



**LUTHERAN  
SOCIAL SERVICES**  
National Capital Area

*"Everything that is done in the world is done by hope." M. Luther*

Issue No. 1 2014

# LSS/NCA Supporters Warm the Bitter Cold

## Newcomers Welcomed with Warm Clothing and Holiday Meal



**C**an you imagine arriving to the United States in the past few weeks without a winter coat, hat, scarf, or even a sweater to keep you warm? Many refugees face the cold unprepared when they arrive in our community.

On November 14, refugees from all over the world celebrated Thanksgiving at the Suburban Washington

Resettlement Center (SWRC), where LSS/NCA's Montgomery/Prince George's Office is housed. Hundreds of refugees and asylees attended the feast, many celebrating their first Thanksgiving in the United States. At the event, a wall sign posed the question "What Are You Thankful For?" By the end of the day, it was adorned with phrases of gratitude in a plethora of languages representing all the blessings that staff and the families we help to resettle feel fortunate to count.

In addition to celebrating Thanksgiving, attendees could "shop" for much-needed warm sweaters and outerwear in our office that was transformed into



a holiday "store." Every year during October and November, we collect winter clothing to give to refugees at this communal feast.

Donations came from individuals throughout the region; one women's group hand-knitted hats and scarves; and food was donated by Topolino, Red Rock Canyon Grille, as well as staff from SWRC. We are grateful for the generosity of all our supporters who made this event meaningful for newly arrived refugees. Special thanks to Trinity Lutheran in Bethesda for working so hard to fill some last minute needs. ■

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

**COMMUNITY  
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**CHANGING  
THE LIFE OF  
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# Community Partnership Targets Cancer

## Reducing the Breast Cancer Risk for Newcomer Women

Immigrants and refugees often have difficulty accessing health care services, including preventive medicine. Thus, Project KNOW (Knowledge for Newcomer Women) was designed to offer culturally and linguistically

appropriate support in effort to lower the breast cancer rate among newcomer women and increase survival. Project KNOW was funded by Susan G Komen for the Cure and designed by Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC).

Because of our continued partnership with ECDC, LSS/NCA's Northern VA Office was able to offer this beneficial prevention and awareness workshop in late November to the female immigrant and refugee community in the Washington Metro area. Participants learned about the myths and facts of breast cancer, as well as the importance of prevention strategies and early treatment. ■

# LSS/NCA Serves Record Number of Refugees



Due to last year's government shutdown, LSS/NCA has experienced a rapid influx of refugees and asylees. During a two month period in November and December, our staff welcomed 154 newcomers

(double the usual amount over that time) to our community by greeting them at the airport, finding and furnishing new apartment housing, and helping them apply for jobs as they strive to rebuild a life in the United States. By the end of December—only a quarter into our fiscal year—LSS/NCA had already reached 41% of our annual projection of 410 refugee newcomers.

Given the unprecedented influx of newcomers, community support is crucial in providing these families with guidance

and daily necessities as they rebuild their lives in America. Our greatest needs at this time are pots and pans, pillows, and brooms. You can find a full list of requested items on our website at [www.lssnca.org](http://www.lssnca.org) or contact **Aerlande Wontamo** at [wontamoa@lssnca.org](mailto:wontamoa@lssnca.org). ■

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*LSS/NCA has already reached 41% of our annual projection of 410 refugee newcomers.*

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# Changing the Life of a Child, LSS/NCA Focuses on Care

By Olufemi Odukoya

**F**oster Care is in the midst of unprecedented times across our nation. According to Children's Rights, a national advocacy group that works to reform our child welfare system, approximately 400,000 children live in foster care on any given day throughout the country. Last year alone, 650,000 children spent time in out-of-home care in the United States.

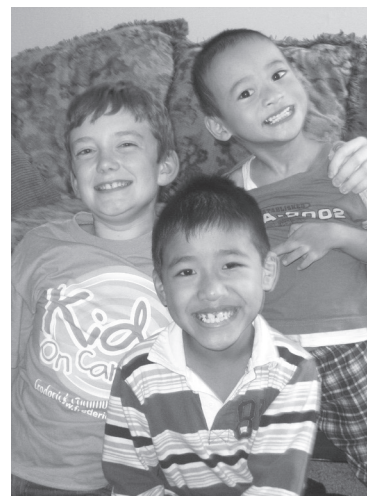
The need for additional foster parents is growing as the number of children needing homes rises and the length of out-of-home care increases. At any given time, 60,000 (or 15%) of foster care children live in institutions or group homes because there are not enough licensed foster families who can provide these youth with stable, loving homes.

