

Rejoicing in HOPE

2025 Annual Report



Rejoicing in *Hope*



Dear Friends, Families, and Supporters,

As we reflect on the past year, our hearts are filled with gratitude for what God has done through our ministries. In a time marked by uncertainty and deep need, we have witnessed hope take root and flourish—in homes, in counseling rooms, around shared tables, and in the lives of people rebuilding after hardship. Scripture reminds us to “rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer,” and this calling has guided our work as we walked alongside individuals and families seeking healing, dignity, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Across our ministries, hope wears many faces. Hope looks like a person with developmental disabilities discovering greater independence and belonging. It sounds like honest conversations in mental and behavioral health counseling, where burdens are shared and light begins to break through. Hope is present in the courageous steps of those seeking freedom from substance use, in the warm welcome of our food pantry where no one is turned away, and in the determination of men and women reentering the community after incarceration, choosing a new path forward.

We rejoice not only in outcomes, but in faithfulness—faithfulness of our dedicated staff, volunteers, congregational partners, and supporters who give generously of their time, resources, and prayers. Your commitment allows our ministries to remain places of refuge, restoration, and hope, even in the most challenging seasons.

As we look ahead, we do so with confidence grounded in God’s promises. The needs around us remain great, but so does the hope entrusted to us. With humility and joy, we recommit ourselves to this shared mission, trusting that the One who began this good work will continue to carry it forward. Thank you for rejoicing in hope with us—and for being part of the story God is still writing.

In appreciation,

Terri Rodriguez
President and CEO
Lutheran Ministries of Mercy

Rev. Juli Lejman-Guy
Chair, Board of Directors
Lutheran Ministries of Mercy



May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace
in believing, so that you may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Who We Are In Service to Others

Lutheran Ministries of Mercy (LMM)

Our Strength Comes from Hope

Lutheran Ministries of Mercy (LMM), with our affiliates Filling Homes (FH), Luther Home of Mercy (LHM), and Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio (LSS), celebrate another year of administration and management partnerships.

Since 2013, with the goal of promoting sustainability, innovative direct services, and operational efficiency, LMM continues to find new ways to meet the demands of our clients, residents, and artists participating in our programming. Working together, administrative, grant writing, planned giving and information technology services are combined and working in tandem, allowing us to concentrate on enhancing mission-driven services.

While each of the affiliates maintain their independent status, including the work of their Foundations who oversee financial investment strategies, it is our combined strengths that continue to positively impact the clients and residents in our care.

In 2025, our agencies took positive steps to partner with other agencies, school districts, and community leaders to help our neighbors where needed the most. These partnerships give us the opportunity to use the gifts of our donors, talents of our staff members, and operational improvements to serve more than 29,000 children, adults, and seniors across 18 counties in Ohio and 2 counties in Southeast Michigan.

We invite you to read through our 2025 Annual Report and, when the time is right, please invite us to share our **Story of Hope** at your next church gathering, staff meeting, or community event. Our talented staff and volunteers will tailor their presentations to the programs that are of interest to you. We look forward to hearing from you.

Residents Served through Campus-Based Housing	133
Clients Served through Day Programming	234
Residents Served through Community Housing	86
Clients Served through Supported Living Services	118
Clients Served in Mental Health & Substance Use Programs	360
Clients Served in Education Services	115
Clients Served in Re-entry Transitional Services	79
Clients Served through the Employer Resource Network	145
Clients Served in Food Pantries	27,896
49% Adults	
32% Children	
6% Seniors with minor children in household	
13% Seniors without minor children in household	



N160 St. Rt. 108
Napoleon, Ohio 43545
419.592.6451 • fillinghome.org



5810 N Main St., PO Box 187
Williston, Ohio 43468
419.836.7741 • lutherhome.org



LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES
of Northwestern Ohio
Strengthening People in Body, Mind and Spirit

2149 Collingwood Blvd.
Toledo, Ohio 43620
419.243.9178 • lssnwo.org

Summary of Impact

Number of
Volunteers

1,108

Number of
Volunteer Hours

16,333

Number of Meals
to Food Pantry Clients

360,489

Prayer and worship services have long been part of our ministries at LHM and FH. Pastor Denise leads these services on a weekly basis and helps our clients and residents with their own faith-filled journeys. Here she and Anthony pause for a moment of prayer.

