

## Finding Hope for the Future

I grew up in a stable home with loving parents and siblings. When I reflect on my childhood, it was a happy one. I was provided for and never wanted for anything. But all that didn't stop me from falling into a dangerous cycle of opiate—and eventually heroin—addiction as a young man.

I was 18 the first time I went to prison for possession and found myself right back inside after only 90 days, this time for theft and forgery. At that point in my life I was a slave to my addiction and would do anything, use anyone, just to get high.

My mother begged me to get help, and I tried dozens of different drug treatment plans. Everything from abstinence, different harm reductions programs, to inpatient and outpatient programs. But nothing stuck and I continued to spiral downward.

*Story continued on page 2*



“ I couldn't go on like this and expect to live not just a fulfilling life, but much longer. ”

**Thomas**

*LSS Faith Mission client*

## A Message of Hope from newly appointed CEO, Rachel Lustig



**“Your generosity provides critical support this summer.”**

I'm honored and humbled to be appointed the new President and CEO of Lutheran Social Services and am grateful to continue a partnership with kind supporters of the LSS Network of Hope like you. Your generosity directly addresses the increased need we see during the summer by providing food, safe shelter, clean water, critical support services, and more. Your support plays a crucial role in ensuring everyone in our community can live with dignity and opportunity.

It may come as a surprise, but the summer months can be as challenging as winter for Central Ohioans struggling to get by. Families with children who depend on free lunches during the school year have to look elsewhere for food, and for those neighbors experiencing homelessness, soaring temperatures increase their risk of dehydration, illness, and severe hunger.

And as the cost of living continues to rise these challenges are compounded, making it even more difficult for many neighbors to make ends meet.

This summer, we're depending on your compassion and generosity once more. Especially as we see a rise in the number of individuals coming through our doors and reaching out for help.

As the Bible reads in Galatians 6:10: “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people.” Thank you for joining me in my new role and “doing good” for our neighbors in need. I look forward to all we will accomplish together.

With gratitude,

Rachel Lustig  
President and CEO  
Lutheran Social Services

## LSS FAITH MISSION



### THOMAS' STORY cont.

Since my addiction was always my priority, I couldn't hold down a job and bounced around the shelter system. I was in a bad way and, eventually, became so unhealthy that open ulcers developed on my feet, and I ended up in a nursing facility.

During the 90 days I spent healing and detoxing in that nursing facility, I decided I needed to change my life. I couldn't go on like this and expect to live not just a fulfilling life, but much longer. As soon as I was discharged, I came directly to LSS Faith Mission.

I was welcomed into LSS Faith Mission and assigned a case manager who helped empower me to uncover and prioritize what's most important to me. This was the first time I actually put effort into making my life better. And it worked! I started to have a reason to get up the next day, I worked on understanding and overcoming my addiction, I got involved in community programs and took advantage of the resources they provide. I had a reason to live other than getting high.

LSS Faith Mission and everyone here really empowered me to take responsibility for my actions, and they inspired me to have faith that I could lead a better life. A life of honesty and selflessness.

I've been sober and clean now for some time and, thanks to LSS Faith Mission, now have a voucher for I hope to use to move into my own home. All I can say is that your support and the support of donors like you, to me, means a path to happiness, a path to health, a path to a lifestyle that enables me to be who I want to be. I have hope for happiness and a life that I never thought would exist.

**“And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.” —John 4:21**

## LSS CHOICES

## Taking Back My Life

by Kathy

Leaving my abuser was one of the most difficult things I've ever done. Even though my husband cheated and abused alcohol and drugs, and eventually became violent with me, I did my best to convince myself I needed to stay out of respect for my marriage.

It was so hard to get out. For far too long I hesitated to reach out for help because I didn't want to be seen as a victim. And on top of my desire to make my marriage work, I didn't know where I would turn once I escaped. Though I'm a hard worker, inflation made it impossible for me to make it on my own right away. By the time I was finally able to get free, I was badly injured and sleeping in my car. That's when I finally reached out to LSS CHOICES.

And now that I'm here, I know this is where I am supposed to be. Since leaving my husband and coming to stay at the shelter, I've been able to work on my goals and build my own future, free from the threat of violence and fear. I've even been able to pay down my debt—and now I'm looking for my own place.

When I married my husband we both took vows, and he broke his vow time and again—when he was abusive, when he withheld love from me, and when he disrespected me. Now I'm no longer living for a broken marriage to a violent man. Thanks to CHOICES, I'm living for myself.

CHOICES is such a tremendous blessing. I'm so grateful to donors like you who ensure other victims like me are able to take back their lives and live without fear—thank you.



**“Thanks to CHOICES,  
I'm living for myself.”**

## Your Support of LSS Faith Mission Serves Veterans

At LSS Faith Mission in Columbus and Lancaster, 177 veterans were served at our emergency shelter and 230 were served in our Supportive Services for our Veterans Families program throughout 2022.

In the first couple of months of 2023, there have been 65 in our shelter and 147 in the Supportive Services for Veterans Families program.



## LSS FOOD PANTRIES

## Mary: “This place, it's a godsend.”

Mary, 86, lives on a fixed income that she works hard to make the most of. But, due to inflation and the high and rising cost of rent and utilities, Mary has found that she often doesn't have enough left over to buy groceries.

