

SEPTEMBER 2026

GOD AT WORK IN OUR MIDST

Stories of the Called Ministries of Genacross Lutheran Services

FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES

When “Sami” joined the Genacross family in June 2023, she was facing significant challenges. After leaving her adoptive home due to increasingly difficult behaviors, she needed a place where she could feel safe, understood, and supported. At Genacross Family & Youth Services, Sami found the support she needed. At the Wynn Group Home, she began building meaningful relationships with peers and staff while developing healthier ways to manage her emotions and communicate her needs. Behaviors that once created barriers – including impulsivity, attention-seeking, and AWOL incidents – dramatically decreased. Sami also gained confidence and a greater sense of belonging. A milestone moment came when she joined her classmates on an eighth-grade trip to Washington, D.C., spending three days learning, exploring, and participating alongside her peers. Through the efforts of her adoption recruiter, a family member has been identified who is eager to welcome Sami into her home. Sami is ready for this next chapter, carrying with her the confidence, coping skills, and resilience she has developed along the way.



NAPOLEON CAMPUS

For several years, “Martha” has called Bavarian Village on the Genacross Lutheran Services-Napoleon Campus her home. As she aged, however, everyday tasks became heavier burdens, and subtle signs pointed to a growing need for extra care. When emergency medical services were called to assist Martha, Genacross team members stepped in to help evaluate the situation. Through a series of thoughtful conversations and collaboration, Martha realized she was not facing a temporary hurdle. She needed short-term rehabilitation and a more supportive environment, so team members helped her transition to the campus’ Health Center. Almost immediately, Martha began to flourish. Surrounding her with support tailored to her needs lifted a weight off her shoulders that she had not realized she was carrying. She started visiting the beauty shop to get her hair done, a self-care routine she had long put aside. Warm smiles returned to her face, and she began genuinely enjoying daily life and connecting with those around her. The transformation was so profound that her family noted she seemed happier than they had seen her in years. Recognizing the positive strides Martha had made, the team worked together to trial a stay in an Alpine Village assisted living apartment on campus. After experiencing assisted living for a while, Martha decided that she felt more comfortable with full-time nursing care, so she decided to return to the Health Center permanently. The true success of Martha’s story is about more than finding her the right level of care. It is about Martha living with peace of mind, knowing she is fully supported and confident in the decisions shaping her journey.



WOLF CREEK CAMPUS

After a fall at home, “John” had extensive shoulder surgery. Under normal circumstances, his therapy would have been outpatient and rather straightforward, but John’s apartment being located up three flights of stairs presented a challenge. Even before his fall, John had trouble climbing the stairs, using his arms to help steady and propel himself. Now one of those arms was in a sling. John really did not like the idea of doing inpatient rehabilitation at a nursing care facility, but he needed therapy to strengthen his muscles and improve his balance. It did not take long after he arrived at the Genacross Lutheran Services-Wolf Creek Campus for his negative mindset to change. The Wolf Creek Campus exceeded his expectations and put his mind to rest. Best of all, John made swift progress with step work in therapy. His confidence grew in his ability to go up and down steps. When John discharged to home, those three flights of stairs awaited him – the true test – and he conquered them with flying colors. As with any post-surgical patient, John has plenty of appointments and continued shoulder therapy awaiting him. The stairs, however, will not be an issue.

HOME & COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

The service coordinator at Luther Oaks senior community in Norwalk, Ohio, has been working closely with “Joan,” a resident who frequently reaches out for assistance, but often has difficulty accepting the resources and services offered to her. Part of the coordinator’s job is to understand that it may be difficult for some residents to accept help. The coordinator continues to meet these residents where they are, listening to their concerns, and providing support without pressuring them into decisions. With Joan, her health has changed recently, and she has become more dependent on others. The service coordinator helped organize a meeting with hospice so Joan could learn more about the services available to her and ask questions directly. She has not yet decided whether hospice is right for her or not, but the meeting gave her a great deal of new information and cleared up some misconceptions sometimes associated with hospice. This experience was a reminder that helping someone does not always mean immediately solving a problem or even having them accept the resources offered. Sometimes it is simply showing up, being there for someone, remaining patient, and making sure they know they have support no matter how long it may take for them to come to a decision of their choosing.

FOUNDATION

In August, the Genacross Lutheran Services Foundation hosted a special Baseball Church event at Fifth Third Field, home of the Toledo Mud Hens. The event brought together residents from the Wolf Creek Campus, youth from Genacross Family & Youth Services, and members of Zion Lutheran Church and other local Lutheran churches. Everyone gathered for an evening filled with fellowship, community, and a shared meal before enjoying a baseball game. It was a wonderful opportunity for residents, youth, church members, and staff to come together and enjoy one another’s company in a fun and welcoming setting. The evening was about more than just baseball; it was about building relationships, strengthening community connections, and creating meaningful memories for everyone who attended.