LHM Williston residents enjoying a day out at the bowling alley! Nothing better than being with friends and enjoying knocking down a few pins too!

Pictured, back row L-R, staff members Josie, Cheyenne and Brittany; front row L-R, friends Donna, Rosie, John, and Jim

Pure Joy! Nancy, an artist from Soaring Arts Studio, loves to paint and this photo captures her smile and pride all in one shot!



Summary of Impact

Number of
Clients Served
29,166

Number of
Staff
789

Community Outreach
& Speaking Events
82

Through Mission Advancement and Marketing, we connect generosity with the needs of our clients, residents, and artists. Tina, Director of Mission Advancement at FH, shares a special hug with Jenny—made possible by the support of our community. Call our offices to learn how you can get involved.

At the LSS Food Pantry, individuals and families select the items that best meet their needs, restoring both nourishment and dignity. Serving 18 counties across Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan, Lutheran Social Services fills carts, bellies, and hearts while building pathways toward stability.

Physical fitness and pool time go hand in hand. Here Lucas enjoys his swim time at the Hanson Aquatic Center on the campus of FH. Staff lead regular classes for clients and residents and the community can purchase memberships and join in exercising too! The pool with beautiful murals created by Soaring Arts Studio is heated to a toasty 85° every day!



Operating Budget



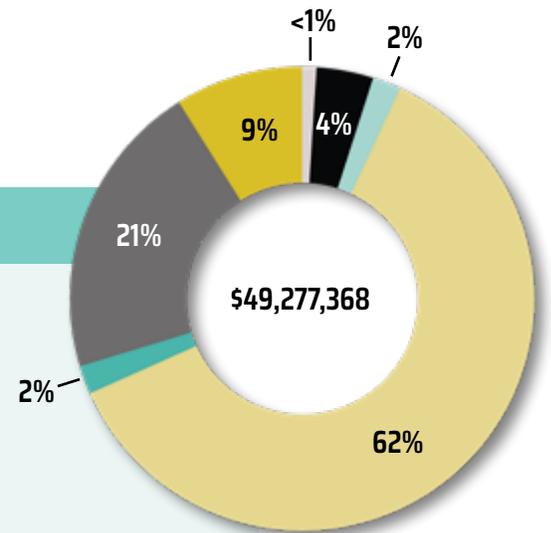
Stewardship

Lutheran Ministries of Mercy and our affiliates are committed to the care and stewardship of all gifts. We continually work to improve our efficiencies. Thank you for your unwavering support! Below is an unaudited reflection of our 2025 year in review. Audits and 990s will be filed mid-2026.



Revenue by Operating Source

 Adult Day Services/Vocational Habilitation	\$ 4,216,986
 Counseling	\$ 282,033
 Grants/Refunds/Other	\$ 2,043,579
 Housing	\$ 1,256,682
 Intermediate Care Facilities	\$ 30,390,893
 LSS Partner Programs	\$ 807,786
 Supported Living	\$ 10,279,409



Breaking the Silence On Mental Health

Life might not come with instructions, but it should always come with support. The stigma surrounding asking for help with mental well-being has lessened as society increasingly encourages individuals to seek support rather than struggle in silence.

At Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio (LSS) more than 360 people relied on our licensed therapists for individual and family services. **LSS has long been a cornerstone of support as our mental health and substance use disorder services focus on holistic care.** We offer a comprehensive approach that includes counseling, treatment, educational opportunities and community support. In addition to in-person services, teletherapy services are also offered.

Counseling and therapy services for anxiety, depression, grief & loss, adolescent and teen counseling, parenting services, trauma and stress-related mental health illnesses require our staff to meet the unique needs of each individual. Our team blends compassion, expertise and dedication to help people lead healthier, more balanced lives.