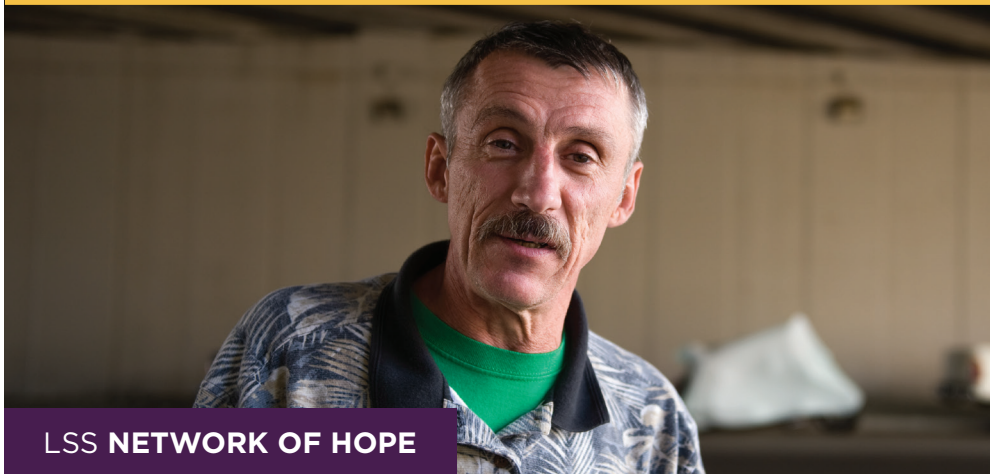
“I was trying to get all my food at the store and it was costing me a fortune,” Mary says. That's what led her to an LSS Food Pantry, where she was thrilled to find fresh vegetables, meat and even essential vitamins she needs to keep up her health.

Visiting the food pantry twice a week, Mary is grateful she doesn't have to choose between groceries or paying her bills—or even medication,

should she need it. “Without the pantry,” Mary explains, “there's a whole lot of things I would have to do without.”

Maybe even more than just the food Mary is able to get at the pantry, she's particularly happy to visit a place where she feels respected and independent, being able to pick out the food she wants and needs on her own. “They make you feel important,” she says of the volunteers who work the pantry. “If it wasn't for them, a lot of us would go without. It's a godsend.”





## GIVE MONTHLY, BECOME A FAITHFUL FRIEND TODAY.

Rising food costs are taking a toll on families and individuals already struggling to get by, and many are turning to our LSS Food Pantries for help. In fact, we've seen a 37% program-wide increase in the number of food pantry clients this year, and a 41% increase in the number of food pantry visits.

**And now that SNAP Emergency Allotments have ended, we anticipate seeing even more hungry neighbors coming to our food pantries for assistance.**

This is why your generosity means so much. While we experience the same increase in food costs, we work hard to stretch our budget to maximize the amount of food we can purchase and distribute. Generous friends like you enable us to continue helping local hungry families and individuals who depend on us put food on the table.

**Scan this QR code to become a Faithful Friend today.**



## Please Support Neighbors Who Need Your Help This Summer

Hungry, hurting neighbors in Central Ohio face an especially difficult summer this year. Rising gas prices, utility bills, and food prices will make it even tougher for many families to get by—and rising temperatures mean increased danger for those devastated by homelessness.

But you can be a source of hope this summer. Your gift today of any amount will help provide meals, shelter, comfort, and care to all those we serve at LSS Faith Mission, LSS CHOICES, and the LSS Food Pantries.

As the need increases during the summer months donations drop, which is why your gift is particularly important right now. Your support means we can continue serving our neighbors in need no matter the season. Thank you for your extraordinary generosity this summer toward struggling neighbors across Central Ohio.

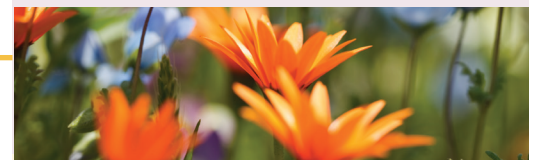
We hope to meet the physical and emotional needs of every person who seeks our help. Please consider giving a gift today by going online to [Issnetworkofhope.org/SummerNews](https://Issnetworkofhope.org/SummerNews) or send the enclosed reply slip with your gift. Thank you!

## Cutting Through the Noise of Life

Our world is loud. Quiet and rest don't just happen; we have to make space for them. Here are four ways to create more room for peace in your life:

- **Set limits.** Overbooked schedules edge out time for rest. Create rules and structure around the time you spend looking at screens, fulfilling commitments, and even working.
- **Declutter.** Excess stuff in your space brings excess clutter to your mind. Organize and simplify your home to enjoy greater rest.
- **Practice the Sabbath.** The Jewish tradition of Sabbath means to denote a particular expanse of time as set apart for rest.
- **Plan for the future.** The process of creating or updating a will can be surprisingly simple, and it creates immeasurable peace of mind.

For the full version of this article, request a FREE copy of "6 Ways to Experience More Peace Today" by contacting Michele Cenci at [mcenci@Issnetworkofhope.org](mailto:mcenci@Issnetworkofhope.org) or (614) 429-5494—or visit [Isslegacy.org](https://Isslegacy.org) today to bless your family with a will.



*Your gift also offers healing and hope to people in need across Ohio. That means your support will help provide meals and shelter to homeless and hungry neighbors who come to LSS Faith Mission in both Franklin and Fairfield counties. You will ensure families struggling with hunger have access to nutritious food at the LSS Food Pantries. And you will bless women and men facing domestic violence with a safe, secure place to stay and heal through LSS CHOICES.*

### Thank you to our funders:



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