



LUTHERAN
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MINISTRIES
of
NEW JERSEY

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Community Partnering
Immigration & Refugee Services
Lutheran Counseling Service
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COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Lutheran Home for Children
Piscataway Community
Residence
Sayreville Community
Residence

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

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Stepping Stones Commons

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Elwood Driver Townhomes
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Mott Centre Street
Apartments
Peapack-Gladstone
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Senior Apartments
Circle F Senior Apartments
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Mirota Senior Residence
Mt. Olive Manor
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South Plainfield Senior
Residence

SENIOR HEALTHCARE

Lutheran Care at Moorestown

CONTINUING CARE
RETIREMENT COMMUNITY
Crane's Mill

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REACHING OUT

Never underestimate the capacity of one agency...

WINTER 2008

A plan, but no agenda...

WHAT SETS OUR MINISTRY APART

Mission Statement

*Through the power of the Holy Spirit,
and in response to God's love as revealed
in the Gospel, the mission of Lutheran
Social Ministries of New Jersey is to serve
those in New Jersey who hurt, who are in
need, or who have limited choices.*

Feed the hungry. Not too many people would argue with that.

Care for the sick. The only humane thing to do.

Protect and respect the elderly. Why wouldn't you?

Yet throw in the word "ministry" and somehow everyone gets confused. Are you a church? A group of clergy? Are you trying to convert us, subvert us, divert us on our chosen path of life?

No, and no, and no. Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey (LSM/NJ) helps people. It's as simple as that.

But unfortunately, the word "ministries" can sometimes discourage potential donors who share, with equal passion, LSM/NJ's goals of serving the hungry, the poor, the sick, the homeless, the disenfranchised. These donors fear, perhaps, that a faith-based group will discriminate against those who do not share that religious faith, or that the organization's purpose is not to serve but to proselytize.

Not so. "Ministry" was never intended to describe who we serve, but rather why we serve," says Rev. Jerry Nugent, President and CEO of LSM/NJ. "Our programs are intended to serve all people, of every kind of background, category, income, race, religion or anything that can describe a person.

"What defines us as ministry is the reason for our work," continues Rev. Nugent. "Our Mission Statement tells us that what we do is 'in response to God's love as revealed in the Gospel.' We see ourselves as being loved by God and then responding to that love."

The concept of "response" is of great importance in LSM/NJ's mission, says Nugent. "We have compassion for what we see going on around us, and out of that compassion, we respond. We go out and do what we can to help people. If you look in the ministry of Jesus, one of the things that really characterized Him was compassion. He saw what was going on around Him, and He

theories or political ideologies or personal agendas. They do it because of their faith.

It might be easier to call the organization "Lutheran Social Services of New Jersey." But it wouldn't be as true. It is a ministry, not a social construct. Each employee has a faith-based

passion to serve, not a job.

As Rev. Nugent emphasizes, "Even though the word 'ministry' does cause confusion, when it's rightly understood, it is a critical piece of describing who we are, what we do and why we do it.

"We don't have a social agenda that says, 'the world should think like this or that,' or 'we're against this way of life or for that way of life,'" continues Rev. Nugent. "What we do is respond to the needs that have been presented to us. That doesn't mean that we're casual about it. We have a very detailed and effective strategic plan, and a strong voice of advocacy on behalf of the elderly, the impoverished, the oppressed. But we don't design our programs to further some agenda-based cause that we're for or against. We develop our programs because people are in need. We are here to respond to that need, because we're responding to God's love."

A plan, but no agenda.

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MESSAGE from the PRESIDENT/CEO

WHAT MAKES *it* WORK

At a recent meeting of the leadership team of Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey, we had about forty of our staff discussing how LSM/NJ is put together and what makes it work. Sitting around the table were people representing everything from disaster response to affordable housing to skilled care and many more of the range of programs that constitute LSM/NJ. We are almost unique among social ministry organizations in the range of programs and services that we bring to the people of New Jersey, or anywhere else for that matter.

Many organizations like ours will concentrate on just a few services, like skilled care or senior housing. Their identity becomes attached to the services that they provide and they begin to think of themselves as a retirement community company or an adoption company. To the contrary, as our leadership team probed what this means, we came to better understand how our identity is tied, not to our services, but to our mission. LSM/NJ is a testament to the idea that a diverse set of programs can do well when they are

strongly held together in a common mission.

How is it working? Very well, thank you. Financially, we just keep getting stronger, and leadership wise, we have an amazing group of people. New buildings are coming up in Mt. Olive, Moorestown and soon in West Caldwell. PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) is on track to be a huge ministry for us. Our work in renewing the N. Camden Land Trust is restoring homes for hundreds of people in one of the most devastated neighborhoods in the country. Refugees from other parts of the world will have the opportunity to use and learn new farming skills at the cooperative farm that will be starting this year. The whole list is longer than this short column can contain.

