



Lutheran Family Services
of Nebraska, Inc.

Connections

Winter 2012



Fremont Orphanage c. 1893

Deaconess
Institute c. 1900

120 Years of Service





Message from the President & CEO

This has been a year of amazing 120th Anniversary celebrations!

Who could have imagined that two orphanages in 1892 would grow into the incredible statewide organization we know today as LFS!

As I've poured through the archives and observed adoption reunions over the past twelve months, I've realized just how innovative and courageous this organization has been! And even more importantly, I've realized how our decisions have almost always led to tremendously positive community impact.

In the 1970s, 80s and 90s, pregnant teens lived with families in "mutual service" homes. In 2012 there are no orphanages and fewer infant adoptions. Today LFS operates three Centers for Healthy Families, focused on prevention and early intervention services. LFS teaches young parents how to be effective parents and challenges teen dads to take responsibility for the safety and well-being of their children. It is challenging work in today's society...but it is the right work to do!

At Ease®—a trauma treatment and peer support program for veterans, active duty military and their loved ones—was implemented in Omaha in late 2009 with expansion in 2011 to Grand Island and 22 surrounding counties. Over 250 veterans have been served through **At Ease**® since it began! To the men and women who serve our nation with courage and pride, **At Ease**® offers a future of hope.

In 2011 LFS served persons living in 77 of the 93 Nebraska counties. The merger of Adoption Links Worldwide into LFS was completed. Fifty-eight children were placed in LFS foster care homes. Two hundred forty-five children ages two to 14 were involved in the LFS RSafe® program for children who have been sexually abused or who were themselves acting out sexually. In 2012, through LFS Refugee Services, 510 refugees were resettled to Nebraska...and hundreds more immigrants sought legal assistance at LFS offices in Lexington, Grand Island and Omaha.

While it has been exciting to remember where we've been, it's even more important to know where we are going. As George Bernard Shaw said, "We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our future." At LFS we accept that responsibility to be here tomorrow and a year from tomorrow...making an impact one person, one family at a time. I invite you to invest in LFS programs that will help achieve our vision of "safety, hope and well-being for all people."

Merry Christmas,

Ruth Henrichs, President & CEO



How, exactly, does one wrap 120 years into a couple of hours?

At Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska (LFS), we throw a party! Two of them, in fact! The first in North Platte; the second in Omaha with Immanuel as Presenting Sponsor. Both events provided a tremendous opportunity for guests to learn just how much LFS has grown since 1892!

In North Platte, LFS honored **Ted Huebner and the Ken & Aletha Huebner Family**, as well as long-time LFS employee, **Marti Wilson**. Jim Nisley served as emcee. Nisley, a North Platte attorney, is a community leader and an adoptive parent, so he was able to bring a personal perspective to the work of LFS.

The entire Huebner family took the stage to accept the Faith in Action® Award in North Platte, including Ted, Ken and three of Ken's four sons and their families. The Huebners were touched by a video tribute honoring their commitment to faith, family and community.

Marti Wilson accepted her award twice, in both North Platte and Omaha! It was emotional for her both times, as she talked about her 36 years at LFS and how the organization has always been willing to take on difficult challenges. CEO Ruth Henrichs thanked Marti for an incredible life of service.

At the Omaha event on September 16, Eric Gurley, CEO of Immanuel Communities, served as emcee. LFS honored **Dr. Tom and Jane Tonniges and their children, Chris, Emily and Betsy**, as well as Jane's parents, **Frank and Mary**

in Action[®]

Anniversary Celebrations

Bruning. Following a video tribute to the family and their commitment to service and adoption, the entire family filled the stage. Chris told the crowd, "We're not sure what the fuss is about. This is just us. We do service."

President and CEO Ruth Henrichs capped off the evening, saying, "At LFS we believe that service is not an accident, and hope is not a privilege." She shared the LFS legacy of courage and diversity, and paid tribute to all of the dedicated and compassionate staff members who have worked at LFS over the years. "While community needs may change, our mission remains constant: to express God's love for all people."

Below: Honorees KEN & TED HUEBNER (5th and 6th from left) with their family at the North Platte Celebration on August 26.



Above: MARTI WILSON (third from left), Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska's first Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, with her family at the Omaha Celebration on September 16.



Top: Honorees at the Omaha event included FRANK and MARY BRUNING, JANE and DR. TOM TONNIGES with Dr. Tonniges' mother ELAINE.

Above: Omaha honorees CHRIS and TRACIE TONNIGES with their children ZAC, RACHEL and HALLIE at the Omaha Celebration on September 16.

Presenting Sponsor



Immanuel

Media Sponsor



faith in Action®

120th Anniversary Celebrations

Omaha Event—September 16, 2012



Left: RUTH HENRICHES with KERMIT and KATHY BRASHEAR.

Below: DON and DIANA WAGGONER.



Above: DANIELA and PASTOR ANDREAS STEIN with CRAIG STIRTZ.