Our services include individual therapy, group therapy



Dr. Mary reviewing a file with LSS VP, Traci

and family counseling, ensuring that people are supported at every stage of their healing journey. According to Dr. Mary, our Director of Clinical Services, "We like to meet our clients where they are in their journey. **We are able to remove barriers that may limit access to care, and at the same time provide a safe, peaceful and trusting atmosphere where we can explore and learn.** LSS is unique because our team is dedicated to offering comprehensive services that help rebuild lives one step, one day at a time."

If you or someone you know is looking for assistance, please call our office at 419-243-9178. With services in several Ohio counties, we are happy to listen and guide you to the appropriate resources.

Special Thanks to Our Community Partners



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



THRIVENT FINANCIAL



THE LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSOURI SYNOD



Scouting for All: Building Belonging through Adventure

After more than a year of planning with the Erie Shores Council of Scouting America, we proudly launched a program designed for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In Spring 2019, our charter was established, affirming that Scouting is for everyone—regardless of age or ability. This inclusive approach allows participants to engage at their own pace, based on interests and strengths.

Reflecting our founding year of 1928, our first members joined Cub Scout Pack 928, beginning their adventures as Wolves. The Ottawa County Community Foundation endorsed this vision with a grant from the Brian and Robin Beck Gift Fund, helping cover startup costs.

Our volunteer Scout Coordinator, Cheryl Smarkel, and her husband Jeff have been pillars of this effort. Cheryl, a retired Luther Home of Mercy RN, and Jeff—known for playing baseball games with residents and antics as “Buster the Clown”—bring decades of ministry experience and joy to every meeting.

Even during COVID, our Scouts stayed connected through virtual gatherings on iPads, practicing the Scout Oath and Pledge of Allegiance while sharing laughter with friends. Today, **the program has grown to 27 Scouts, both male and female, who meet monthly and invite friends to join.** The annual Pinewood Derby remains a highlight, with Scouts racing timed and their friends racing on a “just-for-fun” track that celebrates participation over competition.

Programming is tailored to individual needs, ensuring success without age limits. Activities mirror traditional Scouting—with modifications that foster confidence and belonging. Our community thrives when everyone has a place to contribute.

The impact of Scouting is visible across our campus. From leaves raked and hooks baited for fishing nights to construction projects improving quality of life, the handiwork of Scouts and local troops speaks volumes. Many begin as first graders at family campouts and continue serving through adulthood, creating a legacy of care and connection.

We deeply value our partnership with Erie Shores Council. Local troops regularly use our grounds for campouts and volunteer at events like Sunday Funday, Fall Fest, and fishing nights. **Together, we are proving that Scouting is more than badges**—it’s about building friendships, confidence, and a sense of belonging for all.



*Top: Jimmy and Matt earning an activity badge
Middle: Cheryl awarding Jason
Bottom: Craig and Meghan race while Colleen
(volunteer) assists
Photos courtesy of Boy Scouts*

Creativity, Choice, and Community

Emilee is a talented artist at Soaring Arts Studio, a program of Filling Homes located in Napoleon, Ohio. Emilee's vibrant personality shines through everything she creates. A young woman with Down syndrome, Emilee approaches art with joy, confidence, and a fearless use of color. Her designs reflect her imaginative spirit and unique artistic vision. Each piece tells a story not only of fabric and form, but of self-expression, creativity, and purpose.

That passion came to life during Emilee's recent fashion show, an event that drew an enthusiastic

crowd and celebrated creativity in its truest form. Community members proudly served as models, stepping onto the runway in Emilee's designs and transforming the evening into a joyful expression of inclusion and connection. The event was more than a fashion show—it was a testament to what is possible when individuals are empowered to share their gifts and communities come together to celebrate them.

"We are each uniquely created by God, and together we build communities where those gifts can flourish."

Emilee's journey reflects the heart of our mission. At Soaring Arts, artists are encouraged to explore the creative paths that speak to them, whether fashion design, pottery, acrylic painting, balloon art, or another medium entirely. With guidance and encouragement from dedicated staff, the decision is always theirs. This same commitment to choose extends across our supported living, residential, and day programs, where each person is recognized as full of value, hope, and the ability to shape their own life within the community they call home.