It is complicated and it works. The reason it works is because of a rather astounding group of people tied together by a common mission and ministry.

Regards,

Jerry Nugent, President/CEO



Francis Kardos-LSM, Kevin Tylus-2007 I&R Humanitarian Awards Dinner Honoree, Jerry Nugent-LSM, Reverend Bruce Davidson-2007 I&R Humanitarian Awards Dinner Honoree, Peg Bucci-LSM, & Susan Arnold-LSM

continued from Front Cover

THIRTY LOCATIONS

LSM/NJ is headquartered in Burlington, N.J., but its programs extend throughout the state, with 30 locations in all. The organization is broad-based not only in its geographic reach, but in the range of services it provides.

Lutheran Care at Moorestown has provided shelter and skilled nursing care for the elderly since 1947. LSM/NJ also owns and operates Crane's Mill, a continuing care retirement center located in West Caldwell, N.J.

In addition, LSM/NJ's programs include adoption services and assistance to immigrants and refugees. The organization provides special needs housing for residents with developmental disabilities or mental health needs. It also provides affordable housing both for seniors and for families. In fact, LSM/NJ is the fourth largest provider of affordable housing in the state.

LSM/NJ is a corporate-sized organism with a not-for-profit heart.

New Jersey residents who apply for help from LSM/NJ need not fear that they will receive a pep talk on why the Lutheran religion is

superior to other faiths, or a lecture on how they should live their lives.

"We are clearly faith-based," says Rev. Nugent, "but we don't use that as a hammer on anybody. We're not trying to have people become a certain thing through our work, which oftentimes people assume that the Church is doing. We're simply here to help, not to make people conform to an idea of how society should be, other than a better place for those who need our help."

If you would like to know more about how LSM/NJ helps those who hurt, who are in need, or who have limited choices, please use the contact information provided below—or better still, come and see for yourself. It's a true life story, now playing at 30 locations. One of them is probably near you. ☞

*For more information, please call or write to
Susan Arnold, Vice President of Fund Development and Marketing,
609-699-4108; Sarnold@lsmnj.org*

Residents' WANTS & NEEDS COME FIRST

For Executive Director of Crane's Mill

Home. Baseball players want to get there. ET wanted to phone there. Dorothy believed that there's no place like it.

The pull of home is a powerful force. But what happens when home is no longer a safe place to be? What happens when health needs, or memory issues, or merely the demands of managing and maintaining the structure of a house, require seniors to leave the homes they've lived in for decades?

In the best case scenario, seniors find a new home, in the truest sense of the word. They find a place where their needs are met, where their well-being is the top priority, and where their freedom and independence are respected.

That's the environment that Craig Karczmer, Executive Director of Crane's Mill Continuing Care Retirement Community in West Caldwell, N.J., strives to provide. Talk to Karczmer and you will find that he does not see his job primarily as a matter of managing property or meeting budget demands or making a profit. For Karczmer, what is always uppermost in his mind is that he is working in somebody else's home.

"We're here for the residents, not the other way around," says Karczmer. "I feel like I work for them, I work in their home. When you work in someone's home you want to [do your job] in such a way that they will invite you back."

LISTENING

Crane's Mill is owned and operated by Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey (LSM/NJ). Before Karczmer came on board as the retirement community's Executive Director, he had to pass muster not only with the top management of LSM/NJ, but with Crane's Mill residents. A group of about 20 residents met on-site with Karczmer, informing him of their needs and interviewing him with regard to his perception of the job. Karczmer earned high marks.

Karczmer's communication with the residents did not end with the interview. He continues a custom, started by a previous executive director, of holding monthly fire-side chats with the residents in Towne Square, a spacious central meeting area at Crane's Mill. In addition, Karczmer holds informal "Pub Room" chats every Wednesday and Friday. "This setting offers residents the opportunity to communicate with me in a small group on a frequent basis," he remarks.

Karczmer also attends gatherings of the Residents' Association Board, an elected body of Crane's Mill residents. The Board meets regularly to discuss issues that range from finances to health care to entertainment. "Of course, residents are always welcome to visit me in my office at any time!" Karczmer emphasizes.

"I try to find out what the residents want and do everything in my power to be an advocate to get things done," says Karczmer. "Also, I try to be honest upfront if it's something I cannot do. I want to build the trust between administration—meaning myself and my management team—and the residents."

When it comes to the issue of trust, often a seemingly small action can have a big impact. One of the first management moves Karczmer made was to fulfill the residents' long-standing request for new tables for bingo night. The current set of tables was inadequate for the number of players, plus, residents said, "The



Craig Karczmer, Executive Director, Crane's Mill

tables are too heavy, and your staff has to carry them back and forth." Within less than two weeks, Karczmer, with the participation of the facilities director, acquired an adequate number of smaller, lighter tables. "The residents were so happy," says Karczmer. "It's a simple thing, just listening and taking care of something, but it's really a very basic concept. And, I thought, well, *that was easy.*"

FROM THE GROUND UP

Karczmer became Executive Director of Crane's Mill on November 27, 2006. Prior to that, he was General Manager of FountainView, a retirement community in Rockland County, N.Y. He has also served as General Manager and Vice President of Operations at Victoria Mews Assisted Living in Boonton, N.J., and as Executive Director of Manor Care Health Services, Inc., in Emerson, N.J.