Right: DONNA GURLEY with REV. PEGGY HALL

We were honored that KATHERINE THEIS attended the Omaha Celebration with her daughter, Karen. Mrs. Theis knows a thing or two about children! She provided a foster home for at least 75 children through LFS, and provided a home for even more foster children! At 88, she is still a steadfast volunteer at the Lutheran Thrift Store downtown. Mrs. Theis has 10 children, 31 grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.



Above: We were delighted to have RUTH PFEIL join us! It is believed that Ruth is the oldest living adoptee from the Fremont Orphanage. At 96, Ruth is full of zest! She traveled to Omaha from her home in Ann Arbor, Michigan, especially for the 120th anniversary event. Ruth was joined by her daughter and son-in-law.

Right: Emcee ERIC GURLEY, PAM and RANDY KORTH, and LOIS and STEVE HESS.

Below: STUART J. DORAN, PETER W. and KRISTAE ZANDBERGEN, and APRIL and KENNY ROCKER



Right: JOHN PERSHING with WARREN WHITTED



Left: JAMES and DARLEEN KAUTZ with CARYL and PASTOR MARK GRORUD

faith in Action®

120th Anniversary Celebrations

North Platte Event—August 26, 2012



Left: Emcee JIM NISLEY.

Below: RUTH HENRICHES with MARTI WILSON.



Left: DEB KNIGHT and TED HUEBNER.



Below: KEN HUEBNER, ERIC GURLEY and DAN MAUK.



Left: PASTOR MEGAN MORROW.

Below: NAZARIO, LESLIE, ANA, BRITNEY and ALLEN CASTANEDA



Right: DISTRICT PRESIDENT RUSSELL SOMMERFELD with SHELLY and PASTOR BOB DEARDOFF.

Below Right: GREG and TRACY WEILAND with MARY WICHELT.



Just look how Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska has grown! From two pastors and a few deaconesses, nearly 300 employees now work at LFS in offices across the state. Below L-R: Community Services staff, Western Region Staff and Southeast Region staff.



The Ken & Aletha Huebner Family & Ted Huebner

“We’ve supported LFS for years because they help everybody.”

—Ken Huebner

KEN AND TED HUEBNER’S STORY began on a farm near Hershey, Nebraska—nearly a century ago!

Ted was the oldest, Ken—six years younger, with three brothers and a sister mixed in. They were the grandchildren of German immigrants and grew up as many Nebraska farm children do—working the fields, doing chores, making their own fun.

Ken, Ted and their brothers Gene and Al are all veterans of World War II, all Navy sailors except Ken, who instead served in the Army Air Corps. He figures it was because he couldn’t swim!

After the war ended, Ken and Ted returned to North Platte with the idea of opening a business. By this time, Ken had married the love of his life, Aletha Knapp—a young woman he met at a church play. They had corresponded while he was overseas and became engaged eight months after he returned home.

Ken and Ted opened the Huebner Supply Company in 1951. They sold farm supplies, including feed, seed and fertilizer. The business has evolved over the years—now the building at 8th and Poplar in North Platte is a busy lawn and garden center. Three of Ken and Aletha’s four sons now run the business.

The family also owned a farming corporation called KASON Farms. The name KASON stands for Ken, Aletha and sons. It was through this corporation that the family humbly became lead benefactors for the Clifford L. Johnson Center for Healthy Families® in North Platte. The Center conference room is named the KASON Farms Room, and another room in the building is named after Ted. The Huebner family has quietly supported LFS with treasure, time and talents for years.

Ken and Aletha almost celebrated 60 years together. She died on New Year’s Eve, 2006—just weeks shy of their wedding anniversary. Aletha was deeply involved in the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League, ultimately serving as president. Ken has also served in many leadership roles, in church—as well as in the community. He was a city councilmember and served as Mayor of North Platte in the mid-sixties. Ken is credited with continuing a cleanup of the city started by his predecessor. As he says even today, “Making an ethical decision is not making a hard decision.”

These days, 98-year-old Ted is comfortable in assisted living. At 91, Ken still drives and visits Ted often. He also checks in at the store almost daily, and when he’s not there, he’s at Rotary, or at his book club or at church. Or, he’s pursuing his passion for history and writing, which is evidenced by the history books on his coffee table, stacked a foot high. Ken has authored three books containing fascinating and intricate details of his incredible life of service. As he says, “You should work hard at whatever you are doing,” and, “A person should always serve the Lord, day in and day out, 24 hours a day.”

For remarkable lives of faith-filled service and charity, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska is proud to honor Ted Huebner, Ken Huebner and family with the 120th Anniversary 2012 Douglas E. Parrott Faith in Action® Award.



The Ken & Aletha Huebner Family and Ted Huebner (lower right)



Ted Huebner

faith in Action®

120th Anniversary Celebrations

2012 Douglas E. Parrott
Faith in Action® Honorees

The Dr. Tom & Jane Tonniges and Frank & Mary Bruning Family

“We need to be there for people.”

