



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

Partners in Ministry,

The environment in which Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) — your church's statewide social ministry organization — carries out our work continues to be perilous. Not only has state funding for human care declined in real terms, but for the past few years, the state has also turned organizations like ours into involuntary creditors by delaying payments for services by up to six months. Late payments from the state require us to borrow money to cover the cash flow gap so we can keep providing services to our neighbors in need. In addition, the cost of borrowing is not covered by state contracts.

At the same time, because of the recent recession and the very slow recovery, charitable giving to LSSI has declined. Many very compassionate individuals and congregations have had to cut back on their contributions.

Those are the grey clouds that continue to hang over our ministry.

Now let us tell you about the many silver linings!

Despite the challenges, LSSI has been able to serve more people than ever in the past year. In Fiscal Year 2012, we served 108,735 people, nearly 10,000 more than we did in the previous year. Both our internal quality measures and our numerous forms of accountability to various government agencies affirm the excellence of our care for people in need. We continue to look for ways to build on our strengths, such as the development of gracious low-income housing for elders in communities across the state. With our Hands@Work initiative, we are engaging with more than a dozen congregations to help them strengthen their own *local* social ministry. And we are expanding the reach of our Prisoner and Family Ministry to provide transitional housing for juveniles who have no home to return to.

In March, we bade “farewell and Godspeed” to our President and CEO, the Rev. Denver Bitner, who retired after four years as our leader. The LSSI Board of Directors has chosen to create a new temporary position, Executive Chairman, and has appointed Board Chairman, Mr. Eric J. Draut, to serve in that role for approximately one year. Our Chief Operating Officer, Mr. David M.A. Jensen, has become Interim President. We anticipate that LSSI will undergo some significant restructuring in the year ahead before we enter a search process for a new CEO.

As always, we give thanks for the faithful leadership on our Board of Bishop Roth. In addition the following persons from this synod currently serve on our Board of Directors: Dr. David J. Melby, Ms. Jeanne Rapp, Mr. A.J. Mike Schwindenhammer, and The Rev. Elyse Nelson Winger.

We are grateful for the wisdom and commitment that each of these persons brings to our ministry.

One of the keys to the recovery of strength and momentum for LSSI is the recovery of the integrity of the state's fiscal strength. A generation of state leaders — in both political parties and in both the executive and legislative branches of government — has left the state with an untenable debt in the state's various pension systems. Unless there is significant pension reform, the state's pension obligations will squeeze out investment in education, health care, human services, housing and nutrition, the basic building blocks to success for individuals and communities. That's why, on May 8th in Springfield, alongside our annual "Lutheran Day" we helped to sponsor and organize a "Rally for Human Care." Our message was that these basic building blocks to success should not be pitted against each other. All five are necessary for people and communities to thrive.

We are grateful for the church's ongoing support for Lutheran Social Services of Illinois and our mission of bringing "healing, justice and wholeness to people and communities."

In Christ,

Eric J. Draut
Executive Chairman

David M.A. Jensen
Interim President

Pr. Daniel Schwick
VP for Church and Public Engagement