Victoria Mews, notes Karczmer, was "a startup from scratch. It was a new build." Karczmer also oversaw the construction of several new buildings when he served as Executive Director of Manor Care Health Services, Inc. The experience of directing new building starts will be particularly valuable to Karczmer as he oversees Crane's Mill's "Phase II/III" construction.

Phase II will expand the independent living portion of Crane's Mill by adding ten cottages and 70 apartments to its current capacity of 20 cottages and 186 apartments. "That's exciting for me," says Karczmer, "that's the part I really enjoy, because you're able to bring to life something from scratch."

LSM/NJ has obtained approvals for the new construction from the Department of Environmental Protection, and has submitted an application to the Department of Community Affairs. LSM/NJ management hopes to break ground for the new construction in the spring of 2008.

Karczmer notes, however, that while new construction is exciting, it must not eclipse Crane's Mill's commitment to current residents. "We've talked about all the new builds

continued on next page

NEW CONSTRUCTION

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and all the great designs we're going to do, but what we're also doing at the same time is upgrading and updating the current structure of Crane's Mill," says Karczmer. "We want to show current residents that they're being taken care of. We're upgrading apartments, installing new carpeting and wall coverings, beautifying and making things fresh and new, so that residents can say, 'You know what, this place is continuing to look gorgeous.'"

Karczmer will strive to complete the refurbishing with a minimum of inconvenience to residents—a consideration which anyone who has lived in a house that is undergoing a renovation can appreciate.

"We've got to communicate with residents, we've got to be as quiet and as clean as possible," says Karczmer. "If I were coming into someone's home [as a workman], I would want to make sure that they would refer me, right? So I wouldn't be traipsing in with dirty shoes and leaving it a mess. No matter what we do, we must make sure that we never lose sight of the fact that this is [the residents'] home, and we have to make them feel at home constantly."

FAMILIAR FACES

Seeing familiar faces around you is an important part of feeling at home. Because Crane's Mill has three types of residence options—independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing—seniors can continue to be close to the same neighbors and staff members even if their health needs change.

"What's great about a Continuing Care Retirement Community like Crane's Mill," says Karczmer, "is you have the opportunity to move into a place for your retirement and never have to worry about moving again, no matter what your health needs are. You've already said, 'You know what, this is a great place, and no matter what care needs I have, I don't have to leave. I already know everybody here, and I know the kind of health care that is provided.'"

Karczmer spends a good deal of time circulating throughout all three portions of the Crane's Mill community to make sure that a comfortable and caring environment is maintained in assisted living and skilled nursing, as well as in the independent living portion. Karczmer's attitude is shared by the rest of the Crane's Mill staff, as well. "If someone we know [from the independent living residences] has to go into skilled nursing for rehab or whatever, we'll go visit," says Karczmer. "They don't lose sight of the same faces, the same people that they trust."

THE BIG PICTURE

Crane's Mill is a "market rate" retirement community, which means that its fees are comparable to those of high caliber, for-profit retirement communities. But there are a couple of important differences at Crane's Mill which Karczmer particularly values. One is that, because Crane's Mill is run by the nonprofit and mission-focused organization of LSM/NJ, the financial strength of Crane's Mill gives a "foundation" of stability for other

LSM/NJ programs, such as those which assist children, refugees, or low-income families or seniors.

This is in keeping with LSM/NJ's mission statement: "Through the power of the Holy Spirit, and in response to God's love as revealed in the Gospel, the mission of Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey is to serve those in New Jersey who hurt, who are in need, or who have limited choices."

Karczmer, like virtually every LSM/NJ employee, was drawn to the organization because of its mission statement. "I like to be part of LSM/NJ's mission," says Karczmer. "We provide care and service programs for a lot of people. That's our mission, every day. We're all marching forward to that, and that's a good feeling."

And because LSM/NJ's mission is to help people, Karczmer can make management decisions at Crane's Mill based primarily on what is best for the residents: their well-being overrides all other considerations. "I don't know that I could work like this in other companies or organizations," says Karczmer. "Not every place has this directive and this kind of mission."

"At Crane's Mill, you're never afraid to make a decision," continues Karczmer, "because if you base your decision on what will benefit the residents, then you can never really be wrong."

And you can always make people feel right at home. ☘



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2007 Mt. Olive Ground Breaking Ceremony

HARD HAT *Update*



To every thing there is a season...
A time to build...
Ecclesiastes 3:1,3

Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey (LSM/NJ) is enjoying a season of growth. Walls are rising for new buildings. Walls are expanding to enlarge existing facilities. Visions of future projects loom enticingly on the horizon.