—Dr. Tom Tonniges

IT WAS A LITTLE BOY NAMED CHARLIE who changed Dr. Tom Tonniges' life. Early in his career, Tom saw in Charlie, a child with severe cerebral palsy, something no one else did – intelligence, ability – truly, a future. He urged the child's parents to give their son a chance. Mainstream him in public schools. They initially resisted, but their eventual decision became a pivotal one. That little boy has grown up to become a well-respected professional, the head of assistive technology at the University of Oklahoma Medical Center.

Through Charlie, Tom's career choice went from being a decision of the mind – to a decision of the heart.

To say that Dr. Tom and Jane Tonniges care about children might just be the understatement of the year.

The Tonnigeses have dedicated their entire lives to the care and welfare of children, both

personally and professionally. Dr. Tonniges was a pediatrician in Hastings for 18 years before moving to Chicago, where he spent a decade at the American Academy of Pediatrics. More recently, he served as primary care physician at Boys Town and now as Chief Medical Officer at Arbor Health Plan.

And that's just the day job.

Dr. Tom and Jane have been generous in donating time, talent and treasure for many organizations so that children have better lives and a healthy future. He serves as a health consultant for Building Bright Futures; both were recently honored for their commitment to Voices for Children, and their contributions making the annual “Kids Count” survey possible. Dr. Tonniges has served on the board of directors for Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska. As an active member of Omaha's Downtown Rotary, Dr. Tonniges has helped train pediatricians in Eastern Europe. The Tonniges children tell stories of picking up at the drop of a hat to provide free health care to children on reservations or those injured in earthquakes.

The Tonnigeses are very proud of their three adult children – Chris, Emily and Betsy.

All three are professionally successful: Chris in banking, Emily in business and Betsy in education. Chris and his wife Tracy adopted three children through Lutheran Family Services: Rachel, Zachary and Hallie. Betsy and her husband Patrick added the fourth grandchild, Chloe, to the growing family.

Jane's parents, Frank and Mary Bruning, still live in Bruning, Nebraska, where she grew up. They are cornerstones of the community – where Frank, at 86, still goes into the bank every day. Mary has managed the family fencing business for 40 years. The Brunings have invested heavily in their lovely, classic community and its future. Grandson Chris calls his grandfather larger than life – and his grandmother a “force of nature.”

Lifelong friends Warren and Nancy Whitted sum it up nicely. “These are just outstanding people. Good, good people. They are the kind of people we should all aspire to be.”

For lives of service advancing the well-being of all children and the communities they live in, we honor Dr. Tom and Jane Tonniges and Frank and Mary Bruning with the 120th Anniversary 2012 Douglas E. Parrott Faith in Action® Award.



The Dr. Tom & Jane Tonniges Family



Frank & Mary Bruning

Marti Wilson

“It was always more than just a job...”
—Marti Wilson

THE LITTLE GIRL was abandoned and lost.

After decades of work in human care, it is memories of this one little girl that immediately brings tears to Marti Wilson's eyes. A 10-year-old child, adopted from overseas by a Texas family, and then rejected by them. They put her, alone, on a plane to Omaha—where no one was waiting for her when she arrived!

Marti Wilson was there when the urgent call came in to Lutheran Family Services. Could LFS assist? At this point in time, LFS was providing both foster care and adoption services under Marti's leadership and supervision. Marti personally took the case and worked tirelessly to help this confused and grieving little girl find a forever family and feel loved again. As Marti says with a smile, “I got to know her very well.”

That little girl grew up and is now a very successful Nebraskan. Marti is so proud of her. “You just have to give people the chance to be what they can be,” she says. “Love them... and then love them a little more.”

Another memorable child was an adopted, premature infant who needed to be transferred from Western Nebraska to Children's Hospital in Omaha. He was in an isolette, where temperature and oxygen are tightly controlled. There was no money for an AirVac or ambulance in those days, so the hospital recommended transporting the baby by personal vehicle....in other words, in Marti's car. Although she didn't like the idea, she did it—and they made it—with just two stops along the way to feed the baby.

“Marti would do anything to help an adoptive family,” says Ruth Henrichs, President & CEO of Lutheran Family Services. “Marti is the most real, most genuine person you will ever meet...and she's loyal to the core,” says Ruth.

Marti and Ruth have worked together at LFS for over 35 years. They have seen a lot of growth and an equal amount of change. Together they have built programs and later closed them down. Ruth says Marti built the LFS adoption program from the ground up in the 1970s, traveling statewide to assist hundreds of families with adoption—sometimes as many as 70 children a year!

In the 1980s LFS entered into the delivery of behavioral health services. Marti led a process which transferred state operated mental health clinics in Eastern Nebraska to LFS outpatient mental health and substance abuse offices. “It was because of Marti's tenacity and leadership that the change process worked, almost seamlessly,” says Ruth. “Give Marti a challenge and she will work until she has accomplished her goal! Just look where our LFS behavioral health programs are today. Her legacy lives on...with excellence!”