Emilee's story is a powerful reminder of why this mission matters and how thoughtful, faithful support makes opportunity possible. Through the commitment of donors, staff and volunteers, **we continue to create environments where choice is honored, talents are nurtured, and individuals are encouraged to pursue the paths uniquely placed before them.**



Mission Connection

“...in the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven.” — Matthew 5:16

Donations to LMM throughout the year are shared with our affiliates unless the donor makes a restriction. This year, more than \$53,000 was raised through our **Together Toward Tomorrow Campaign, Board Appeal, and gifts from our Congregations**. The list below reflects those who generously

donated from January 1 - December 31, 2025. If your name is not listed here, please accept our apologies and notify Jeanette at 419-972-4373. Your gifts of time, treasure, and prayer help us expand our ministries for those in our care. Together, we are enhancing lives.

Individual Donors

Anonymous
Defiance, OH
Mr. Jim Bockbrader
Pemberville, OH
Mr. & Mrs. James Borgelt
Defiance, OH
Mrs. Jan Bratton
Delta, OH
Rev. & Mrs. Charles Campbell
Toledo, OH
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Despones
Genoa, OH
Ms. Melissa Gregg
Martin, OH
Mr. & Mrs. John Hrovatic
Port Clinton, OH
Rev. & Mrs. Dale Kern
Archbold, OH
Mr. Marcus Lohrmann
Sylvania, OH
Mr. Henry Lusiak
Johnstown, OH
Rev. & Mrs. Stephen Lutz
Elmore, OH
Mr. Michael Martaus
Toledo, OH
Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Merkel
Maumee, OH
Rev. & Mrs. Kurt Meyers
Toledo, OH
Ms. Joan Myers
Toledo, OH
Rev. & Mrs. Shawn O'Brien
Williston, OH
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Parsons
Napoleon, OH
Mrs. Grace Peterson
Toledo, OH
Mr. & Mrs. Arnie Rodriguez
Sylvania, OH
Mr. & Mrs. John Ross
Sylvania, OH
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Scheiding
West Chester, OH
Ms. Virginia Seeman
Sylvania, OH
Mr. & Mrs. Todd Slight
Napoleon, OH
Ms. Verna Young
Fremont, OH

Churches, Estates & Organizations

All Saints Lutheran Church
Toledo, OH
Anonymous
Defiance, OH
CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA)
Maumee, OH
Hylant
Toledo, OH
Integrated Financial Resources
Toledo, OH
M.E. Ford and Associates
Toledo, OH
PayPal Giving Fund
Washington, DC
St. Paul Lutheran Church-Haskins
Bowling Green, OH
St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church
Napoleon, OH
St. Peter Lutheran Church
Norwalk, OH
The Estate of Edward J. Schulte
Sylvania, OH
The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
St. Louis, MO

In Honor of

Birth of James Palmer Hrovatic
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Olszewski
Sylvania, OH
Birthday of Verris Tabol
Mr. & Mrs. John Hrovatic
Port Clinton, OH
God's glory for Staff caring for residents
Mr. & Mrs. Roger Sergent
Pemberville, OH
Lynn Nickelsen
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Hattan
Port Clinton, OH
Our Lord Jesus Christ
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Arps
Celina, OH
Trinity Lutheran Women's Ruth Circle
Trinity Lutheran Church
Galion, OH

In Memory of

Dan Beamer
Ms. Carole Beamer
Martin, OH
Debbie Boose
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Skinn
Norwalk, OH
Staff at LHM
Mr. & Mrs. Fred Anson
Baldwinsville, NY
My husband, Walden "Bud" Damschroder
Mrs. Mary Damschroder
Perrysburg, OH
Our Departed Loved Ones
Mr. & Mrs. Allan Zaenger
Worthington, OH
Martha Jane Dietsch
Mr. Marvin Dietsch
Edgerton, OH
Christopher Jaye
Mrs. Alnita Paterson
Chardon, OH
David Joehlin
Ms. Mary Joehlin
Oregon, OH
Dean & Hazel Marsh
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Marsh
Sun City, AZ
Doris Obrock
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Obrock
Perrysburg, OH
Diane Swartz
Pastor Alan Swartz
Lithopolis, OH
Pastor Don Wukotich
Rev. & Mrs. Charles Campbell
Toledo, OH
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Graf
Defiance, OH
Mr. & Mrs. John Hrovatic
Port Clinton, OH
Lutheran Men in Mission
Bucyrus, OH
Mr. & Mrs. Todd Slight
Napoleon, OH
Ms. Deborah Wissner
Cuyahoga Falls, OH

