

A year of

WALKING THE ROAD OF COMPASSION

Made possible by you

Annual Report

2015



**NUMBERS IN
REVIEW**



Creating
FAMILIES
 Strengthening
LIVES
 Engaging
COMMUNITIES



1,980
 Children & adults found wellness,
 wholeness, & new beginnings



310
 Volunteers and interns
 strengthened lives



119
 Partners and faith
 groups engaged in
 service

What are these?

Let's call them tokens of our appreciation. Cut them off, hang them on the fridge, or use them as bookmarks! These side bars highlight the children and families who have been touched by your compassion.

Reading online? Look for the green heart to learn more about the numbers.

2015 Board of Directors

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 Sue Zimmerman, Secretary
 Lisa Gaffney, Treasurer
 Doug Andre
 Anteneh Gebreselassie
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*Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS),
 Southeastern District Represented by
 The Rev. Kenneth G. Carlson*
 The Rev. Richard Graham, Bishop
ELCA Metro Washington, D.C., Synod

Special Thanks...
65 Staff



Thank You

*For walking the road of
 Compassion*

The Dalai Lama said, "Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive."

Our community is blessed with active congregations, selfless volunteers, and dedicated supporters who continuously recognize the needs of others. From the global stage to the family next door, the needs are overwhelming and seemingly insurmountable. But together, we have transformed service to provide comfort and restore hope.

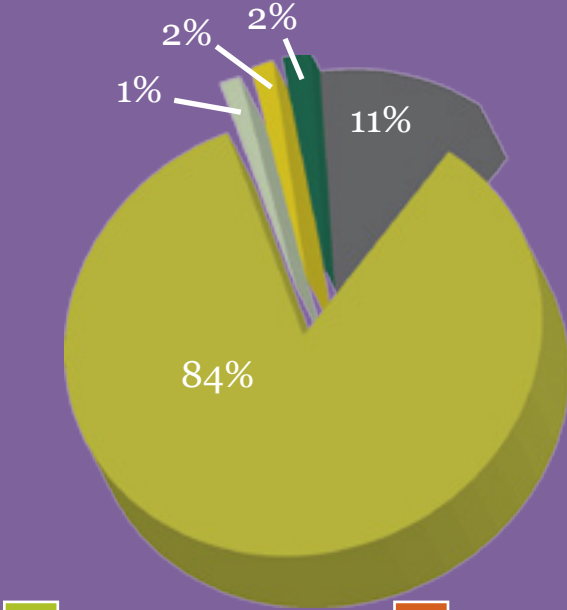
Because of your care and compassion throughout 2015, we encouraged and strengthened those who are often disregarded or forgotten. Every small gesture, every dollar donated, every hour volunteered is a blessing unto itself.

Thank you for choosing not to accept the status quo, but instead to walk with us hand-in-hand down the road of compassion.

Blessings,

C P Connell

Christine P. Connell, DM
 CEO



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REFUGEE & IMMIGRATION

♥ **573**

Refugees fled thousands of miles from war & persecution to find new beginnings in our community.

801

Refugee adults received job training to go the distance in their careers

563 ♥

Refugees found employment to guide them to self-sufficiency

*We have always held to the **HOPE** that there is a better life, a better world beyond the **HORIZON***

~Franklin D. Roosevelt

In 2015, LSS/NCA developed a partnership with Northern Virginia Family Services to provide mental health support to refugee arrivals.