This is the first in a series of “Hard Hat Updates.” Read on to see what we’re building, why we’re building it, and how far we’ve come.

MT. OLIVE MANOR II

- Ground breaking took place in June 2007.
- \$8.9 million project will consist of 50 subsidized senior housing units for seniors 62 and older with qualifying income.
- One-bedroom apartments, 540 square ft., include full kitchen and bath, dining area combined with a living room.
- Funded largely through Section 202 HUD program, with additional funding from Department of Community Affairs HOME program, Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program, and Morris County HOME program.
- Mount Olive Manor II is expected to be ready for occupancy in mid-2008.

LUTHERAN CARE at MOORESTOWN

- Construction of 46 new Grace Assisted Living Apartments is underway.
- \$15 million expansion includes one- and two-room suites, some with balconies.
- Grace Assisted Living is expected to be ready for occupancy in mid-2008.
- For information, please call the Marketing Department at 856-235-1214.
- Also at Lutheran Care at Moorestown, the renovation and refurbishment of Lutheran Home is underway.
- For information about recognition, Memorials and naming opportunities, please call the Development Department at 609-699-4108.

CRANE'S MILL Continuing Care Retirement Community

- Ground breaking for Phase II expansion is slated for spring 2008.
- \$30 million project will include ten cottages & 70 independent living apartments.
- For more information and to take advantage of the introductory pricing, please call the Marketing Department at 973-276-3035.
- Additionally at Crane's Mill, the newly redesigned pool area and Fitness Center with state of the art workout equipment is nearing completion.
- Refurbishment of Sycamore I section of Crane's Mill independent living has been completed.
- Sycamore II section is slated for a face-lift in 2008.

LOOKING AHEAD...

- LSM/NJ is working through the awarding and approval process to establish a PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly) site in Hudson County, N.J.
- Additional continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs) are needed to serve seniors in New Jersey. A study conducted in July 2007 by Health Dimensions Group shows that the need is particularly strong in the New Providence area. LSM/NJ is currently in conversation with the owners of several properties that would be suitable for a CCRC.

AND THIS IS WHY...

“Thanks to our strategic plan, our aggressive mission, the dedication of our Board and staff, and the generosity of our donors, we are now strong enough to expand our organization’s vision,” says Susan Arnold, LSM/NJ’s Vice President, Fund Development and Marketing. “We help thousands of people in New Jersey each year, and our new programs will continue to provide hospitality, healing and hope to the residents of New Jersey for many years to come.”



2007 Mt. Olive Ground Breaking



Sayreville Community Residence

TWO HOMES, ONE PURPOSE:

A High Quality of Life for the Developmentally Disabled



Piscataway Community Residence

Ye are the light of the world...Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Matthew 5:14-15

The brightest lights sometimes shine in the most unexpected places.

At first glance, it might seem that the women who live at Piscataway and Sayreville Community Residences do not have many reasons to feel aglow with the joy of life. All the residents are developmentally disabled. Most will live out their lives in these group homes, without the opportunity for independent living that the rest of us often take for granted. The residents of Sayreville are so profoundly disabled that some cannot even speak.

But do they enjoy life? Absolutely, says Johanna Schroeder, Residential Coordinator for Piscataway and Sayreville Community Residences.

How can Schroeder be sure? “When someone can come up into your face and not talk, but giggle and smile at you,” says Schroeder, “you know she enjoys life.”

These women also contribute, each in her own way, to the fulfillment of the lives of others. “There is one individual at Sayreville who likes a certain spot on the couch, and if anyone sees her coming, they get up and move out of that spot so she can have it,” says Schroeder. “The residents have a quiet way of understanding each other.”

Six women, ranging in age from 32 to 57, live at the Sayreville Community Residence, founded in 1993. Both Piscataway and Sayreville Community Residences are owned and operated by Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey (LSM/NJ). The Piscataway Community Residence, founded in 1985, is LSM/NJ’s oldest group home. With a capacity to house nine women, the group home currently has seven residents, ranging in age from 30 to 65.

Their developmental disabilities vary. Some have cerebral palsy, others Down syndrome or autism. Some have traumatic brain injury—technically not a developmental disorder, since it occurs as a result of an accident or trauma rather than as a lifelong factor in a person’s development—but with similar effects on a person’s ability to function.

A TYPICAL DAY

The residents of Piscataway and Sayreville have a fairly busy day. Each weekday morning, the women leave the group homes to attend day programs run by various nonprofit organizations, such as Easter Seals of New

Jersey. Here their activities may include working on the development of skills needed for everyday living.

In some cases, the skills might be as basic as learning to dress themselves. In others, the women may learn skills that could help them to hold part-time jobs. The goals vary in accord with each woman’s individual habilitation plan (IHP), and the learning continues inside the group homes as well as during the day programs.