“What I like about LFS,” says Marti, “is that it has always been about quality, vision and courage. It has never been about being bigger. It has always been about being better. The best you can be. It has always been about seeing the person in front of you first, then their problem, and then working with them to find a solution. Everyone, absolutely everyone, is important.”

For dedicating her entire career to making a difference in the lives of others, LFS honors Marti Wilson with the first Lifetime Achievement Award from Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska. Thank you, Marti, for 37 years of helping God's children, adults and families reach their dreams!



Marti Wilson

Memories



"We also began to develop post adoption services. I loved my job, co-workers and clients. I recall Ruth [Henrichs] saying, 'You have to have the right people on the bus.'"

—Marcia Blum, LFS Pregnancy,
Parenting & Adoption Services
Supervisor from 2001-2007

"[It] was my first job out of college. The building I started working in was in an old house on 36th & Fowler, part of the Deaconess Institute. I worked there a couple years and then we moved to the building Lutheran [Family Services] now occupies. The CEO was Jane McGoogan. I learned from Mrs. M. that there was no child that was unplaceable—a belief I carried all my career. Those values of focusing on the well-being of each child was reaffirmed in those years."

—Donna Tubach-Davis, Immanuel Social Services employee from 1963-1967
(Immanuel Social Services was a precursor to Lutheran
Family Services of Nebraska)

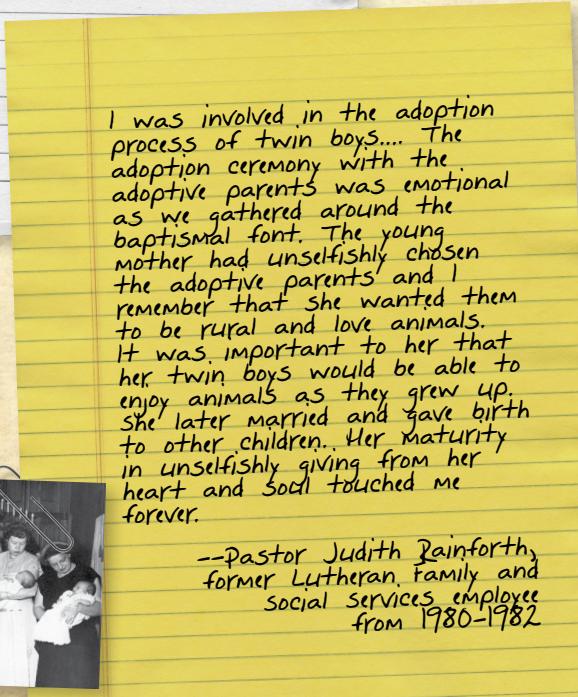


"My husband & I now have 4 kids!! 2 are adopted & we have a beautiful open relationship w/ their birth family! I wish you a very successful Celebration!"

—Barbara Murray, former LFS Pregnancy, Parenting & Adoption Therapist from 2005-2007

"In Fremont Orphanage, 1942-1944, my secretary desk was right next to my 'boss's desk'—Rev. A.H. Bringewatt. He dictated to me which I took in shorthand. In 1944 (Sept.) offices moved to Omaha where my office was in waiting room at Karbach Block. Later offices were moved to Omaha Loom Bldg. Dictation was put on cylinders which I listened to + transcribed. Other machines I worked with were the mimeograph + the hectograph. I was secretary, bookkeeper + receptionist. I loved every minute of it."

—Vera (Eckhardt) Heiden, orphanage employee from 1942-1950 (The orphanage was a precursor to Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska)



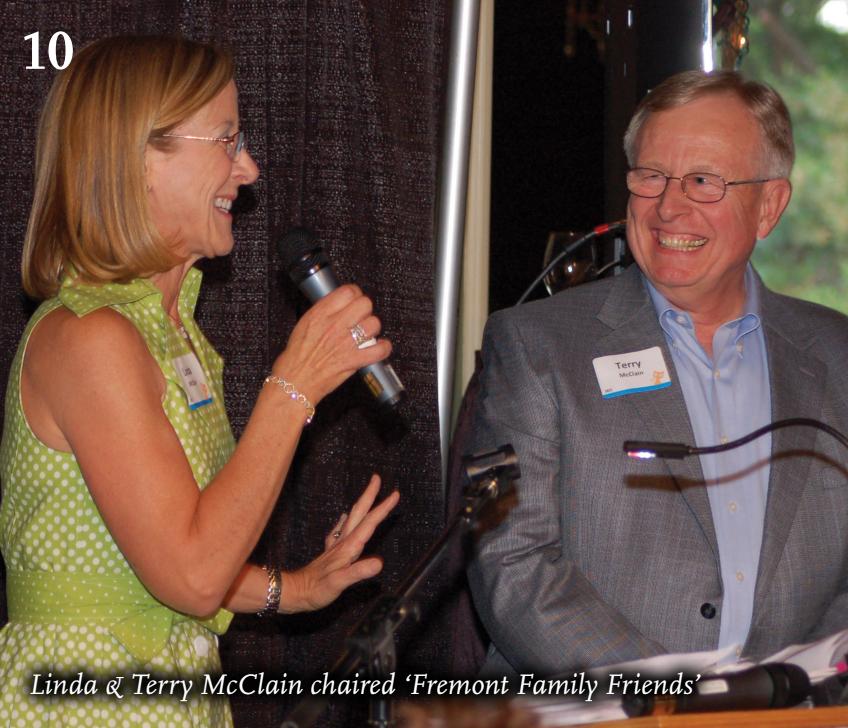
I was involved in the adoption process of twin boys.... The adoption ceremony with the adoptive parents was emotional as we gathered around the baptismal font. The young mother had unselfishly chosen the adoptive parents! and I remember that she wanted them to be rural and love animals. It was important to her that her twin boys would be able to enjoy animals as they grew up. She later married and gave birth to other children. Her maturity in unselfishly giving from her heart and soul touched me forever.

