



LSS LIVE



Lutheran Social Services of NE, www.lssne.org
Serving New Englanders in all six states

MMann@LSSNE.org

Time after Epiphany, Year C, 2010 Issue IX

URGENT LSS NEED: HAITIAN CHILDREN WILL ARRIVE IN MASSACHUSETTS:

The Unaccompanied Refugee Minors program of LSS is the only program in New England that serves refugee or undocumented children exclusively. We expect an influx of Haitian children and teens in the near future, but do not yet know their numbers or legal status. Nonetheless, we must prepare to receive them with love and with moral and material support. If you are interested in becoming a temporary or long-term foster parent, mentor or resource for a Haitian refugee child or teen, call Mary Bartholomew at 508-791-4488 or email her at mbartholomew@lssne.org. And, as Mary reminds us, one thing we can all do to support these displaced children is to pray for them.

LSS CHEERS THE HUNDREDS OF YOU who responded to our appeal for donations to assist with Lutheran organizations' relief efforts in Haiti. You had contributed \$26,000 as of Jan. 26, and the donations are still coming in. You gave via PayPal, direct online donations to LSS, and paper checks. As promised, LSS has sent 100 percent of your generous gifts to Lutheran World Relief without deducting anything for administrative costs or postage. **WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM ANY CONGREGATIONS, YOUTH GROUPS OR OTHERS WHO PLAN TO TRANSLATE THEIR CHARITY INTO ACTION BY TRAVELING TO HAITI TO ASSIST IN RELIEF EFFORTS ON THE GROUND.**

LSS CONTINUES TO NEED FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE HAITIANS already in this country with temporary legal status. We are setting up legal clinics and information meetings to help these Haitians understand their rights. We urge you to give again: on the LSS website or by check to LSS Haitian Relief, 888 Worcester St., #160, Wellesley, MA 02482. Designate your gift for "Haiti domestic relief."

LSS NEWS: DEACONESS COMMUNITY GRANT WILL HELP LSS HELP CONGREGATIONS:

"Seeding Social Ministry as an Expression of Prophetic Diakonia" is the title of a \$30,000 Mission Support Grant from the ELCA Deaconess Community to LSS of New England. The grant was born of LSS's long history of sharing its professional resources to enable congregations to develop local ministries that respond to needs in their communities. We will use this grant to support emerging ministries with whom we have already begun to explore particular programs:

- Faith Kitchen, in partnership with Faith Lutheran in Cambridge, Mass., a twice weekly community meal program.
- Cape Cod Ecumenical Youth Ministries, a group of seven churches ministering to a neglected segment of the population on the Cape.
- Good News Garage Rhode Island, a program that is already up and running thanks to a partnership of Rhode Island ELCA congregations and LSS's Good News Garage team of professionals from the Connecticut office.
- Conversations have also been launched in Bridgeport, Conn., around the potential for social ministry programs in the communities surrounding congregations that are struggling and even closing.

LSS provides a menu of professional resources to these congregations, including grant writing and social service consultation.

We at LSS see this effort as the beginning of a formal "office" for congregation relations for which we will seek professional staff. In the meantime, we welcome inquiries from congregations that are wrestling creatively with the social needs in their localities and weighing ideas for how to respond. We invite you to contact Kirk Schroeder, kschroeder@lssne.org or 781-997-0850 for a conversation about our partnership in ministry.

LSS NEWS: THE WORLD'S BEST POTLUCK – THERE WAS NO LUTHERAN JELLO IN SIGHT!

The menu at Christ Lutheran Church, Natick, Mass., on January 9 included goat stew, exotic vegetables and lots of rice – the daily fare of the many countries represented within the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) program of LSS. But it also included pizza, chips and chocolate cake, because the 200 URMs have become acclimated to American food. **Twelve nationalities were represented: Sudan, Congo, Liberia, Burma, Afghanistan, India, Somalia, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico and Ukraine.**

LSS STORY: RUKIA BILAL HAD TO PAY FOR A TAXI FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE TO BOSTON

whenever her son had a seizure resulting from a severe neurological disorder. The reason: she had no one to care for her other son who could not ride in the ambulance with his mother and brother and whose transportation Medicaid would not cover. In March 2009, Rukia, a fulltime student and single mom, became the proud owner of a 2003 Ford Taurus from Good News Garage. Let her finish the story: *"I can't say enough about Good News Garage, all I can say is thank you. You have changed my life and my two sons' lives. I used to walk everywhere with my kids. I had to carry them on my back during the hard winter. GNG made my dreams come true and I am able to go to my school and take my son to his appointments. Good News Garage is the best program for women, men and children in the world."*

LSS CHRISTMAS STORY: on Dec. 22, a young Hispanic woman in Connecticut gave birth to a baby girl. She wasn't able to care for her baby and had made no plans for her. She sought the help of the hospital's social work department, which then contacted the LSS Adoption office in Rocky Hill. LSS Adoption Director Lynn Gabbard dropped everything to go to this young mother's side (even though Lynn had 50 people arriving at her house for Christmas in less than 24 hours!) The young woman was happy and relieved to hear about her adoption options, especially so when LSS was able to identify a Hispanic couple, both professionals and willing to turn their lives around on a moment's notice. The adoptive mom dropped her Christmas preparations and headed for the hospital to bond with her new baby daughter. Dad flew home from a business trip and went straight to the hospital. The hospital worked fast to make all of the arrangements. And on Christmas Eve, this joyful Christmas story was fulfilled, when this family – including their six-year-old son – brought their new daughter and sister home!

LSS REJOICES that a recent U.S. State Department ruling increases the reception and placement grant for newly resettled refugees from \$900 to \$1,800 per capita. Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration Eric Schwartz informed LIRS Vice President for Protection and Programs Susan Krehbiel of the change in a January 22 letter. The change is retroactive to Jan. 1, 2010. For the complete press release go to

<http://www.lirs.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=nhLPJ0PMKuG&b=5544305&ct=7872763>



To respond to any of these LSS stories, news items or needs, email mmann@lssne.org .

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