#GivingTuesday

Rev. & Mrs. Charles Campbell
Toledo, OH
Hylant
Toledo, OH

Mr. & Mrs. Arnie Rodriguez
Sylvania, OH
The Starfish Foundation
Boston, MA

Ms. Sandra Toth
Oak Harbor, OH
Ms. Denise Wagner
Waterville, OH

Churches and Leadership

We are honored to have over 250 Association of Congregation Lutheran Churches and an additional 33 churches join us in our ministries in 2025. The dedication of these congregations allow our ministries to grow, connecting our programs and services to God's light and hope!

Members of these congregations and community leaders comprise our Board of Directors and affiliate Foundation Directors. The back cover of this Annual Report lists all of our Board of Directors' names. A separate Foundation report is available that lists our leadership names and the financial investments they oversee. For more information about the Association of Congregation Churches or serving in a leadership role, please contact our LMM office at 419-972-4373.

In Loving Memory of Pastor Don

It is with heavy hearts that we share the passing of our founding Lutheran Ministries of Mercy President & CEO, Pastor Donald L. Wukotich in April, 2025. Prior to his service to us, he served as Executive Director of Luther Home and as Pastor for several ELCA Lutheran Churches.

By God's grace, he guided our ministries for over 31 years. He was a visionary, a mentor and a true champion for our work. Upon his retirement in 2017, our affiliates through

donations, established the **Donald L. Wukotich Scholarship Fund** which provides scholarships to our employees. Many staff members have furthered their education with this support. We are grateful for the time we had with Pastor Don and will honor his memory by carrying forward the work he so deeply cared about.



Our Shared Ministry



The strength of LMM is our affiliates and their work in the community. Working together we are able to find balance, even as the needs of our residents and clients change. Joined by the dedication of more than 500 volunteers, we share our program highlights with an ongoing sense of pride and gratitude through our quarterly newsletters, social media pages, and more. We remain hopeful because you have made our work a priority through prayer and dedication of time and treasure.

Our affiliate Vice Presidents pictured above with Terri Rodriguez, President & CEO of LMM.

From (L-R): Terri Rodriguez; Carol Slight, Filling Homes; Megan O'Brien, Luther Home of Mercy; and Traci Jaksetic, Lutheran Social Services (seated).

LMM Leadership



Terri Rodriguez
President & CEO



Kenneth Richmond
Director of Finance



Ron Miller
Director of Facilities
& Support Services



Todd Naveau
Director of
Information
Technology



Jeanette Hrovatic
Director of Planned
Giving



Denise Wagner
Director of Human
Resources



Sharing Resources • Enhancing Lives

5810 N Main Street, PO Box 187
Williston, Ohio 43468
419.972.4373

lutheranministriesofmercy.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025

Rev. Juli Lejman-Guy, Chair
Mrs. Bobbie Abel, 1st Vice Chair
Bishop Chester B. Trail, 2nd Vice Chair
Rev. Charles Campbell, Secretary
Mr. Tim Schumm, Treasurer

Trustees

Mr. Andy Barthel
Ms. Denise Etzler
Ms. Marilyn E. Ford
Mr. Matthew H. Garrow
Mr. Rob Giesige
Mr. Donovan Greening
Mrs. Amy Merkel
Mr. Jeff Mires
Mr. Timothy Robinson
Mr. Jeffrey L. Schwartz
Ms. Becky Stewart
Mrs. Kathleen Winters

Grounded in our *shared faith*
and tradition of service, the daily
practice of *hope* grows stronger
with every act of *kindness*,
every step toward *progress*,
and every moment spent in
unity.

