

Message to the Synod from Mark Peterson, President and CEO of Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

2009 was a year unlike any other in generations. Lutheran Social Service has faced enormous challenges in meeting a new level of need:

- Waiting lists doubled for homeless teens needing a safe place to sleep
- We turned away 1,000 people a month who were desperate for financial counseling.
- Waiting list for waivers continued to grow for persons with developmental disabilities needing services.
- An increasing number of rural older adults were less able to make financial contributions for their home delivered meals.

Our staff faced these challenges with a level of commitment and depth of compassion that I marvel at. Congregations and individuals have also responded in generous ways. In the midst of a severe recession, supporters of LSS have stepped forward and volunteered their time in service and increased their financial support.

Through the commitment of our staff and our many friends, this is what we were able to accomplish during 2009:

- We established new residences for persons with brain injury.
- We opened five new homes for persons with developmental disabilities.
- We received our first Program-Related Investment through Thrivent Financial and the Lutheran Community Foundation, making it possible for us to hire 30 additional financial counselors.
- We opened The Center for Changing Lives in Minneapolis that provides a new model of integrated service and housing.

What made much of this possible was:

- An increase in philanthropic support of 12% at a time when donations were down 13% nationally.
- We were able to secure special appropriations at both the Federal and State levels to support some of our most needed services.

For 2010, we will be focusing on and further improving outcomes for those we serve:

Children, Youth and Families, so that they...

- have stable, nurturing homes with a safe place to sleep every night.
- are fully integrated participants in social and community networks.
- are accessing the community-supported services that they need.
- are thriving members of their communities.

People with Disabilities, so that they...

- have meaningful relationships with others.
- are fully integrated participants in social and community networks.
- are accessing community-supported services.
- are choosing the design and delivery of the support they receive.

Older Adults, so that they...

- have services that support their independence, well-being and relationships.
- are choosing the design and delivery of their services.
- are contributing time and resources to their communities.