On their return to the residence each afternoon, the women often pursue leisure activities such as gardening, working on arts and crafts projects, or viewing movies or television. Piscataway residents also assist with chores about the house, such as cleaning.

The residents’ family members are welcome to visit them at the group homes at virtually any time, or to take them for outside visits, usually on a weekend. Occasionally, the women go as a group on day excursions, such as to the Jersey shore, Baltimore Inner Harbor, or plays in the park.

NO TYPICAL DAY

Johanna Schroeder has been Residential Coordinator for three years. Prior to that, since 1993, she worked as part of the direct care staff at Sayreville. Staff members do not live in, but work in shifts to provide 24-hour care, which includes assisting residents as needed with various aspects of daily living, ranging from hygiene to working on the goals in their IHPs.

Unlike for the residents, for Schroeder, “There is never a typical day. I think that’s what I enjoy so much about what I do,” she remarks.

“When you are working in the management of a group home, your life is [centered] around the group home,” continues Schroeder. “I might be working [on administrative tasks] at one of the residences today, and tomorrow I might have to sit in the hospital because someone’s sick, or basically do whatever the day calls for. You are on call 24 hours a day.”

Despite the demands, Schroeder loves her work. This type of job, however, is not for anyone who seeks instant gratification. Though the rewards are profound, they require patience and persistence. “Seeing someone accomplish something that you’ve been trying to teach them for three years,

that’s the ultimate reward,” says Schroeder.

PERSEVERANCE

Unless one has an opportunity to view the developments over time, one is not aware of the progress residents can make, says Schroeder. “Fortunately, I’ve been there since 1993, so I’ve seen many different changes. Many.”

Not as fortunately, the residences themselves can change over time. Like any home, Piscataway and Sayreville residences require repairs and maintenance. Funding for such improvements is limited. “It took us forever to get a kitchen remodeled,” says Schroeder. “Funds are scarce.”

GENEROSITY

More money would allow repairs and updates, including safety features, such as a sprinkler system for Piscataway. (Sayreville currently does have such a system.) Additional funding would also allow the staff to provide opportunities for residents to experience even more satisfaction in their lives. “I would like to take residents on longer trips—things like that,” says Schroeder.

Despite the limitations, however, residents definitely experience the joy of affectionate interaction in a good home. “When you’ve lived together for years, you have communication going, you understand what each other likes. You know each other’s ways,” says Schroeder. As one example, she explains, “There is an individual, one of the most profoundly disabled residents we have, who does nothing with her hands. But there is another resident who will monitor her and help her to her chair, things like that.

“When visitors come,” continues Schroeder, “a lot of them are surprised that we’re not just a residential quarter, a facility. We are a home.”

With additional contributions from generous donors, Piscataway and Sayreville could become even more comfortable and rewarding places to live.

Think how brightly the lights would shine then. ☞

For more information, please call or email Johanna Schroeder at 732-985-3464, JSchroeder@lsmnj.org



Francis J. Kardos, Vice President of Finance & CFO

New Vice President of Finance & CFO FRANCIS J. KARDOS

STRESSES EFFECTIVE FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Francis J. Kardos has joined Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey (LSM/NJ) as its Vice President of Finance and Chief Financial Officer, effective August 13, 2007.

Kardos says he was attracted to LSM/NJ by its combination of faith-based commitment and reputation for sound business practices.

“At LSM/NJ, the mission statement is always playing in the background and takes precedence over everything we do,” says Kardos. “Our mission is, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and in response to God’s love as revealed in the Gospel, to serve those in New Jersey who hurt, who are in need, or who have limited choices.”

Kardos notes, however, that “Our mission can’t be accomplished unless we continue to organize ourselves and operate in a businesslike fashion. All good things come from God, only good things come from God, but I strongly believe that God expects us to collaborate in the effort.”

As CFO, Kardos oversees the financial and accounting activities of a growing, multifaceted organization. His responsibilities include standard accounting functions such as payroll and billing; financial reporting requirements to the Board of Trustees and fellow managers, to state and

federal government agencies, as well as to LMS/NJ limited partners and bondholders; and management of LSM/NJ’s computer and information systems.

Kardos describes his primary objective as financial stewardship. “Our goal is to safeguard the resources of LSM/NJ and promote an internal control environment that provides for timely and accurate reporting of valuable information that helps teammates manage their affairs for the benefit of those we serve,” he says. “Finance and accounting are not the focal point, after all. The function of our department is to support the efforts of our colleagues who are directly involved in making a difference in people’s lives.”

A Certified Public Accountant with more than 30 years’ experience, Kardos held managerial positions with Campbell Soup Company and the accounting firm Touche Ross & Co. before becoming Chief Financial Officer for Checkpoint Systems, Inc., of Thorofare, N.J. He played a major role at Checkpoint as the manufacturer made a financial turnaround and was for two straight years one of the country’s fastest-growing small cap public companies.