On the Border Between Hope & Despair

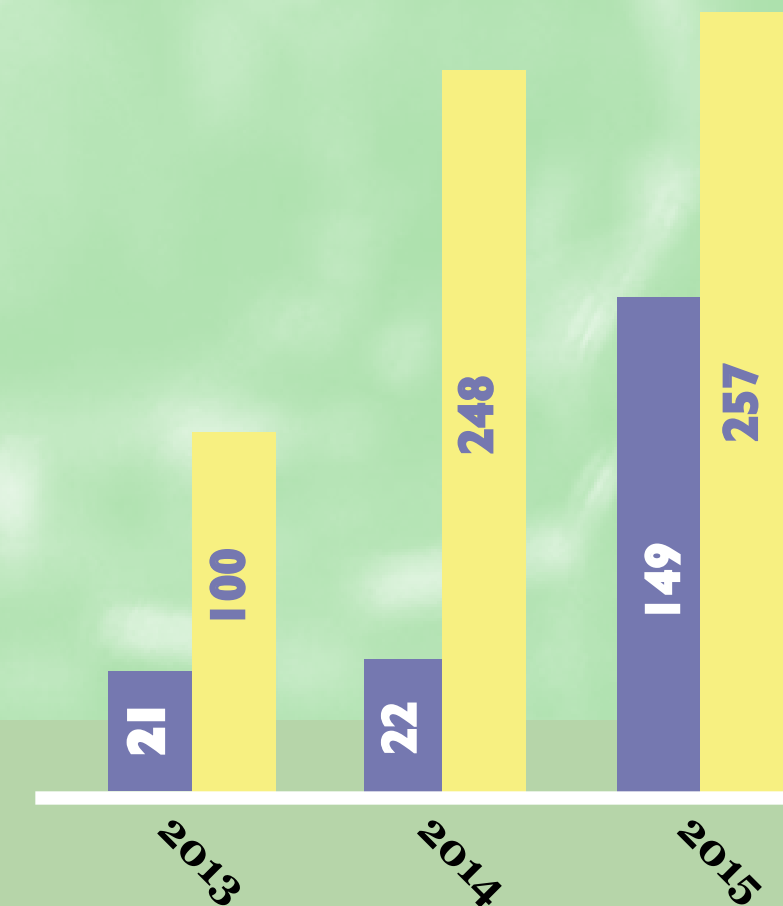
"I heard a loud boom and then saw orange fire with sparks of white shimmering off the home next to me. People were screaming. The air was thick with soot. A man came running to my door. He said it was no longer safe for my family to be here. This was the only home I had ever known; this was Baghdad."

Abdul grabbed his wife and woke his three little girls—all under the age of 7. The house was on fire. There was no time to pack or find family mementoes. In their pajamas, they made their way through the alleys and dark streets of Baghdad.

For four years they waited in a refugee camp near the border, between hope and despair. They taught their children what they could without paper or books. They sustained themselves on rice and water. They got used to saying "good night" while lying on the dirt floors of a tent. Finally, they were told it was their turn to leave.

Exhausted and frightened, they landed in Virginia on a cold December night. Although unsure, Abdul wanted to believe there was a better future than what they had left behind. LSS/NCA gave Abdul something money couldn't buy: hope, peace, and faith in a future for his children. Through community support, LSS/NCA found his family a home, provided basic necessities, and offered Abdul employment training so he could provide for his family.

Proud to call America his home and thankful for the friendship of his neighbors and community, Abdul is now a translator for the US Army and his children are on the honor roll in high school.



♥ Number of Refugees Receiving Services

Immigration & US Citizenship Services

Financial Literacy Services

FOSTER CARE & ADOPTION



Children placed in
loving, nurturing
foster homes **100**

53 People inquired about
adopting a child

Foster families opened
their homes to abused
or neglected children **55**

The Future Is
STRAIGHT AHEAD



A Thousand Miles Beyond the Past

Three sisters, Leila, Aliyah, and Tatiana were removed from their father's home due to allegations of sexual abuse. Their mother abandoned the girls years ago. Faced with an immediate need to find the girls a loving home, LSS/NCA placed them with the Jones family, an elderly couple with the energy and stamina to make any 20-year-old jealous.

After the trauma the girls endured, they had a challenging road ahead. They experienced developmental delays, educational deficits, and mental health issues. With the help of their social workers and the support of the Jones family, the girls began therapy and classes to help them address their needs.

Each of the girls has made significant progress in growing beyond the past and building an inspiring future. They are involved in their schools' athletic programs and look forward to coming home each day to Ms. Jones' delicious homemade meals.

In 2015, foster parent recruitment efforts resulted in 8 newly licensed homes. More than 75% of people who begin training do not complete the process to become a licensed foster home due to the demand of the program.

Encouragement is the
COMPASS
that leads us in the right
DIRECTION

YOUTH HAVEN
Camps and retreats for families and
youth affected or infected by HIV/AIDS

