and CEO



Our Core Values

As we conclude another year of ministry at Genacross Lutheran Services, I am reminded how deeply our work is shaped by the values we hold. Six years ago, we made a commitment to focus on one of our Core Values each year and highlight that value in each edition of *The Friend*. This annual rhythm has allowed us not only to talk about what we believe, but to reflect on how those beliefs come to life across our ministries and teams.

We began with **Faithfulness to Christ**, the foundation of our mission since 1860. We explored how Christ-centered service continues to define our purpose — calling us to compassion, humility and hope in every interaction.

Next, we focused on **Equality and Justice**, lifting up our responsibility to ensure that every person we serve is treated with dignity and respect. This value challenges us to confront barriers, advocate for those whose voices are often unheard, and welcome all people as children of God.

Our reflection on **Wholeness of Life** reminded us that genuine care extends beyond physical needs. Emotional, spiritual, and social well-being are essential to a meaningful life, and our teams embrace this holistic approach daily.

When we turned to **Integrity**, we reaffirmed our commitment to honesty, transparency, and doing what is right — even when it is difficult. Trust is earned through consistent action, and I am proud of how our staff upholds this standard.

Our emphasis on **Quality of Service** celebrated the professionalism and dedication of those who serve our residents, clients and families. Whether providing services for youth, seniors, or those in between, our teams strive for excellence grounded in compassion.

Finally, this past year we highlighted **Stewardship of Resources**, a value especially important in today's complex environment. Stewardship calls us to use our resources wisely, plan diligently, and ensure that Genacross remains strong for future generations.

As I look back on these reflections, I am struck by how interconnected our values truly are. Together, they form the framework that guides our mission, decisions and daily work. More importantly, they are lived out by the extraordinary people who represent Genacross with heart and purpose.

Thank you for being part of this ministry. Your support, prayers and partnership make it possible for us to carry these values forward with faith and confidence.

Blessings,

GenacrossLutheranServices.org

LeadingAge Ohio Board Elects Marshall Chair

At its November board meeting, Genacross President/CEO Rick Marshall officially was elected Chair of the Board of Directors for LeadingAge Ohio. He will serve a two-year term as board chair of the nonprofit trade association that represents approximately 400 long-term care organizations and hospices, as well as those providing ancillary health care and housing services in Ohio.

Mr. Marshall, who has been vice chair for the past two years, will lead the board in fulfilling its governance role by setting the agenda, managing board meetings, and ensuring effective and strategic oversight of the organization. He will also serve as the primary link between the board and LeadingAge Ohio senior leadership.

"Rick brings both a wealth of experience as well as a future-orientation that will lead us into our next chapter," said Susan Wallace, President/CEO of LeadingAge Ohio. "His previous service as our Advocacy Chair and leadership with Lutheran Services in America have prepared him ably for this role, and we are lucky to have him."

At the LeadingAge Ohio 2025 Conference & Trade Show in early September, Mr. Marshall shared some of his priorities as incoming board chair during a live taping of the association's "Another Word for Living" podcast.

Mr. Marshall shared his excitement "about building on and elevating the partnerships that we have developed with a number of other organizations." These include the Ohio Health Care Association and Ohio Assisted Living Association. He emphasized the need to find common ground when advocating for the needs of older adults and to continue fostering those relationships.



LeadingAge Ohio President/CEO Susan Wallace (left) and Immediate Past Chair Kristi Strawser celebrate the election of Rick Marshall, Genacross President/CEO, as Chair of the LeadingAge Ohio Board of Directors.

During the podcast, he also stated it was important to work with the national LeadingAge organization to improve communications and align more in advocacy efforts, as well as engage with other state affiliates to cooperate and create efficiencies.

"We want to continue to add value for our members," Mr. Marshall added. "We need to build on our educational programs and expand the tuition discounts for those individuals who want to expand their knowledge."

According to Mr. Marshall, "Advocacy is always an essential focus of what we do. We need to continue to stay abreast of the important issues and make sure legislators hear a consistent message from us and our partners."

New Group Home - *continued from front page*

The one-story dwelling, which had previously been used by another service provider as a home for individuals with developmental disabilities, was purchased by Genacross Lutheran Services in May 2025. For most of the summer, time was spent updating the home, including painting the walls, installing a fence, updating electrical and plumbing systems, and putting in a new driveway and parking area.

After renovations were complete, the home was furnished to prepare it for the Department of Children and Youth (DCY) site inspection. This included furniture for all areas, as well as other touches to make it feel welcoming.

After months of completing many legal and building occupancy processes, the home passed its DCY site inspection, and the final application for licensure was approved in early November.

