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## **Central/Southern Illinois Synod 2021 Annual Report from Lutheran Social Services of Illinois**

Dear Valued Partners in Ministry:

In a year beset with challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, and human spirits dampened by the loss of friends and loved ones, I give thanks to God for members of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod and your commitment to Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI). I am grateful to share annual accomplishments and updates from LSSI with all of you.

When LSSI formed its pandemic task force in February 2020 to begin preparing for some of the issues we anticipated, I don't think any of us could imagine what lay ahead. As a human services organization, caring for people is our business. We needed to find ways to continue services while keeping our clients and employees safe. I've been deeply moved by the dedication of our workforce, but also impressed at their ability to switch to new, innovative ways of providing services and how quickly they shifted to these adjustments.

LSSI's staff has risen to the occasion to provide vital services to children, adults, and seniors throughout our state. Last year, we served nearly 44,000 children, adults, and seniors—one out of every 289 people in Illinois! Despite the pandemic, the needs of the people we serve continue, and in some cases, we were able to expand services.

LSSI was formed in 1867 to help children orphaned by a cholera epidemic in western Illinois. In response to their need, Lutherans in the area worked together to establish an orphanage. From that single act of generosity was born 154 years of ministry to our Illinois neighbors. Thanks in large part to the ongoing support of congregations and individual members of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod, LSSI remains a vital resource for our communities.

Foster care and child welfare programs, mental health services, alcohol and drug treatment, affordable senior housing, residential programs for people with developmental disabilities, and programs that help individuals impacted by incarceration—all of these ongoing efforts build and enhance lives in the Central/Southern Illinois Synod and throughout Illinois.

Over LSSI's long history, we have learned that we are far more successful when we provide our services proactively. In this context, we're pleased to highlight some of those programs here:

- LSSI continues the distinction as the largest statewide provider of foster care in Illinois, serving 2,729 children—12% of children under the guardianship of DCFS. To give you an example of our reach in the Central/Southern Illinois Synod, that includes 450 children through our Peoria office, 253 children through our Champaign and Danville offices, and 466 children in our Marion and Vienna offices. There are 653 LSSI-supervised licensed foster care homes in the state.

- LSSI was granted funding from the State of Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority for our Prisoner and Family Ministry based out of our Marion office. With this grant, LSSI will be able to provide our signature Employment Skills School more frequently and include a certification for OSHA safety training, as well as enable the of an additional Case Manager and a Program Aide. This grant also allows LSSI to provide additional employment-related items for returning citizens, including uniforms and transportation to interviews and new jobs. We look forward to reporting on more progress of the grant with you.
- LSSI has formed a partnership with Aunt Martha's Health and Wellness, an Illinois nonprofit organization operating 20 healthcare and social service programs. This collaboration will co-locate Aunt Martha's staff and services on the first floor of LSSI's Portage-Cragin Counseling Center on Chicago's northwest side. The partnership will enable LSSI to seamlessly connect its clients to Aunt Martha's primary medical care, nursing, medication monitoring, and psychiatric services onsite. Staff from each organization, working together, will form a team to coordinate primary medical care and behavioral health services for children, youth, and adults.

We express our gratitude to Bishop John Roth for his leadership of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod, as well as his service on the LSSI Board of Directors. We extend our thanks to the following individuals from the Central/Southern Illinois service area who served on the LSSI Board of Directors this past year: Judy K. Dalhaus and Rev. Youngshim Pitcher.

We are grateful to the trustees of LSSI's Cornerstone Foundation representing the Central/Southern Illinois Synod service area this past year: Marcia A. Anderson, Pr. Greg Busboom, Connie Frankenfeld, and Roland Person.

Our collective work does have the power to effect positive change in our world. The apostle Paul said in 1Thessalonians 2-3, "We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope."

We remain grateful for the support of our friends in the Central/Southern Illinois Synod and our ongoing shared ministry.

In faith,



Mark A. Stutrud  
President and Chief Executive Officer