



CLINT P. MOSES

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Testimony on Assembly Bill 304 and Senate Bill 308

June 10th, 2025

Thank you Chairs James, Chair Tittl and committees members for hearing Assembly Bill 304 and Senate Bill 308, relating to allocation of \$1 million for purchase of Libertas Treatment Center in Chippewa Falls.

As many of you are aware, Western Wisconsin has been devastated by hospital closures in the last two years. First, residents of the Chippewa Valley area were affected by the closures of HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire and St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls. Simultaneously, without notice or public justification, the Libertas Treatment Center closed its doors after providing substance use treatment services in Chippewa Falls for nearly 48 years.

Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan recently acquired the former Libertas Treatment Center. Through the purchase and renovation of this facility, LSS plans to open a 50-bed treatment center to help men in need of recovery services. Women in similar circumstances will continue to receive services through a well-established LSS program located in Eau Claire.

The new treatment center will offer daily evidence-based treatment methods. Clients will participate in a variety of group activities and therapy sessions designed to inform, educate, and motivate them as they heal, recover, and prepare for their transition home and within the community. Clients also have the opportunity to engage in other programs within the facility such as GED classes, employment outside of the facility, and other education.

LSS anticipates that most clients served at this new facility will need both medical monitoring and transitional residential treatment services, with many residents being referred from DHS, self-admittance, or a correctional facility.

Due to the challenges of access to healthcare in Western Wisconsin, reopening this facility as a substance use treatment facility will fill a significant void in the area's growing mental healthcare needs. This bill improves access to much needed mental healthcare assistance. I kindly urge you to support this bill and thank you once again for your time to consider this important piece of legislation.



June 10th, 2025

Members of the Senate Committee on Mental Health, Substance Abuse Prevention, and Children and Families

Members of the Assembly Committee on Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention

Testimony on 2025 Senate Bill 308/ Assembly Bill 304

Relating to: a grant to assist in the purchase and renovation of an existing facility in the city of Chippewa Falls to provide a 50-bed treatment center to men with substance use disorders.

Thank you, Chairman Tittl, and other members of the committees for the opportunity to testify on this legislation today. Last year, the Chippewa Valley experienced an unprecedented loss of health care services when two hospitals and Prevea Health pulled out of the region. In addition to these closures, L.E. Phillips Libertas Treatment Center, which provided substance use treatment and detox services, also had to close its doors, leaving the Chippewa Falls area with a service gap. Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS) recently acquired the former Libertas Treatment Center.

Through the purchase and renovation of this facility, LSS plans to open a 50-bed medically monitored and transitional residential treatment center that will serve adult men (ages 18-65+) who self-refer or are referred by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) County unit or a correctional facility. Women will continue to receive services through a well-established LSS program located in Eau Claire, WI.

The new treatment center will offer daily, evidence-based treatment methods. Clients will participate in a variety of group activities and therapy sessions designed to inform, educate and motivate them as they heal, recover, and prepare for their transition home and within the community. Clients may also engage in educational and employment opportunities (e.g., GED/HSED virtually, employment outside of the facility, etc.). The typical stay for medically monitored clients will be four to six weeks. For transitional, residential clients, the average stay will range from 30 to 120+ days. Upon discharge, clients will be referred to a continuing care option, such as an outpatient clinic and/or recovery coaching from LSS, as needed.

LSS plans to upgrade the former Libertas Center facility, ensuring that clients experience spaces that are welcoming and safe to assist the healing and recovery process for these patients. Thank you all again for your time and consideration, and I will be happy to answer any questions you have.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jesse James".

Senator Jesse James
23rd Senate District
Sen.James@legis.wisconsin.gov



June 10, 2025

To: Assembly Committee on Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention

From: Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce

Re: Assembly Bill 304

The Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce has served our community since 1915 as the advocate of business. We have about 1,000 investor organizations who employ more than 45,000 individuals throughout the Eau Claire area. We work to represent the business community as a champion of a strong local and regional economy.

The Eau Claire Chamber supports AB 304, a grant to assist in the purchase and renovation of the existing, but closed 50-bed substance abuse treatment center in Chippewa Falls.

The Libertas Center was part of the 2024 closures of all HSHS Hospitals and Prevea clinics in our area, creating an unprecedented healthcare crisis for our region... affecting patients, healthcare professionals and their families, and the entire local economy. The closures had a particularly drastic effect on availability of mental health and substance abuse treatment services.

