

Tidings

Spring 2012



Impact and opportunity

PAGE 4



Celebrating Bowl-A-Rama's 25th anniversary

PAGE 3



Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois

www.lcfs.org
www.facebook.com/LCFSIL

Impact and opportunity

"MAKING A DIFFERENCE" IS A PHRASE associated with many things, from athletics to politics. What about foster care? May is National Foster Care Month and a great time to positively influence a young life.

In the mid-1990s, Happy Johnson's birth mother was unable to provide him with the care he needed and as a result he stayed in several foster homes. Happy (pictured, right) eventually moved in with foster parents who adopted him. According to Happy, it takes a lot of courage and care for a person to take you into his/her home. It also enabled him to experience kindness and love.

Happy noted, "I was able to have more of a positive attitude about the future. (Being in foster care) taught me how to be an optimistic person even in the face of adversity."

Happy's case was assigned to LCFS and according to his caseworker at the time, Leondra Blumenberg, Happy is a good example for both foster parents

and children that, "There is hope and success after foster care." Happy is now a successful New Orleans-based entrepreneur and author of two children's books. His foundation (<http://happyjohnson.org>) aims to inspire the next generation of first responders.

It helps kids respond not only to disasters, but to life in general. It also teaches them how to be proactive about safety in a sustainable, environmentally-friendly way. His children's books help spread this message.

According to Happy, "I'm a grateful person because of foster care." He also noted that for current and potential foster parents, it's a great time to be involved in foster care; especially right

now with the state of the economy, and problems like hunger and homelessness; "What better time to highlight the need to get involved (and to make an impact) in children's lives." Happy noted that being a foster parent means you have the

chance to share time and love with foster children, who need both. He added that for foster parents it also means, "(the) opportunity to (positively) change the life of someone else."

Leondra Blumenberg reinforced that idea, noting that the people in the lives of foster

children, foster parents, caseworkers, etc., play an important role in helping those children excel and be whatever they want to be.

If you're interested in becoming a foster parent, contact LCFS at 800-363-5237 or lcfs_info@lcfs.org.



Photo courtesy of Happy Johnson

A passion for fashion

WHILE THE LATEST FASHIONS brought more than 250 supporters of Chicago Uptown Ministry together for the Ministry's annual Luncheon and Fashion Show on March 10th, they also drew inspiration from being able to help provide services to the residents of Chicago's Uptown community. Generous donations from attendees and sponsors meant more than \$33,000 was raised to help provide services such as a food pantry, after school/summer school programs, ESL classes, counselling services and the new Ways to Work program.

Executive Director Emily Jackson noted the key role supporters of Chicago

Uptown Ministry play in making sure its work continues. "Chicago Uptown Ministry is a very important social ministry of LCFS and our larger Lutheran Church because it serves some of the most vulnerable people who often have very limited options in their lives. For 20 years, this Fashion Show has helped keep the doors of Chicago Uptown Ministry open and serving the



Fashion fans focus on raffle prize.

public. We are thankful to the Fashion Show committee, staff and congregation members who diligently use their talents to bring people to our mission."

There were also a lot of a lot of happy raffle winners, including Debbie Conley, who won the grand raffle prize, a

four-night trip for two, including airfare.

To see additional Fashion Show photos, visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/LCFSIL.

About LCFS

Our purpose

With the support of generous donors, Lutheran Child and Family Services confronts neglect, abuse, isolation and poverty by providing safe homes for children, fostering self-reliance in families, strengthening connectivity in communities and promoting the dignity of all people.

Mission

In response to Christ's love, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois attracts, develops, mobilizes and provides resources to improve the well-being of children, individuals, families, congregations and communities.

About Tidings

Tidings is published three times a year in celebration of the many children, individuals and families whom we serve and our supporters who make it possible.

Contact

We welcome your feedback, questions and comments. Contact us at lcfs_info@lcfs.org.

For more information about:

LCFS Services and Referrals:
800-363-LCFS (5237)

LCFS Special Events:
708-488-5558

LCFS Annual Fund Contributions,
Volunteer Opportunities or
In-Kind Contributions:
708-488-5557

Major & Planned Gifts:
708-488-5555

Congregational Questions:
708-488-5532

LCFS is a Recognized Service
Organization of the Lutheran Church—
Missouri Synod.

2 | 800-363-5237

Reflections from the President

The courage and strength of foster care

Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong.

— I CORINTHIANS 16:13, NLT



ST. PAUL GAVE THIS ADVICE TO THE CORINTHIAN church many years ago, but his words still resonate in the foster care community. May is National Foster Care Month, and I encourage you to take a few moments to join me in reflecting on the strength and courage of foster parents, foster children and foster care workers.

In the story on page 4, "Impact and opportunity," you'll read about Happy Johnson. Today, Happy is a successful entrepreneur and author based in New Orleans. But back in the mid-1990s, Happy's birth mother wasn't providing him with the care he needed. Happy was placed in a number of foster homes before joining the family that ultimately adopted him.

The strength of Happy's conviction to be the best that he could be, along with the courage of his foster parents to take him into their home, as well as the strength of Happy's caseworker in guiding him and his foster family through the process, helped make him the successful man he is today. Granted, not all children in foster care share this same type of outcome, but the potential positive impact on the life of a child makes all of the effort involved worthwhile.

Foster care is very much needed in the lives of many Illinois children. If you're interested in becoming a foster parent, contact us at 800-363-5237 or lcfs_info@lcfs.org, and our expert staff will work with you to see what opportunities might be available.

Gene Svebakken, MSW, ACSW
President & CEO



The Lutherbrook Guild was recently recognized at its annual breakfast event for its many years of dedicated service. Guild members have built awareness and raised funds for Lutherbrook since 1940, and we thank all those who have been involved for their compassion and service. Pictured left to right are Guild members Karon Pederson, Judy Harshbarger, Linda Tkachenko, Marie Ahrens, Barb Lapetina, Josie Kibb and Shirley Stukol, along with Lutherbrook Executive Director Brent Diers.



Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois

7620 Madison Street | River Forest, Illinois 60305
800-363-LCFS (5237) | www.lcfs.org

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Schaumburg, IL
Permit #101



President and CEO Gene L. Svebakken, MSW, ACSW
Editors: David Bakker and Sara LoCoco

All photographs in Tidings without an identifying caption are used for illustrative purposes only and do not represent actual LCFS clients or staff.

License number: 012998



Preparing for back-to-school



FAMILIES ARE STRUGGLING TO PROVIDE THEIR CHILDREN with basic necessities like food and clothing. Back-to-school supplies go unpurchased because buying them would impose too much of a financial burden. In response, LCFS is partnering again with Staples' "Kits for Kidz" program, enabling us to purchase book bags and school supplies at a deeply-discounted rate. As a result, kids we serve across the state in foster care and community programs get basic tools to help them start the new school year off right.

Your \$25 gift provides a child with a complete set of gender- and age-specific school supplies for the coming year, including a backpack.

Please consider making a donation at lcfs.org/backtoschool or contact the Annual Fund manager at 708-488-5557 or AnnualFund@lcfs.org.

Thank you for your support.

Please clip this form and return it to LCFS, 7620 Madison Street, River Forest, IL 60305

Yes, I want to provide 1 or more children with back-to-school supplies this year.

- \$25 supports 1 Child with school supplies
- \$50 supports 2 Children with school supplies
- \$125 supports 5 Children with school supplies
- \$250 supports 10 Children with school supplies

I want to make my donation via

- Check *Please make checks payable to LCFS.*
- Credit Card
 - VISA MasterCard
 - Discover Amex

CARD NUMBER _____ EXP DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

AMOUNT _____