"We are excited to expand our capacity to serve more youth and their families," said Genacross President/CEO Rick Marshall. "The need is great, and Genacross is proud to utilize our expertise and compassionate care to make a positive difference in our communities."



Assisted living resident Jennifer Summers shows off the 2025 Golden Ladle and Texas Roadhouse gift certificate that she and her son received as winners of the People's Choice Award at the Wolf Creek Campus Chili Cook-Off.

Wolf Creek Campus Chili Cook-Off Brings the Heat and Heart

The aroma of simmering spices filled the chapel at the Genacross Lutheran Services-Wolf Creek Campus on November 4, as residents, staff and family members gathered for the annual Chili Cook-Off. With 10 delicious entries competing for top honors, the event was a true community favorite.

"We were thrilled to welcome special guest judges from Texas Roadhouse in Holland, Ohio, who brought along their famous rolls and cinnamon butter for everyone to enjoy," said Activity Director Vicki Ropp.

The Texas Roadhouse team provided prizes, including a bucket filled with steak sauce, a T-shirt, and a dinner for two certificate for the Guest Judge Award winner, as well as an additional dinner for two for the winner of the People's Choice Award.

After plenty of tasting and laughter, the winners were announced. The People's Choice Award went to a dynamic assisted living resident and son duo, Jennifer and Andrew Summers. The winning recipe was originally Jennifer's, but Matthew added his own twist — featuring Hatch chiles as the secret ingredient. They were thrilled to take home the top honor and share their culinary success with everyone.

Wolf Creek employee Becky Rankins, medical records, received the Guest Judge Award for her chili recipe, winning top approval of the Texas Roadhouse team members.

The Activity Department added a special touch to the event by presenting each winner with a 2025 Golden Ladle, recognizing their outstanding chili and community spirit.

"It was a wonderful day filled with good food, friendly competition and even better company — proof that nothing brings people together quite like a good bowl of chili," Ms. Ropp stated.



Napoleon Campus Joins Symphony of Trees

The Genacross Lutheran Services-Napoleon Campus has a long tradition of being involved in the local community. One of the ways the Napoleon Campus gets involved during the holiday season is by participating in the annual Symphony of Trees fundraiser in Napoleon, Ohio.

For the past three years, the campus has donated a decorated tree for the annual Symphony of Trees, a four-day event that raises awareness and funds for organizations that provide life-changing services for local children. The organizations that benefit from the event include Northwest Ohio Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), The Center for Child and Family Advocacy in Napoleon, and Henry County Hospital.

“While our Napoleon Campus serves older adults, another Genacross ministry serves youth and families, so it’s close to our hearts,” explained Joanna Studer, Director of Admissions/Marketing. “Supporting children in need, whether it is those cared for by Genacross or others that benefit from the Symphony of Trees event, gives us great joy.”

This year’s Napoleon Campus tree was created by Ms. Studer, along with former Executive Director Casey Amonette, Activity Director Michelle May, and Director of Nursing Christina Copeland. The tree, which had a “Generations of Light” theme, was dazzling with silver, bronze and rose gold ornaments to capture the lights of the season. It was on display November 13-16 at the beautiful and historic Armory Arts and Events Center in Napoleon.

“We here at the Napoleon Campus really take our work to heart,” said Ms. May. “The seniors we have the honor to care for have been in many roles within the community, and we like to maintain strong ties. We love to bring the joy of Christmas to our campus, our community, and our seniors and families.”



The Napoleon Campus entry created for the annual Symphony of Trees is resplendent with silver, bronze and rose gold decorations.

Day of Giving Exceeds Fundraising Goal

On September 10, the Genacross Lutheran Services Foundation held its fourth Annual Day of Giving. Through the generous support of donors, the Foundation exceeded its fundraising goal of \$25,000 by raising over \$34,000.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of matching donors — Plante Moran, Terry L. Bossert, and Stapleton Insurance Group — the first \$11,500 raised was matched dollar for dollar.

“We appreciate our donor support and the tremendous impact this giving can make on the many individuals touched by Genacross ministries each year,” said Mike George, Foundation Executive Director.