—Pastor Judith Rainforth,
former Lutheran Family and
Social Services employee
from 1980-1982

My great aunt Martha Eckhardt (born in 1870, arrived in U.S. 1884) worked for a time at the Fremont Orphanage in about 1901. Her job was to keep the stoves going, carry coal up + down stairs, make beds for 44 children, bathe some of the little ones, keep the stairway clean, up + down all day, shovel snow, knit socks + mittens. She + 'the other maid' slept in the coldest room.

My grandfather Ernest Eckhardt Sr., pastor of the Lutheran church in Blair, NE, was elected to be the secretary of the Board of Directors of the Orphanage around 1907. During those years, my grandparents 'adopted' a boy from the Orphanage. (my Dad was about 12 years old). After a few years of joy, the mother who has given out her son for 'adoption' reclaimed her son. Adoption does not seem to have been legalized in those days.

—Vera (Eckhardt) Heiden, orphanage employee from 1942-1950 (The orphanage was a precursor to Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska)



Linda & Terry McClain chaired 'Fremont Family Friends'



Patty & Sid Dillon, Jr.

Cindy & Mogens Bay



Hazel Dillon, Craig Stirtz & Sid Dillon



Bev & Ed Burchfield



Fern & Dale Olson



Roger & Rita Goree



Darrell & Myrna Puls



Wil Tewes with Ruth & Rupert Dunklau

Fremont's First Fundraiser a Huge Success!

It was a packed house at the Fremont Golf Club on June 12. "A Few of My Favorite Things" was the theme of the first-ever fundraiser for the Rupert Dunklau Center for Healthy Families® in Fremont. Not only did the sold-out event raise over \$135,000 for services to Fremont children, it also launched the beginning of a new volunteer support network: "Fremont Family Friends."

Terry and Linda McClain were the Event Chairs (and founders). Honorary Chair couples were Sid and Hazel Dillon and Rupert and Ruth Dunklau. The event included a silent and live auction. Some of the winning bidders will enjoy dinner at the Governor's Mansion, fresh flowers each month for a year, and a week-long stay at an Arizona vacation home. But the real winners were children! Money raised from the event will assist families in Fremont with children under age five and pregnant mothers.

Pat Persaud served as the evening's emcee. Guests enjoyed dinner and a video which told the story of daily work at the Rupert Dunklau Center for Healthy Families®. Young parents credited the Center for support and guidance that has helped them establish healthier lifestyles for themselves and their children. Two mothers said they believe they would have lost custody of their children without the support and services at the Center. You can watch this video on LFS' YouTube page: [LFS of Nebraska](#).

New Leadership to Organize for the Future

The very beginnings of Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska (LFS) were rooted in the desire to meet the needs of children. While some things have changed over the past 120 years, the desire for all children to have safety, hope and well-being remains our vision.

Several factors have created tremendous opportunities for LFS to carry this vision to the next level. A growing awareness of the community impact of early intervention and prevention programs, as well as the increased statewide focus on child welfare services has created a perfect environment for new ideas and partnerships.

Over the past few months, Children Services has targeted three primary areas of focus: Early Intervention and Prevention, Permanency and Well-

Being, and Childhood Behavioral Health.

Ryan Suhr, the newly appointed **Statewide Administrator of Children Services**, is leading the change as LFS organizes Children Services for the future. He previously served as Clinical Supervisor for Children's Behavioral Health.

Pegg Siemek-Asche has been **Statewide Administrator of Behavioral Health** since March, 2010. Prior to her appointment, Pegg served briefly as Right TurnSM Supervisor. Jude Connelly, **Statewide Administrator of Community Services**, assumed leadership of Community Services in January, 2012. Previously, Jude was the supervisor of the LFS Crisis Response Program in Douglas and Sarpy Counties.

