

DIRECTOR'S REPORT | *Nicole Bauer*

LSS GROWS IN ROCHESTER

In 2019, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSS) combined the reach of three regional services in Rochester when they moved into a new shared office space. LSS Financial Counseling, Older Adults Services and Youth Services moved to their new site at the Metro Sales building in January.

Collectively, LSS served more than 900 Rochester area residents in 2019. The collaborative move allows LSS services to develop new strategies to address community health priorities in greater Rochester.

In 2019, LSS supported more than 170 older adults in the Rochester area through our Senior Companions, Community Companion and Neighbor to Neighbor Companion Services.

Just over two years ago, LSS began working with a local hospital to provide Senior Companions to support older adults who are at high risk of emergency room utilization with a companion to help them stay emotionally and physically well.

In January 2018, our Community Companion Service began a partnership with Medica® to support older adults who are transitioning home from a hospital stay, and to help them avoid being readmitted. This evolved out of our Senior Companions service, which offers weekly volunteer visits to help people remain living at home and avoid nursing home care.

Recently, we launched a Neighbor to Neighbor Companions service that not only supports older adults but others as well who need help getting to medical appointments, grocery shopping and managing medications.



In 2019, we made many strides to improve the lives of older Minnesotans, grow partner relationships and provide meaningful volunteer opportunities.

We received a new health care insurance partner for our Community Companion service, which supports older adults as they transition home after a hospital stay. Our trained community health workers make phone and in-person home visits to promote a safe and healthy environment and a successful recovery. In one group of more than 100 individuals served by Community Companions, everyone was able to stay in their homes without hospital readmission after 60 days post-service.

Thanks to a partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, we enhanced our Respite Education and Support Tools (REST) training. This allowed many of our Neighbor to Neighbor Companions volunteers to increase their skills and knowledge of community resources to be more effective. Many other community members were also trained, and a member of our leadership team became one of two national trainers who educate regional trainers. We look forward to expanding our training and developing national partnerships.

We entered our second year of the Porch Light Project, a partnership the University of Minnesota to provide CARES® training to Companion Services volunteers who support people with dementia or memory loss. Data collected showed that volunteers found the training valuable, and many were able to apply it to their companionship service in addition to using it to enrich their personal relationships.

Earning 245D Licensure in 2019 allowed us to shorten our waitlist of those in need of Companion Services while keeping our Neighbor to Neighbor Companions volunteers engaged by matching them with individuals who receive support from waiver funding.

We look forward to future opportunities to ensure older adults lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole Bauer". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Nicole Bauer, MA

Senior Director of Caregiver & Companion Services
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2019 FUNDING SOURCES

Foster Grandparents Program

Federal	907,862	64.7%
State	426,517	30.4%
Local	69,407	4.9%
TOTAL	\$1,403,786	100.0%

Senior Companion Program

Federal	580,480	31.3%
State	499,803	26.9%
Local	775,539	41.8%
TOTAL	\$1,855,822	100.0%

Total Senior Corps Funding

Federal	1,488,342	45.7%
State	926,320	28.4%
Local	844,946	25.9%
TOTAL	\$3,259,608	100.0%

Funding for Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents is provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service, Minnesota Board on Aging, UCare, United Way, and community agencies through their partnership with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota.



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NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR BRINGS LAUGHTER AND SUPPORT IN HOPKINS



When Janice greets you at her apartment, she immediately introduces you to her friend, Lauren. Janice playfully says that Lauren knows all her secrets. Lauren smiles and reassures her. "What happens in Jan's apartment, stays in Jan's apartment!" she says, as they both laugh heartily.

Laughing is a hallmark of their time together, which happens

once a week when Lauren visits Janice in Hopkins through LSS' Neighbor to Neighbor Companions service.

The service matches older adults with trained volunteers who provide weekly assistance with grocery shopping, paying bills and household tasks, and transportation to medical appointments.

"Janice sometimes has trouble finding the right words, but she's very interactive and we have great conversations. This is a friendship for both of us."

Janice was diagnosed with Alzheimer's three years ago. Her brother Don says it was hard to accept it when his sister, who was always good with computers and numbers, started struggling with things that used to come easily. He worried about her future since he lives out of town. During a typical visit, Lauren will take Janice grocery shopping, look at old family photos, or talk about what's going on in the world over a cup of tea.

"Janice is very spiritual," said Lauren. "She still goes to church every day. We talk about our faith and how it supports us, on both the good days and the not-so-good days."

Janice agrees. With a simplicity that speaks volumes she says, "It's wonderful when she visits me. We help each other. We're good friends."

ACTIVE. ◆ HEALTHY. INDEPENDENT.

LSS Older Adult Services

With the right community supports, older Minnesotans are '**Abundantly Aging**': staying healthy, choosing to live at home longer, giving back as volunteers and remaining as independent as possible.