In 2000, Kardos became Chief Financial Officer of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Camden. In that position, he exercised financial oversight of four skilled nursing facilities, six low-income housing projects, and a variety of social ministries. Most recently, Kardos was CFO of the Jewish Senior Housing and Healthcare Service, Jewish Federation of Southern New Jersey, where he oversaw the successful opening of a new continu-

ing care retirement community in Voorhees, N.J.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Kardos says he is strongly committed to helping the members of his department continue to develop professionally. Sixteen LSM/NJ employees report to Kardos, including financial controllers, accounting managers and accountants, a payroll manager, an information technology technician, and a Multiple Data Set coordinator who is a registered nurse.

“We have a group of employees who are technically proficient, have a strong work ethic, and are committed to advocating for the mission statement. And hopefully have a sense of humor as well.”

Staying current with new information technology helps employees work more efficiently, Kardos believes. “We view software and computer systems as productivity tools,” he says. “LSM/NJ installed new accounting software in 2007, and we are currently considering new budgeting software. We will continue to consider technology upgrades.”

Upgrading technology and enhancing accounting and budgeting efficiency are standard activities at many organizations, Kardos notes, but they take on a deeper significance at LSM/NJ because of its mission.

“These efficiencies can have a beneficial effect on LSM/NJ’s ministries and its ability to carry out the mission statement,” he says. “At LSM/NJ it’s never solely about the numbers. Ultimately, the numbers are a quantification and reflection of the impact LSM/NJ has on people’s lives.”



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HOW ASYLUM SEEKERS ARE TREATED

What We Don't Know May Appall Us



The Reverend Bruce Davidson at the Immigration and Refugee Humanitarian Awards Dinner

This is a great country. Many people from other countries want to live here.

This is a great country. Many people from other countries want to destroy it.

How do we tell the difference between the freedom lovers and the freedom destroyers?

That is the question that Homeland Security and other U.S. officials face every day, and it is not an easy one. The deliberately destructive do not wear badges to distinguish themselves from regular folks. "One may smile, and smile, and be a villain" is a Shakespearean bit of eloquence that is still true today.

There are two tragedies inherent in that truth. One is that those who are bent on destruction sometimes live free. The other is that the innocent who want only to live free are sometimes subject to inconvenience, invasion of privacy, and even more serious harms.

IMAGINE

Imagine that you are a peaceful person who has the misfortune to live under a dictatorship. You are being persecuted because of your political convictions or your religious beliefs. You become convinced that very soon you must either find a way to leave your country or face imprisonment, possibly even death.

You seek asylum in the U.S. What happens next?

In some cases, you end up in a detention center, such as the one in Elizabeth, N.J. You are held there until the government is satisfied that you are a genuine asylum seeker, not a pretender or terrorist seeking entry into the U.S. under that guise.

You are assigned a bed in a dormitory. There are no windows. The detention center resembles a warehouse. In fact, N.J. citizens viewing it from the outside may be unaware that this building stores not merchandise, but people.

The men's section is separate from the women's section, but that is where privacy ends. You shower in a communal room

where the partitions between showers are waist-high.

Your only exposure to natural light comes during a daily, hour-long exercise period in a walled area about the size of a volleyball court. Even here the sunshine is diluted, for translucent panels cover most of the ceiling.

You wait until a judge hears your case to determine whether you can stay in the U.S. No one can tell you exactly how long that wait will be. Some detainees are released within two to three weeks; some may be in the detention center for over a year. Six months is not unusual, according to Rev. Bruce H. Davidson, Director of the Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry in New Jersey.

The description of the Elizabeth detention center given above is based on the eyewitness account of Rev. Davidson, who recently toured the center as part of a group of about 15 concerned citizens. With the exception of the detainees and the security staff, relatively few people have been permitted to see the inside of the detention center. In fact, it took time, and more than one request, before the group was granted permission to tour. The tour group was shown only the men's section of the facility, not the women's.

ADVOCACY PARTNERS

On the detention center issue, as on many other advocacy issues, Rev. Davidson works closely with Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey (LSM/NJ).

Helping immigrants, asylum seekers and other refugees is not a new venture for LSM/NJ. In 1946, LSM/NJ began to assist World War II refugees who sought hope and freedom in the U.S. Through its Immigration & Refugee Services department, LSM/NJ continues such work unabated to the present day.

As advocates such as LSM/NJ and Rev. Davidson know only too well, newly arrived asylum seekers are not the only people who may spend time in a detention center. Immigrants who have been living and working in the U.S. for months, or even years, can

also end up in such facilities. In some cases, these detainees may have knowingly violated immigration laws. But in other cases they are the victims of bureaucratic glitches or similar misfortunes, says Rev. Davidson.