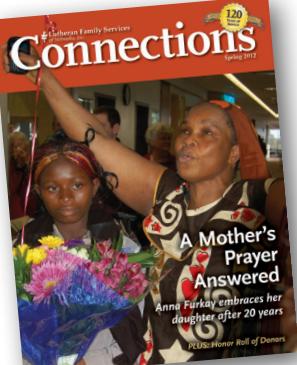
Ryan Suhr

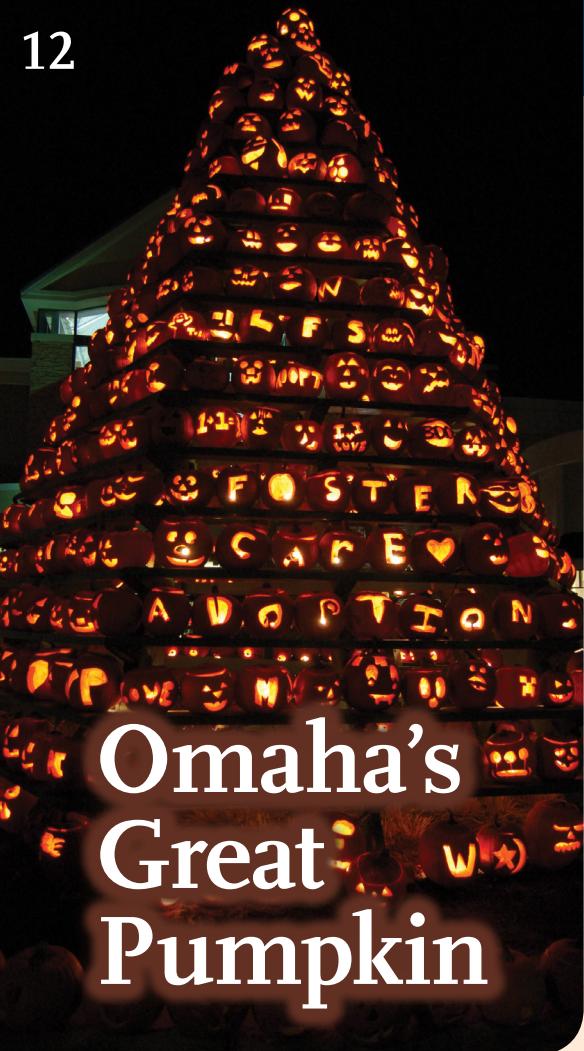
Pegg Siemek-Asche

Jude Connelly

Anna Furkay's Grandson!

Meet little baby Benedict, whose name means "Wonderful Boy." Benedict's mother is Angeline Wleh and his grandmother is Anna Furkay. You met them in the cover story of the last issue of *Connections*. Anna and Angeline were reunited in Lincoln in April, 2012, after a twenty-year separation following the Liberian Civil War. After working with LFS Immigration Legal Services for six years, Angeline arrived in Nebraska. No one realized she was pregnant. Benedict was born just days after her arrival. Had he been born any sooner, Angeline would have been unable to bring him with her and she may have been forced to stay in Liberia.





Omaha's Great Pumpkin

For the fourth year, Omaha's Great Pumpkin "rose" over Village Pointe's Center Court. Each of the 1,033 pumpkins on the tree symbolized a child in foster care who is hoping and waiting for adoption. This year, the focus was on the desperate need for families willing to adopt older children, those 12 to 18 years old. Statistics for those who "age out" of the system without a family are grim – half are homeless within two years. The free Family Festival held on October 27 included pumpkin carving, a pumpkin pie eating contest and a "ghoulish" hair show – put on by a former foster child who is now a hair designer. Big thanks to volunteers from the Forever Families Guild for making it all happen!

Luvs® and Huggies® for Lutheran Family Services

Diaper Derby Coming Up!

Oh, the difference a supply of clean diapers can make! Did you realize that an adequate supply of disposable diapers can cost over \$100 each month? After all, babies need up to 12 diapers each day; toddlers about eight. Unfortunately, in low-income households, infants may spend the entire day – or even longer – in a single diaper, simply because the family cannot afford to buy enough. Staying in a soiled diaper can cause numerous health problems, especially diaper rash, and may even be linked to an increased rate of hepatitis.* Without diapers, low-income parents cannot take advantage of free or subsidized childcare since parents are required to provide their own supply. And worst of all? Studies show that a baby crying from wanting his diaper changed is at greater risk of physical abuse by his caregiver.

For all these reasons, the upcoming Diaper Derby is SO very important to our Centers for Healthy Families. By collecting diapers for the low-income families we serve, churches provide tremendous budget relief to our Centers, since diapers are the number one item that caregivers choose when they "cash in" their incentive points. This

year, ten churches collected almost 70,000 diapers! That's a lot of clean and happy bottoms!