73 YOUTH 
Received mentoring and
retreat experiences that
encourage self-esteem
and personal growth

19 PARENTS
Given support to improve
health, manage stress, and
strengthen their families.

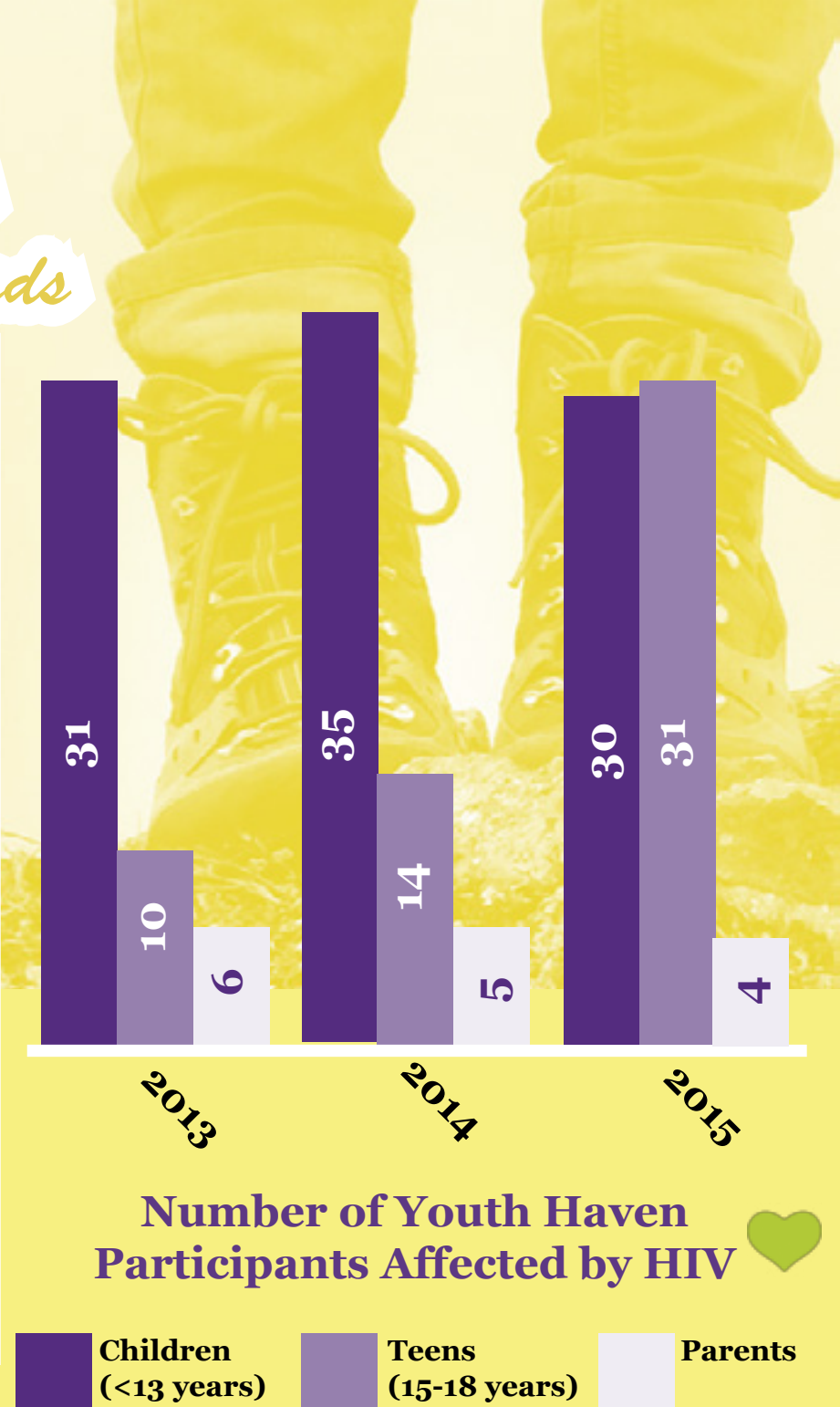
Youth Haven
created the
“Flourishing Families”
project to monitor
health and provide
wholistic and financial
counseling to 10 Youth
Haven families.

Navigating Life's Obstacles & Rough Roads

“I’m afraid I’ll fall,” said Megan as she considered the challenge of zip-lining. She watched fearfully as her fellow campers bravely scaled the ladder up to the platform above. “You can do it, Megan,” replied Jackie, one of the counselors, “I’ll go with you and everyone will cheer us on. We are all here for you.” This is the motivation Megan needed to find the courage to climb the ladder.

After each camper zipped to the bottom of the campsite, Jackie asked, “Sometimes the road ahead of us isn’t smooth. How did you overcome your fears and get to the end of the obstacle course?” The campers responded, “Because we didn’t give up,” and “Because everybody kept cheering us on.” Jackie then asked, “How does this challenge help you with other challenges you face?” The campers had a plethora of responses. Megan, who could be heard over the group said, “I’m not in this alone.” This year at camp, Megan and all the other campers learned something that many people never do –they don’t have to navigate life alone.

This lesson is especially important for Megan and her fellow campers; the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS leaves them ashamed and alone. Youth Haven provides support and motivates youth to overcome challenges to realize their potential.





Find more stories and information at:



Website: LSSNCA.org

2015 Snapshot: LSS/NCA By the Numbers



***Thank
you*** FOR
SUPPORTING

Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area