Celebrating Hope and Transformation: A Night of Gratitude

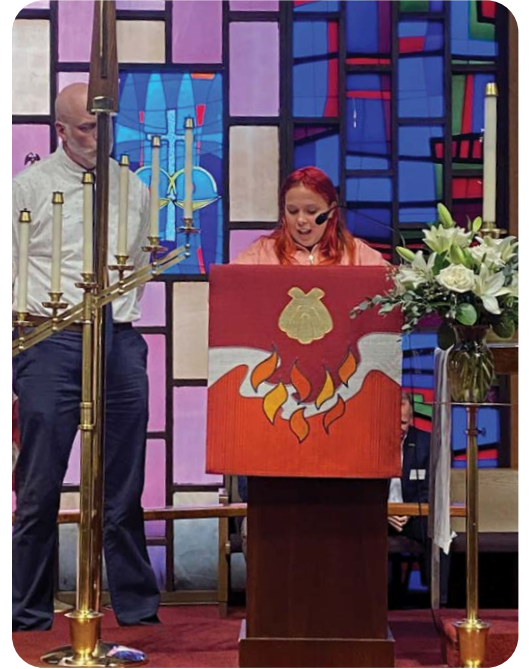
The Genacross Lutheran Services family recently gathered for a memorable evening of celebration and appreciation, bringing together dedicated donors, supportive congregations, and compassionate staff who make the Genacross mission come alive every day. The Donor and Congregation Appreciation Event was a heartwarming reminder of how compassion, faith and generosity work together to transform lives.

Among the evening's most moving moments was the testimony shared by Makennya Harris, a recent resident of one of the Genacross youth group homes. With courage and grace, Makennya reflected on her personal journey and the life-changing impact of the care she received. She credited staff for helping her rebuild confidence, rediscover hope, and achieve her dream of living with her sister, a milestone made possible through the support of Genacross donors and faith partners.

Representatives from numerous congregations across the region joined in the celebration, reaffirming their commitment to serving others through Christ's love. Their ongoing prayers, volunteer efforts, and financial gifts continue to strengthen Genacross programs, from youth and family services to senior and affordable housing ministries.

"The evening also provided an opportunity to thank the many donors whose generosity fuels every success story," said Mike George, Executive Director of the Genacross Lutheran Services Foundation. "Their steadfast support ensures that young people like Makennya — and countless others in our care — can heal, grow and look forward to a brighter future."

As the holiday season approaches, Genacross remains deeply grateful for this community of believers and supporters who walk beside the organization. Together, Genacross continues to bring light, love and lasting transformation to those who need it most.



Former youth-in-care Makennya Harris shares a moving testimonial at the Genacross Donor and Congregation Appreciation Event held at Providence Lutheran Church in Holland, Ohio.

