



# Looking Forward to Summer!



This summer is the 16<sup>th</sup> session of Youth Haven Camps & Retreats serving families and children affected by HIV/AIDS. Each year, the camp attracts talented interns, creative counselors, energetic campers, and gracious donors and volunteers. After an already busy 2014 laced with innovative programming, we look forward to the excitement of summer. What's ahead:

**NEW Parents Committee:** This year, Youth Haven formed a parents committee with the help of our partnering camp social worker, Alison Walker, LICSW, from Family Ties Project. The committee's goals are to provide

input on discrete and effective ways to enroll new families and campers, suggest issues to explore during parenting classes, and propose discussion topics for camp that will support young campers. New to this year's Family Mini-Camp, we have invited one of our Youth Haven graduates to the disclosure conversation. She will share what it is like to be told as a child that your family is impacted by HIV.

**Teen Retreat:** In June, our teens and young adults will journey to Mar-Lu-Ridge Camp and Retreat Center for a 3-day Summer Adventure Retreat. Through



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*After an already busy 2014 laced with innovative programming, we look forward to the excitement of summer.*

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high ropes and challenge course activities, the youth will explore the importance of teamwork, asking for support when needed, and pushing beyond perceived limitations with confidence. And we have one more surprise in store for our campers this year... the group Lutheran Grace is sponsoring two lucky campers to attend the 2014 International HIV/AIDS Conference in Melbourne Australia!

**Camp Kids Haven:** The 6-day overnight Camp Kids Haven is set for July 29-August 3, 2014. Our youngest campers have the chance to create a strong peer support-network and explore new things about themselves and the world around them in a stigma-free environment. ■

Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area [www.lssnca.org](http://www.lssnca.org) United Way #8146 CFC #78343

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**LSS/NCA CELEBRATES  
100 YEARS**

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# A Summer Vacation for Refugee Children

For the second summer in a row, refugee children will be invited to attend LSS/NCA's summer program in Virginia. Funded through the Virginia Office of Newcomer Service, the LSS/NCA Refugee Kids Summer Program introduces children to several



activities and field trips that help them stay active, learn about their new home, and better prepare them for the next school year.

Studies have shown that summer "vacation" often results in a loss of academic skills and knowledge. This loss of retention over summer break is estimated to equal nearly one month of learning. While this set back affects students of all backgrounds, its impact on refugee students is more acute. During the school year, refugee children have a more difficult time keeping up with their peers.



They often struggle because of language barriers and lost education due to their family's displacement.

This program is designed to assist low-income newcomer families by helping provide learning opportunities that provide enrichment and camaraderie for refugee youth. ■

# Celebrate World Refugee Day

Join Refugee and Immigrant Services (RIS) for our annual World Refugee Day celebrations in Silver Spring (MD) and in Falls Church (VA)!

Our theme this year is "Embracing Our Identities" to celebrate our refugee



community and share in the cultures and traditions of others. Come join us for a fun celebration featuring music, dance, food, arts and crafts.

Our Silver Spring event will be held on Friday, June 20 from 3:00 PM – 8:00 PM at the Silver Spring Civic Center,

and our Falls Church event will be held on Saturday, June 21 from 10:30 AM – 2:00 PM at St. Paul's Lutheran Church (7426 Idylwood Rd).

For more information or if interested in volunteering for this event, please contact Lily Habtu at [habtue@lssnca.org](mailto:habtue@lssnca.org). ■

# New Visitation Center for Foster Care: Partnership Provides a Home Away From Home

The first goal of foster care is to reunify the child in care with his/her biological family. Research shows that regular, frequent visitation increases the likelihood of successful reunification. These quality “playtimes” also help promote healthy attachments, and reduce the negative effects of separation.

*Holy Comforter St. Cyprian Catholic Church in Southeast D.C has offered their facility as a new family visitation site for Foster Care.*

Sometimes these visits are impeded because of transportation limitations or time constraints. Seeing the need for a convenient and easily accessible space, Holy Comforter St. Cyprian Catholic Church in Southeast D.C has offered their facility as a family visitation site for Foster Care. This location will give families more flexibility, increase the frequency of visits, and allow LSS/NCA to host the visits in a neutral, non-threatening setting.

If you are handy with a paintbrush or perhaps have a knack for organization, we are looking for a few volunteers to help us clean and decorate the space to create a home-like setting. We are also looking for

furniture pieces (ie: couches, chairs, table) and toys to help make our new location feel like home. If you are interested in

helping us with this opportunity, please contact Josie Wade at [wadej@lssnca.org](mailto:wadej@lssnca.org).



## Why Would YOU be a Foster Parent?

*This is an excerpt from a series of interviews done with Claire DeLabar, a LSS/NCA foster parent. Ms. DaLabar, like all our foster parents, exemplifies love, compassion, and acceptance in its purest form.*

1. If you could point to one singular event or reason in your life that made you decide to become a foster parent, what would it be?