Here are all of the churches that participated in the 2012 campaign:

- Bethany Lutheran Church (*Elkhorn*)
- Holy Cross Lutheran Church (*Omaha*)
- Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church (*Omaha*)
- Lord of Love Lutheran Church (*Omaha*)
- Morning Star Lutheran Church (*Omaha*)
- Rejoice! Lutheran Church (*Omaha*)
- Saint Michael Lutheran Church (*Omaha*)
- St. Paul's Lutheran Church (*Millard*)
- St. Thomas Lutheran Church (*Millard*)

Who will gather the most diapers and win the coveted "Golden Huggie" award in 2013?

If your church would like to participate in the February 2013 Diaper Derby, please contact Cheryl Murray at (402) 661-3138 or cmurray@LFSneb.org

* The Diaper Bank; thediaperbank.org



Evonne & Bill Williams talking with Medal of Honor recipient Sal Giunta at the At Ease USA Luncheon in January. Their "Remembering Our Fallen" exhibit is in the background.

A New Way for Churches to Help Military Families

At Ease® Congregational Outreach

Meet Bill and Evonne Williams, the newest members of our outreach team!

You may best know Bill and Evonne as creators of the "Remembering Our Fallen" exhibit and as the organizers of the Nebraska Heartland Honor Flights for World War II veterans. Now, Bill and Evonne are helping Lutheran Family Services (LFS) engage churches to support military families.

As parents of four sons who are active military, the Williamses are working with the **At Ease®** team at LFS in the new **At Ease®** Congregational Outreach program. Funded by the Wheat Ridge Foundation, this program will engage church communities to support and encourage military families within their own congregations and communities.

The program comes at a critical time for military families. Due to continued deployments, more and more service men and women are coming home with wounds you cannot see: post-traumatic stress, depression, traumatic brain injury. Nationally, military suicides reached an all-time high this summer, with twice as many soldiers killing themselves than those killed in combat. The LFS program **At Ease®** was created in 2009 to provide mental health therapy and support for these soldiers, reservists, National Guardsmen – anyone who has worn the uniform – as well as their families and loved ones. Support groups have proven a critical component in the recovery of these families.

The new **At Ease®** Congregational Outreach program will help "inspire churches to action" and provide ways churches may support these heroes and their families.

If you have an interest in this program or would like to have Bill & Evonne Williams speak at your church, please contact Justine O'Neill-Hedlund at (402) 978-5615 or joneillhedlund@LFSneb.org.

LFS Honored for Integrity

Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska was honored to receive a Silver Award of Distinction during the Better Business Bureau's (BBB) Integrity Awards luncheon on October 9, 2012. The Integrity Awards honor those businesses and non-profit organizations whose business practices exemplify the BBB's mission and principles of honesty, commitment and accountability.

The BBB Integrity Awards recognize companies that go above and beyond in serving their customers and communities in Nebraska, South Dakota and southwest Iowa. Unlike other awards, the BBB Integrity Awards focus on demonstrated ethical business practices, rather than a company's growth, profitability or popularity. LFS was nominated by a member of the business community. An extensive application included examples of how LFS demonstrates its commitment to ethical business practices and operating with integrity.



Ruth Henrichs & Gaye Lynn Schaffart (Chair, LFS Board of Directors) accepting BBB Integrity award

Full House for First Adoption Conference

In August, Nebraska held its first statewide adoption conference. The two-day conference was designed to prepare parents and professionals to establish permanent, loving families for children in foster care.

Over 200 attendees heard nationally-known adoption experts speak on best practices across the adoption spectrum, including pre- and post-adoption, as well as disruption prevention, trauma and loss.

"There are several identified barriers to adoption excellence in Nebraska," said Jessyca Vandercoy, Director of Permanency and Well-Being for Lutheran Family Services. "This conference was created to provide continuing education to close gaps in knowledge and break down barriers in service delivery. From the feedback we've received from attendees, we believe we made great strides toward that goal."

The event was sponsored and organized by Right TurnSM, LLC, and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Right TurnSM, is a collaborative partnership between Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska and the Nebraska Children's Home Society. Both Right TurnSM and DHHS are committed to ensuring all Nebraska children have a family.



Nebraska Adoption Conference 2012
Sponsored by Right turn™ DHHS



At a Nov. 13 philanthropy award ceremony in San Francisco, LFS was recognized as a national finalist for a Bank of the West *Community Impact Award*. This \$10,000 award recognizes a non-profit inspired by Bank of the West customers with a history of philanthropic activity. Terry & Linda McClain's loyal and generous support of LFS made this possible. (l-r) John Bahnken (*Senior Executive Vice President of Wealth Management Group, Bank of the West*), Ruth Henrichs (*LFS President & CEO*), Maura Markus (*President and COO, Bank of the West*), Terry McClain (*LFS Foundation Board*), Linda McClain, Peter W. Zandbergen (*LFS Board of Directors*), and Mike Bracco (*Chief Administrative Officer, Bank of the West*).



Thank you to the Nebraska North District Lutheran Women's Missionary League! Lana Erickson (left), Vice-President of Gospel Outreach, delivered a check for \$2,012 to support the Fatherhood Program at the North Omaha Center for Healthy Families®. Jamalia Parker (right), Director of Early Intervention and Prevention Programs, accepted the check on behalf of LFS.