"The immigration law sometimes is so cryptic and difficult that people don't even know that they have overstayed their visa, or that their visa provision was different from what they understood," says Rev. Davidson.

For anyone who has had to decipher government documents—not famous for their clarity—this is easy to believe. And the problem is compounded for immigrants since, in most cases, English is not their native language.

Even worse, some of our fellow citizens prey on this vulnerable immigrant population. People who are not lawyers sometimes pose as lawyers, pretend they can assist an immigrant who is having visa problems, take a retainer, and disappear.

At least a few cases approach the nightmare stuff of which Hitchcock movies are made. For example, a woman—call her Ann—who had been in this country since age six was unaware that, years ago, her grandmother had tried to resolve an immigration issue by consulting one such impostor of an attorney. When Ann, as an adult, applied for a marriage license, this improperly handled issue resurfaced. Ann spent three months in a detention center before the matter was successfully resolved.

A VERY SLOW "SPEEDY TRIAL"

The sixth amendment of our U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to a speedy trial. Even for U.S. citizens, of course, this "speed" is not always what we would wish it to be. For those awaiting a hearing in detention centers, the delay may be even longer.

There is a courtroom in the detention center. Rev. Davidson and the rest of the tour group saw this courtroom during the heart of a working weekday—presumably prime time for such business as courtroom hearings—yet it was empty.

continued on next page

“What’s slowing the process down?” asks Rev. Davidson. “If it’s a lack of personnel, if there aren’t enough judges [available to hear the cases], then that needs to be addressed.”

CRIMINAL TREATMENT OF NON-CRIMINALS

In the meantime, people who have not been convicted, or even accused, of any violent crime are being held under conditions that are undeniably prison-like.

Fortunately, whether they know it or not, detainees in detention centers have many friends outside the walls. Rev. Davidson of the Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry and LSM/NJ are not the only advocates working diligently to change the conditions within detention centers. A number of groups—some Lutheran, some of other faiths, and some secular—have been active in this cause.

One of the most powerful services that organizations such as LSM/NJ can provide to detainees is high-quality legal advice. “If you have access to good legal representation,” notes Rev. Davidson, “your time in the detention center is a whole lot shorter than if [you don’t.]”

ACTIVISM, ADVOCACY, AWARENESS

Despite the diligence of advocates, improving conditions in detention centers is likely to be a long and arduous quest. One hopeful sign of progress, however, is the fact that a tour group was allowed into the detention center at all. “The tour was something that we had pressed for,” says Rev. Davidson, “for a long, long time.”

Another measure sought after, but not yet achieved, by advocates is a provision for

speedy preliminary hearings to determine whether or not there is reason to suspect that a particular detainee may pose a genuine security threat. In cases where there is an indication that a person may have entered the U.S. to do harm to its residents, maximum security measures may be necessary until further investigations can be made. But when it seems overwhelmingly evident that the detainee is a peaceful person who seeks

happen—not have them stuck in a facility where they don’t have access to anything for months at a time.”

To try to achieve such reforms, advocates have promoted a grassroots campaign whereby concerned U.S. citizens write letters to members of Congress and other political officials.

Advocates also seek reforms regarding spiritual support and comfort for detainees.

For example, advocates of all faiths have requested, and to some extent achieved, a more flexible policy regarding prayer services within the Elizabeth facility and visits to detainees from pastors and other religious leaders. In addition, through the efforts of Rev. Davidson and others, monthly prayer vigils are being held by concerned citizens outside the Elizabeth detention center.

Perhaps most important of all, though, is to make more Americans aware of the conditions within detention centers. “If people are not criminals, they shouldn’t be treated as criminals,” says Rev. Davidson. “They shouldn’t be hidden away in a warehouse district, with no access to the outside, no windows, [little or no] human contact. We just think that’s wrong,” continues Rev. Davidson. “And we think that most people, most Americans, if they were aware that this was happening, would feel the same.”

If you’ve read this article, now you know. **For more information on this issue or to find out how you can help, please call or email Rev. Bruce Davidson, Director of the Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry in New Jersey, at 609-396-4071, bdavidson@njsynod.org**



Donald Barb, The Reverend Bruce Davidson, Congressman Rush Holt & Jan Elsassar of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans at the Immigration & Refugee Humanitarian Awards Dinner

asylum, or who has relatively minor issues regarding immigration documentation—such as in the case of Ann, mentioned earlier in this article—less extreme security measures, which allow reasonable privacy for the detainee, may suffice.

Expedition hearings to determine the final status of asylum seekers or immigrants are also necessary. “Detainees have a right to have their case heard quickly, and a determination on their status to be made,” emphasizes Rev. Davidson. “If they’re to be returned to their country because they don’t meet the criteria that our country sets up for asylum seekers, for example, then that’s what should

IMMIGRATION & REFUGEE SERVICES

When refugees arrive in our country, they are eager to set up households, to work, and to become self-sufficient.

Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey facilitates the refugee resettlement process by serving as a resource to a congregation or community group that want to help welcome new refugees by providing assistance during the initial settlement period.

Partners Can Provide The Following Assistance:

- Temporary housing and food.
- Assistance in finding and furnishing permanent housing.
- Orientation to the new community.
- Financial assistance through cash donations for miscellaneous needs.
- Friendship, compassion and advocacy.

Partnership is not confined to the relationship between a refugee family and a congregation. Refugees also partner with LSM/NJ staff members, who facilitate the nuts and bolts of the resettlement process. Given every individual's need to establish relationships based on trust and equality, it is essential that partnerships extend beyond LSM/NJ staff to include congregants who can enter into relationships with refugees on an equal footing and, it is hoped, eventually establish true friendship based on mutual respect.

Different Ways Of Lending A Hand

Partnership can occur in many ways - through one congregation, a community group or through a joint partnership by a combination of sources. Partners can provide needed resources, such as household furnishings, financial support, and volunteer time.

If your congregation or community group is interested in extending the hand of friendship to a refugee family, please contact:

IMMIGRATION & REFUGEE SERVICES

189 South Broad Street, P.O. Box 30, Trenton, New Jersey 08601 • 609-393-4900 • www.lsmnj.org

A Three-Way Gift Of Love

Partnership is a rewarding experience for all:

- The refugee family is given an opportunity to begin a new life.
- The partner receives the gift of making a difference in someone's life.
- The community becomes enriched with a wider circle of cultural traditions, customs, skills, and friends.

A VARIETY OF PARTNERSHIPS

Housing Assistance Partnership

- Provide transitional housing for newly arrived families.
- Provide rental assistance to families striving to reach self-sufficiency.
- Serve as co-signatories on apartment leases for newly arrived families.

Basic Needs Partnership

- Collect furniture donations needed for housing.
- Collect small household items such as fans, telephones, small televisions, bedding, & towels.
- Collect items to stock a kitchen.

Financial Partnership

Groups unable to provide direct assistance to refugees can help through much needed financial support. Your financial assistance can help in a number of ways.

- \$100 Provides travel assistance for one month for a refugee family using public transportation.
- \$250 Provides food for two refugee families for one week.
- \$500 Provides beds for a refugee family of four.
- \$1,200 Provides one month's rent for one refugee family of four.
- \$1,500 Provides the security deposit for one refugee family's rent.

LUTHERAN SOCIAL MINISTRIES of NEW JERSEY 2007 *Events* SCRAPBOOK



Spring Golf Classic

Dave Cubberley with Sam Merlino-Merlino Design, David Danton & Gary Kanalstein-Kanalstein Danton Assoc.



Spring Golf Classic

Jim Wujcik with Sovereign Bank



Spring Golf Classic

Nathan Dunn-Shehadi Commercial Flooring, Jeff Gentile-Interface Flooring, Steve McMickle & John Milmo-Garden State Paint & Design



LSM Open House

Jerry Nugent, Don Tretola-PSE&G



LSM Open House

Geoff Brown-Princeton Jct. Engineering, Beth Kitchen-Kitchen Associates, Marty Katz-Princeton Jct. Engineering



Crane's Mill Brick Dedication

Nathan Dunn-Shehadi Commercial Flooring



Crane's Mill Continuing Care Retirement Community Piano Dedication

Anita Goodwyn-Crane's Mill Resident



Mt. Olive Ground Breaking

Jerry Nugent, Don Lubin-Affordable Housing Group, Peg Bucci, Larry Brown-Abiding Peace Senior Housing Corp., John Dumont-Dumont & Watson



Mt. Olive Ground Breaking

Bob Montesano, Anthony Ammiano & Pete Montesano-DeSano Contracting



Lutheran Care at Moorestown Brick Dedication

The Rev. Lou Dunkle with LCM residents



Lutheran Care at Moorestown Lawn Party

Lutheran Care at Moorestown Staff



Immigration and Refugee Humanitarian Awards Dinner

Tom Troy-Sharbell Building Company, Steven Doerler, Doerler Landscapes & Congressman Rush Holt



Immigration and Refugee Humanitarian Awards Dinner

Bishop E. Roy Riley, Betsy Riley & Al Cowell



Immigration and Refugee Humanitarian Awards Dinner

Fred Weiss, & Schelley Hollyday-Morrison Senior Dining Services



Immigration and Refugee Humanitarian Awards Dinner

Kevin Tylus, Martin Tuchman & Jay Destribats-Yardville National Bank



Fall Golf Classic

Louis Simon, Ron Trichon, Mike Kalick & Stephen Bianco-RMS Graphics



Fall Golf Classic

Jerry Nugent, Bob Green & Bob Gale-Commerce Bank, Fran Kardos



Fall Golf Classic

Dave Hildebrandt-Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, Don Schleaf & Jeff Wichman

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THE
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2008 EVENTS

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