There are so many reasons that I wanted to be a foster parent; but if I must choose one, it would be the importance of the relationships [I had] with the parents of friends and other adults during my teenage years. Teens are at such an important time in their life, and it takes many kind and loving influences to help them into adulthood. Fostering is a terrific way to be that positive influence.

2. What has been the most rewarding experience thus far?

As a foster parent of a URM [Unaccompanied Refugee Minor] teen, the most rewarding experience has been to see our world through the eyes of teen from an entirely different background, learn from them and help them adjust and grow. The absolute delight in a teen seeing and experiencing things that much younger children here take for granted is precious indeed!

3. If you could relay one piece of advice to potential foster parents, what would it be?

Be prepared for everything you can think of and then enjoy how life becomes so much more interesting than you ever could imagine!

*If you are interested in becoming licensed as a foster parent/ caregiver and joining LSS/NCA in the effort of Rebuilding Lives, please contact Olufemi at (202) 723-3000 x284*

# Caregiver "Crash Courses" Reach out to Families

Caring for an aging or ill loved one? Too busy to seek help? Normally a 6-week course, our "Support U™ Crash Course" is conducted in two intensive sessions, at host congregations in the metro-DC region.

Class members can participate in one of two tracks--101 for those who are not yet caring for a loved-one but want to look ahead, and 201 for those in the midst of

increasing responsibilities. The sessions provide important information and opportunities for peer group discussion regarding: planning ahead, finding resources, self-care, family dynamics, dementia and chronic illness, and financial well-being.

Congregations are invited to host a Crash Course series in their neighborhood and reach out to church members and the local community. LSS/NCA will provide class materials,

instructors, registration, and assist with gathering resources. Thanks to a grant from National Lutheran Communities and Services we are now offering a discounted tuition and low-income persons may receive a scholarship from Gifts of Hope.

Contact Caregiver Services to host a Support U Crash Course at your congregation or sign up for a class near you:

[ccministry@Lssnca.org](mailto:ccministry@Lssnca.org) ■



## Youth Haven Focuses on Sustainability with College Sampler Retreat

This April, Youth Haven Teen Retreat visited Delaware State University. Campers toured several academic departments and enjoyed "college life" by participating in Field Day events. Because the campers were hosted by current students, they were able to ask questions and find motivating peer support. They left the campus feeling embraced by other students and inspired to set a goal for their own future.

Youth Haven lodged at Pecometh Camp & Retreat Ministries, located in Centreville Maryland, where

campers had a chance to learn about sustainability through the camp's farm and living shoreline. After a tour through the garden and greenhouse, campers had the chance to get their hands dirty maintaining the compost piles and caring for the baby oysters that Pecometh is fostering. The youth gained an understanding of how to reduce household waste, maintain a natural habitat, and the importance of developing skills for a career in sustainability.

Thank you for supporting these amazing camp experiences. To organize a donation drive and

support our upcoming summer camps, contact the Camp office: 202-723-300 ext. 261, [youthhaven@Lssnca.org](mailto:youthhaven@Lssnca.org). ■



Do you know what this is? Read the article for a clue. Send your answer to [YouthHaven@Lssnca.org](mailto:YouthHaven@Lssnca.org) and the first person to respond will receive a prize and get a special shout out on our Facebook page!

## NEW: CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

# Stronger Together

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

**O**ur family owes much of who we have become to Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area. Thanks to LSS/NCA, our family quickly transformed from a two-person household into a family of five, with three toddlers playing chase around the house, and what seemed like never-ending piles of laundry and infinite kisses to go around. We will be forever grateful to LSS/NCA for this transformation.

LSS/NCA does more than just bring people together. They build stronger families and communities, create memories that will be cherished for a lifetime, and bond neighbors together through service—often in profound and unexplained ways.

That's why we are chairing the **STRONGER TOGETHER** campaign—to ensure that more children, more families, and more memories are created. With generous support from our community, we've already raised almost 40% toward our goal!

This campaign will raise \$2.5 million and enable LSS/NCA to deepen the level of programming we can provide, serve more people through those programs, and ensure another 100 years of quality service to neighbors in the Washington DC Metro area. **STRONGER TOGETHER** has three essential priorities:

<b>1</b>	Investing in People – scholarships, program expansion	\$1,500,000
<b>2</b>	Investing in Capital – critical needs for staff and programs	\$500,000
<b>3</b>	Investing in Stability – growing emergency funds and operating reserves	\$500,000

This transformational \$2,500,000 comprehensive fundraising effort will strengthen LSS/NCA's outstanding work, accelerate our ability to meet the large and growing demand in our community, and offer help and hope to those who need it most. This is our community and we each serve an essential role in improving it for all our neighbors.

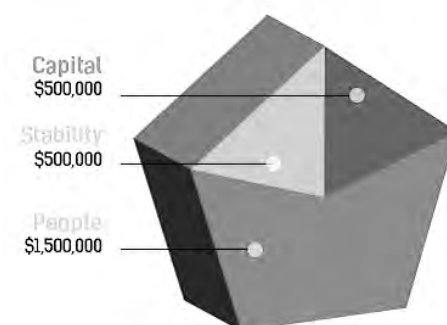
Throughout the coming months you will hear more about **STRONGER TOGETHER**, and we ask you to join us in this effort. With your help, our community, our neighbors, and LSS/NCA will all be Stronger Together.