IN MEMORY OF

Aug. 1 - Oct. 31, 2025

Ted Benner by Joette L. Boyd-Randall

Donald & JoAnn Boyd by Joette L. Boyd-Randall

My husband, Walden "Bud" Damschroder by Mary Damschroder

Kurt Ehrhardt by Nancy Ehrhardt

Francis & Marguerite Falkenberg by Beverly Rowell

Virginia Feusse by Richard Feusse

Phyllis Frey by Karen Frey

Norma Jean Gast by Terry Gast

Henry & Lucille Hauenstein by Susan Santoro

Mrs. Janis Hawkins by Jim & Rachel Nissen

Son, David Joehlin by Mary Jane & Bob Joehlin

Joey & Mike on their Birthdays by Marie Hagen

My Husband, Thomas J. Longanbach by Charmaine Longanbach

Bob Nungester by Ken & Margie Nungester

Dorothy Riehl by Margaret & William Frank, Gail Freshour

Dave Roberts by Nancy & Jeff Wellman

Ernest Rosebrock by Marilyn Rosebrock

William W. Rowell by Beverly A. Rowell

John & Brodie Schmich by Debbie, Brandon & Brenton Schmich

George Smith by Helen Winkelman

NON-CASH

Aug. 1 - Oct. 31, 2025

Kathy Boehm

Kelly Harmon

Rebecca Jaessing

Jane Thompson

David Walkup

IN HONOR OF

Aug. 1 - Oct. 31, 2025

Miriam Benner by Joette L. Boyd-Randall

Jesus, our Redeemer and Good Shepherd, by John Weislmeier

Sandra Johnson by Mary Billow

50th Anniversary of Mr. & Mrs. Rick Kardos by St. John's WELCA, Oak Harbor

Our grandchildren by Donna & Bill Nelson

INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS *Aug.1 - Oct. 31, 2025*

Rev. Dr. Jerry Bauer	Fred Doering	Dan & Julie Kunos	Melene Oswald	Amanda Schroeder
Rev. Steve & Amy Bauerle	Joyce Douglas	Estate of Iolanta Lohmann	Rev. Frank & Diane Paine	Joan Schwartz
John & Julia Bergman	Sandra Durfey	Rev. Steve & Heidi Lutz	Julie Paulsen	Jane Sharp
Jason Beyer	Sue Eidenier	Ian Malhoit & Alanna Pauly	Rev. Tim & Kate Philabaum	Duane Shively
Mary Billow	Jason Fisher	Rick & Janet Marshall via the Marshall Family Charitable Fund	Jeff & Sharon Przysiecki	Paul & Susan Sieben
Hilde Boes	Jerry & Alice Geiger		Kevin & Christine Rahe	Estate of Christine Siefert
Lawrence Boldt	Rev. Lee & Jane Genter	Denny & Kathy Matheney	Arlene Ramler	Scott Slee
Karen & Chuck Botzko	Arlene Gerig	Vince & Laurie Mauro	Ann Ray	Joan L. Smith
Steve & Deb Bowsher	Jack & Gretchen Grigsby through Charles Schwab	Carol Meuser	Suzanne Riehl through Fidelity Charitable	Jean Snyder
Lee & Natalie Bredbeck	Timothy Guss - Thrivent Choice Dollars	Jeannette F. Miller - Thrivent Choice Dollars	Pamela Roberts	Lois Staber
Bob & Eileen Brossia	Merle Haar	Rev. Todd Milner	Dr. Michael & Carolyn Roetter	Paula Susterich
Kari Bucher	Vicky & Demetrius Harris	Loetta Moore	Nancy Rowland	Mary & Thomas Wabeke
Christina Burnette	Estate of Arthur Hickok	Melanie Moore	Jon Russell	David Walkup
Beth Charvat	Rev. Keith & Sue Hunsinger	Ivadel Nehls	Lorinda & Jeff Schalk	Rev. Dennis Wansitler
Estate of Walter Christen	Estate of J. Henry Huseman	Julie Niemeyer	Karen & Larry Schanke	Linda Weaver
James Cordy	Estate of Clayman Kabat	Ken & Margie Nungester	Jamie & Randall Schimmoeller	Mary Widmer
Jennifer Dawson	Ellen Kraft	Marie & Bob Obrock	Wendy Schmidt	Katie & Jay Zawisza
Tamara Dawson-Kynard				
Carl & Barbara Dierksheide				

CONGREGATIONAL DONATIONS*Aug.1 - Oct. 31, 2025*

Bethlehem, Pemberville	Solomon, Woodville
Church of the Master, Perrysburg	St. James, Bradner
Community of Christ, Whitehouse	St. John, Deshler
Concordia, Toledo	St. John's Ev., Oak Harbor
Faith, Toledo	St. Luke's, Curtice
First St. John, Toledo	St. Mark, Fremont
Hope, Hamler	St. Martin's, Archbold
Messiah, Toledo	St. Matthew, Lima
Olivet, Sylvania	St. Michael, Ottawa Lake, MI
Shepherd of the Valley, Perrysburg	St. Paul, Defiance
	St. Paul, Liberty Center

ORGANIZATIONAL DONATIONS*Aug.1 - Oct. 31, 2025*

Toledo Refining Company Annual Community Impact Fund housed at the Greater Toledo Community Foundation, Inc.
Hylant, Toledo
James & Mary Bell Charitable Foundation, Los Angeles, CA
John Henry Eldred, Jr. Foundation, Toledo, at the suggestion of Lee Wunschel
Kroger Community Rewards, Columbus
Northwestern Ohio Synod, ELCA, Findlay
Stapleton Insurance Group, Sylvania
Taylor of Perrysburg
TOPS #1648, Toledo

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HOUSING SITES HOLD VACCINE CLINICS



Resident Linda Goss shows off her arm after receiving a shot at the Luther Hills vaccine clinic.

Each fall, as the cold and flu season approaches, staff members at the Genacross affordable housing sites work with local pharmacies and health departments to provide vaccine clinics for residents. In September and October, clinics were held at most of the Genacross communities located in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan.

Housing residents had the opportunity to get a variety of vaccines, including influenza, COVID-19, shingles, pneumonia, RSV, and tetanus shots. These clinics protect the health of residents without them even having to leave the comfort of their homes.

"The residents really seem to like the convenience of the pharmacist coming to their building and appreciate that we are looking out for their well-being," said Service Coordinator Celest Clough. She arranged for vaccine clinics at Luther Grove, Luther Hills and Luther Ridge, Genacross senior communities located on the east side of Toledo.

While most of the vaccine clinics were held for residents only, Luther Pines senior community in Lima, Ohio, held a Health and Resource Fair that was open to the public as well. Organizations from the local community, including Ohio Senior Insurance; West Ohio Food Bank; Ohio Northern University's HealthWise program; and Lima Parks, Recreation & Forestry Division, were available to talk to individuals about their services. Allen County Public Health also provided a vaccine clinic.

"At Luther Pines, we strive to be a positive part of our local community," said Service Coordinator Molly Teague. "The Health and Resource Fair was a way for our community to reach out to the public and offer people an opportunity to learn about local services available to them."



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