In response, LSS/NCA has decided to launch the "U CAN" Campaign, an initiative focused on recruiting additional foster parents. Many individuals and families have responded to the charge that "U CAN" help change a child's life; "U CAN" provide a lasting and permanent relationship and

home for a child; "U CAN" be the difference maker.

Though the campaign is just beginning, individuals from all walks of life have recently stepped up and expressed a desire to be foster parents. One potential LSS/NCA foster parent, who has had experience working with children in a clinical environment, expressed a deep desire to support the personal growth of children in a home setting. LSS/NCA staff has also met with a couple who are a generation removed from

raising their own children but know they can offer a loving home and guidance to other children in the community. These families and others have decided to be proactive and join LSS/NCA in changing the landscape of foster care. Together and united, we will fill the gap in our community and ensure a brighter future for our children. ■



Some of LSS/NCA's former foster and adoptive families.

**Anyone 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**



## NEW: "Crash Course" for Busy (or future) Caregivers

LSS/NCA is leading a two-part seminar for busy persons who have an increasing responsibility for an aging or ill loved-one and who may otherwise be unable to attend a multi-week course. Based on the full 6-week course, participants will be able to receive important information and have time to visit with others who have similar challenges on two Saturday mornings over brunch.

"We are especially looking to get the attention of folks who know that changes are on the horizon but don't necessarily see themselves as caregivers in the traditional sense," said Support U trainer and gerontologist Urrikka Woods-Scott. "Planning ahead can make a huge difference, but it's easy to put it off when you have lots of demands on your time."

### Support U Seminars Schedule:

Silver Spring, MD  
(St. Stephen Lutheran Church)  
Part 1—February 8  
8:30 – 11:00 AM  
Part 2—February 22  
8:30 – 11:00 AM

Northern Virginia  
(St. John's Lutheran Church)  
Part 1—Sunday, February 2  
2:30 – 5:00 PM  
Part 2—Sunday, February 9  
2:30 – 5:00 PM

To register for a Support U Seminar, send an email with location/date desired to: [ccministry@lssnca.org](mailto:ccministry@lssnca.org) no later than the Wednesday preceding the event.

## CHURCH AND COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

# Youth Haven Mentoring Provides Support to Young Adults throughout the Year

By Dara Yah'ya



Over the years, LSS/NCA has expanded the Youth Haven Teen Retreats to include a "Leaders in Training" program in which we work between retreats with youth up to the age of 21. The participants have the opportunity to gain work experience as junior and senior camp counselors and explore career ambitions. This year, we have enhanced opportunities for mentoring so more youth get to develop a meaningful 1-on-1 relationship with a volunteer mentor. The 2013-14 mentoring program was launched last September beach-side at a teen retreat.

Our guiding quote for the mentors is, "A lot of people have gone further than they thought they could because someone else thought they could." (Author, unknown) The essence of mentoring is the sustained human relationship that shows a child that he/she is valued as a person and is important to society. The goal is to have our young people be self-sufficient, thriving, and equipped to address the unique challenges of living with HIV. Walking with these young adults to develop to their fullest potential is what the "Leaders in Training" program does best.

For more information about ways you can become a mentor or about the "College Sampler" Teen Haven retreat in April, email: [youthhaven@lssnca.org](mailto:youthhaven@lssnca.org). ■

# Welcoming New Caregiver Partner Congregation



**A** leadership team from Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, DC, was recently trained to provide "Support U" classes to family

caregivers. Plans are underway for them to hold their first class this winter. This enthusiastic team has been working together reaching out to

persons in their congregation who have been impacted by the needs of aging or ill loved-ones. This new partnership with LSS/NCA has equipped them with new tools and a desire to bring the ministry to the greater community as well.

If you are interested in becoming a "leader" for your congregation, the next Support U leader training session will be held in March. For more information about developing caregiver support within your congregation, email: [ccministry@lssnca.org](mailto:ccministry@lssnca.org). ■

## Contribute to LSS/NCA by Shopping Online



**W**henever you shop on Amazon, you can make an automatic donation to LSS/NCA just by telling Amazon that LSS/NCA is your charity of choice. Amazon will contribute 0.5% of the total

price of your purchases to LSS/NCA. Every time you buy a gift for a loved one or maybe a little something for yourself, you will help rebuild the life of a neighbor in need—we can't think of a better reason to shop!