Melanie Folstad and Rick McUمبر  
Chairs, **Stronger Together**

*This transformational \$2,500,000 comprehensive fundraising effort will strengthen LSS/NCA's outstanding work, accelerate our ability to meet the large and growing demand in our community*



Melanie Folstad & Rick McUمبر chair LSS/NCA's **Stronger Together** campaign



To read the Case for Support visit [www.lssnca.org](http://www.lssnca.org).

# 1917

SOCIETY

## Planning with a Purpose

**Alice Benson, Regional Gift Planner Metro DC Synod**

Most people do not have tricky estate plans. Then again, only about 70% of Americans even have wills. If you haven't made your own plans, the state you live in already has them made for you. What do you think are the odds that their plans will match your wishes?

By having a will and other plans in place, you can remember your loved ones as well as ministries you have supported during your lifetime. Please consider including Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area in your will, or as a beneficiary designation of your retirement plan or life insurance policy. Through this type of thoughtfulness, you can leave a legacy of caring not only for your own family, but also for the orphan, stranger, sick and homeless. You may designate your gift to any of LSS/NCA's programs or to its mission of walking with those in need.

If you would like information on ways to plan your estate with purpose, contact Summer Parrish at (703)698-5026 x.138 or visit our website [www.LssNca.org](http://www.LssNca.org).

## Expressions of Abundance 2014 Recap

**E**xpressions of Abundance, LSS/NCA's annual benefit breakfast was a huge success. With more than 130 attendees, your support provided nearly \$100,000 in undesignated funds that will go towards sustaining our services and expanding the capacity of our programs to be able to serve more people.

*Your support provided nearly \$100,000 in undesignated funds*

This year's breakfast was especially moving because of the participation of some special guests from the LSS/NCA family. Hamed Ebadollahi, a 24 year old refugee from Iran, gave a moving testimonial about his role in advocating for equal rights in his



home country and his journey as a refugee. In addition, a few children in our foster care program read poems and diary entries they had written so they could share their hopes for the future.

The success of this event is credit to our amazing supporters, partners, and staff who are dedicated to offering hope to some of our most vulnerable neighbors. Thank you to all our donors, event volunteers and table captains who invited friends and family to hear this year's inspirational stories. ■

## What's new with Vann?

**I**t was just a few months ago when I picked up Nina. She was excitedly talking about the job interview she just had. Not long ago, Nina was granted asylum when she landed in America after stowing away on a ship. She had made her way out of Iran late one night after being threatened for speaking publicly about women's rights.



Though she had been living with the grief of leaving her family behind, she was making an effort to do everything she could to build a future. With LSS/NCA staff, she learned how to navigate job searches, enroll in English classes, and practice for interviews. Today, I picked up Nina's husband and little baby girl from the airport. Nina had made enough money working two jobs that with the help of LSS/NCA, she was able to help her family come to America.

Share your story at [www.lssnca.org](http://www.lssnca.org) ■

**BE ON THE LOOKOUT THIS SPRING:**

*LSS/NCA has a fresh new look! Watch for our new website at*

[www.lssnca.org](http://www.lssnca.org)

# Message from Melissa, CEO



Dear Friends in Service,

On June 5, we announced the launch of our campaign STRONGER TOGETHER, celebrating 100 years of service. Since 1917, you, our supporters and partners, have been dedicated to walking with those in need. Although over the past 100 years, our services have changed to meet the needs of an evolving community, Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area has remained faithful to its mission of offering hope and rebuilding lives.

Even after a century of service, your support continues to inspire hope in our community. In the past few months, a college retreat encouraged youth affected by HIV to prepare for their future careers, and foster children have been able to schedule more frequent visits with their siblings because of a new visitation space (pgs 2-4).

And because we are STRONGER TOGETHER, our horizon is full of exciting new ventures including the celebration of World Refugee Day, new "Support U" trainings for our community caregivers, and an educational summer camp for refugee children (pgs 2-4).

Because of what we have accomplished together thus far, we are excited about the lives we will be able to positively affect over the next 100 years. Together, we have achieved so much and together we can do so much more. If you are interested in learning more about STRONGER TOGETHER and how you can support the future of LSS/NCA, please visit our website.

In Peace,

Melissa K. Graves, CEO

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# Stronger Together

## LSS/NCA Launches Centennial Campaign: Stronger Together

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## Save the Dates

May 31-June 1

Family Mini- Camp

June 20

World Refugee Day (Silver Spring, MD)

June 21

World Refugee Day (Falls Church VA)

June 27-29

Teen Retreat

July 19

Compassion in Action (MD)

July 29-Aug 3

Camp Kids Haven

Aug 5

Compassion in Action (VA)

Sept 9

Compassion in Action (VA)

For more information, visit [www.LSSNCA.org](http://www.LSSNCA.org).