Union Bank & Trust Regional President Samantha Mosser (right) presents a check for \$2,000 to Ruth Henrichs, LFS President & CEO (left) for placing in the top three organizations in the bank's online charitable giving contest.



5843

Date October 9, 2012

UNION BANK & TRUST COMPANY

You Belong Here.™

Pay to the Order of Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska \$2,000.00

Two Thousand and No/100

Dollars

Signature: Angie Muhleisen

Donating Grain... A Creative Way to Give Back

At a young age, Bruce and Cheri Werner were exposed to the challenges and rewards of farming. Today they live near Petersburg, NE, where they have worked their farm together for 32 years, raising three children, now grown.

In April, a storm with baseball-sized hail smashed windows of their home and damaged much of the farming equipment as well as the roofs on all their buildings. Another storm completely wiped out the corn that had begun to grow, and Bruce had to replant the entire field. The drought this year brought challenges as well—there was no hay on 80 of their “dry” acres.

Farming has brought many highs and lows for the Werners. Bruce said he wouldn’t do anything else—he just loves the challenge!

The Werners are very grateful for their many blessings. Cheri said now

that the children are on their own, she and Bruce are in a more stable financial position. She said they decided it was time to give back, and Lutheran Family Services (LFS) is one of the places they wish to support. Cheri remembered the orphanage in Fremont when she was a child. She always felt very fortunate to have a loving, caring family of her own.

With today’s high prices and a positive outlook for commodity markets, the Werners made a gift of grain to LFS to fulfill their charitable intentions. They explained that when a farmer delivers grain to market and transfers ownership to a charity, they get greater tax savings than if they sell the commodity and then write a check from the proceeds out of their own checkbook. Farmers should first consult their tax advisors to determine whether a gift of grain is appropriate for their tax situation and



Bruce & Cheri Werner

then contact Lutheran Family Services to make the gift.

Bruce and Cheri both extend an invitation to the farming community to support LFS and give back, as they are doing, through a gift of grain. It’s very easy, and benefits both LFS and the donor. At Lutheran Family Services the need is great, and they have found a very satisfying and creative way to help others less fortunate.

LFS is receiving in-kind donations of grain at local elevators. Please contact Mike Jones at (402) 960-7234 or mjones@LFSneb.org, or contact Susan Medina at (402) 978-5656 or smedina@LFSneb.org for more information.

Welcome Susan Medina

LFS Development Officer Susan Jael Medina comes to LFS from College of Saint Mary where she spent the last five years as the Major Gifts/Planned Giving Officer. For eight years prior to that, Susan was a fund raiser for the Episcopal Church in Southern California.

A meaningful way to make a lasting investment in the human care provided by Lutheran Family Services is through a bequest or planned gift. Through your will, life insurance, retirement plan, trust or other financial plan, you can leave a legacy that will continue to help Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska serve others for years to come.

To learn more, contact Susan Medina at (402) 978-5656 or smedina@LFSneb.org, or visit www.lfsneb.org and click on “How You Can Help” - “Planned Giving.”



**Susan Medina,
Development Officer**

You Can Also Support the Work of LFS by...

Making an online donation

You can make a secure online gift to LFS using your credit or debit card at www.LFSneb.org. You can designate your gift to a specific LFS program or to where the need is greatest. You will receive a tax receipt and your gift will appear on your credit card or bank statement.



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Designating your Thrivent Choice DollarsSM to Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska

 **Thrivent Financial
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If you are a Thrivent Financial member, you may designate your Thrivent Choice DollarsSM to LFS by visiting Thrivent.com/thriventchoice, or by calling (800) 847-4836 and saying “Thrivent Choice” when prompted.

One Number for Appointments, Coming Up...

1-855-659-2706

FS is always looking for ways to improve the client experience and efficiency in delivery of services. Right now, the offices are moving toward a "Central Intake System," which basically means calling one main number to make appointments. With start-up funding provided by United Way of the Midlands, the Bellevue office piloted the new system for Behavioral Health starting in August, and it's going extremely well.

2012-2013 Calendar

December 24-25—
LFS Offices Closed for
Christmas

January 1—LFS Offices
Closed for New Year's Day

January 28—
At Ease USA Luncheon
CenturyLink Center, Omaha

February 22—
Fandango® Fundraising
Dinner & Auction
Champions Run, Omaha

Stay in Touch!

- Become a Facebook fan of Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska
- Follow us on Twitter—[@LFSofNebraska](https://twitter.com/LFSofNebraska)
- Join our LinkedIn network
- Email us at info@LFSneb.org
- Sign up for email updates—www.LFSneb.org



When you share your email with Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska it allows us to send you important information, stories and community updates via email. In turn, we are able to be better stewards of our resources by eliminating some printing and mailing costs.

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Our Mission: *To express God's love for all people by providing quality human care services that build and strengthen individual, family and community life.*

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