To add LSS/NCA as your charity of choice, visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and search for "Lutheran

Social Services of the National Capital Area." By choosing to support LSS/NCA, Amazon will send us a check every time you shop. For more information or direction, please contact **Autumn Orme** at [ormea@lssnca.org](mailto:ormea@lssnca.org) or **703-698-5026 x.112**. ■

*Amazon will contribute 0.5% of the total price of your purchases to LSS/NCA.*



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## SOCIETY

The beginning of the New Year is a great time to review important documents, such as your Will, retirement funds, and insurance policies, to ensure your information is up-to-date and reflect your current needs. LSS/NCA can be named the beneficiary in any of these benefit policies. These gifts allow you to make a commitment for the future of LSS/NCA without giving up any of your present assets.

Bequests can also be a vehicle for making a gift that will have an impact on LSS/NCA for generations to come. Bequests can include gifts of cash, securities, real estate or other property, or a portion of the residue of one's estate. A bequest to LSS/NCA from your estate is entirely free from federal estate taxes. This means that our organization will be able to use the entire amount you bequeath to us. It also reduces the portion of your estate that is subject to taxes, which can often mean larger gifts for your heirs.

Talk with your attorney and financial advisory to learn more about your choices. LSS/NCA encourages you also to include family members in your estate planning conversations.

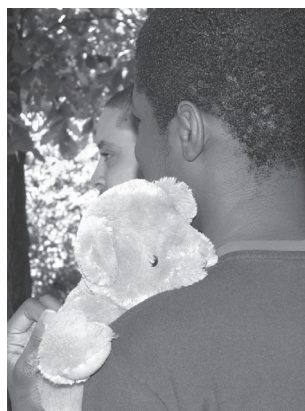
If you would like more information about including LSS/NCA in your estate plans or if you have already done so, please contact **Summer Parrish at [ParrishS@lssnca.org](mailto:ParrishS@lssnca.org)** or **(703) 698-5026 x138** so we can say **Thank You!**

# What Has Vann Been Doing?



**H**ello, I'm Vann! I have already been introduced to many of you, and I have been so lucky to be able to tell you about the determined and hopeful families that have come through LSS/NCA.

I want to take you with me on my adventures and tell you all about the lives that you impact every day. Each newsletter I plan to share a new story with you about our neighbors who have been able to rebuild their lives with the help of LSS/NCA. Here is one of my favorites...



Charlie was only 8 years old when he was told that he was born with the HIV virus. He learned that he would have to take medicine his whole life and still may get sick. He felt isolated from his peers, having to keep a secret and fearing that they wouldn't accept his illness. All that Charlie wanted was a friend, someone that would understand.

That summer, Charlie attended Camp Kids Haven. At camp, he didn't have to feel embarrassed because all the kids understood—having lived a similar life themselves. Soon Charlie found friends that could give him the encouragement he needed. Charlie has attended Camp every year since and will soon return as a camp counselor.

Be sure to follow me on this road to compassion and remember: it starts with you! Find me on **Twitter @compassionvann** or on my weekly blog at **[compassionvann.wordpress.com](http://compassionvann.wordpress.com)**. ■

## LEADERSHIP

# Message from Melissa

Dear Friends in Service,


I hope your holidays were full of wonder and laughter as 2013 came to a close. At LSS/NCA, we had an amazing holiday season. Refugee and Immigrant Services invited hundreds of newcomers to join them for Thanksgiving dinner. For some, it was their first holiday feast in America (pg. 2). And our Foster Care and Youth Haven Programs celebrated with Christmas parties and festive holiday events. In addition, thanks to our amazing supporters, we were able to offer some of our most vulnerable neighbors warm clothing as the temperatures dropped and collect Christmas toys for our young children living with foster families.

Following the holidays, I am able to reflect and be reminded of what the season is truly about. I feel lucky to have seen some of the greatest acts of kindness as our supporters offered their blessings, prayers, and time to the people we serve. Because of this support, our neighbors receive the daily care and guidance they not only deserve, but need to rebuild a better and brighter future.

As we look back at the great achievements over the past year, we also look ahead to the possibilities of the New Year. LSS/NCA recently completed a 5-year strategic plan in which we set goals for the future, including developing new partnerships and looking for opportunities to provide additional services in our communities. The need for increased services for our neighbors is immediate and we ask for your help in securing wholeness, justice, and self-sufficiency for all our children and families. This is a journey that we could not embark on without your shared vision and I thank you for your continued support.

Thank you for helping us look forward to every year with even more optimism than the last.

In Peace,



Melissa K. Graves, CEO



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## Youth Haven Helps Young Adults with Mentor Programming

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Compassion in Action

February 8

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Compassion in Action

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April 12-14

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May 6

Expressions of Abundance

June 20

World refugee Day

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