It's good news for the community that Lutheran Social Services has acquired and is working to reopen this critical facility. This bill would provide state assistance to LSS to be able to complete the funding necessary to successfully put it back in operation to fulfill a desperate community healthcare need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Rogers".

Scott Rogers
Vice President Governmental Affairs
Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce

Reply to: rogers@eauclairechamber.org 715-858-0616

Prepared Testimony in favor of **SB 308 and AB 304**

June 10, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Mental Health, Substance Abuse Prevention, Children and Families and
Assembly Committee on Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention (SB 308 and AB 304)

It is an honor to speak with you today about supporting legislation that will assist individuals who experience drug and alcohol addiction and co-occurring mental health challenges in the Chippewa Falls and the Eau Claire areas.

My name is Héctor Colón. I am the President and CEO of Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (Also known as LSS).

LSS History

- 143 years
- Experience
- Effectiveness,
 - o In 2024, over 30,000 served by LSS in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan including individuals and their families
- Efficient with .88 cents on the dollar going directly into client care where the industry average ranges from .65 to .75 cents.

As you know Recently, the closures of HSHS Sacred Heart and St. Joseph's Hospital in Eau Claire has left this area without much needed mental health and addiction relating services. At the same time, and without public notice or explanation, the former LE Phillips Libertas Treatment Center in Chippewa Falls closed its doors after providing substance use treatment services since 1977.

Adding to this challenge is that According to the 2024 Chippewa County Community Health Assessment, the top five issues that are impacting residents are 1) Alcohol misuse; 2) lack of public transportation; 3) healthcare accessibility 4) poor mental health; and 5) Lack of access to childcare or unaffordable childcare.

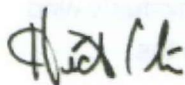
My friends LSS is here to help. We have acquired the former Libertas facility. With state support, the legislation that is up before this committee today - we plan to renovate and reopen it as a 50-bed residential treatment center for men in need of recovery services.

We currently operate five residential SUD treatment programs in Northwest Wisconsin. This new investment in Chippewa Falls will allow us to expand services, reach more individuals, and remain financially sustainable, ensuring long-term care access in the region.

The community is turning to LSS as evidenced by our significant support. We are uniquely positioned to expand access to treatment in Northwest Wisconsin, restoring hope, improving health outcomes, and helping individuals reclaim their lives.

Thank you and I would appreciate your support for this legislation.

Respectfully,



Héctor Colón, President and CEO
6737 W Washington Street, Ste. 2275
West Allis, WI 53214
Phone: 414.246.2300
Email: Hector.Colon@lsswis.org

Prepared Testimony in favor of **SB 308 and AB 304**

June 10, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Mental Health, Substance Abuse Prevention, Children and Families and
Assembly Committee on Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention (SB 308 and AB 304)

Dear Senator James, Representative Tittle, and Committee Members,

Thank you, Senator James and Rep. Moses for co-authoring this important bill, and thank you, Committee Chairman – Sen. James and Rep. Tittl and Committee Members, for the opportunity to speak today in strong support of SB 308 and AB 304. This legislation would help fund the purchase and renovation of the former LE Phillips Libertas facility in Chippewa Falls to become a 50-bed treatment center for men with substance use disorders.

My name is Tara Treglowne, and I serve as the Chief Operating Officer of Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. I'm here today on behalf of our organization, and speaking from personal experience, as someone who lost my brother to complications related to substance use. Substance use disorder affects every community and touches nearly every family. Whether directly or indirectly, it impacts us all.

According to the 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health:

- Over **48 million** people aged 12 and older had a substance use disorder.
- The highest rates are among young adults aged 18–25, with over **27%** affected.

Despite the clear need, access to treatment remains a critical gap, especially in Northwest Wisconsin, where recent closures of treatment centers have left many without care.

LSS plans to re-open this facility as a medically monitored and transitional residential treatment center for adult men. This center will offer evidence-based therapy, including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, and trauma-informed care. We'll also offer support for individuals to obtain their GED, employment support, and life-skills training to prepare clients for long-term recovery and reintegration into their communities.

Renovations- both internal and external - will ensure the facility is **safe, up to code, welcoming, and trauma-informed**, which are all critical to fostering dignity, healing, and hope. Planned updates include expanding bed capacity, upgrading HVAC and windows, improving accessibility to meet licensing requirements, and making modern enhancements such as new flooring, paint, and kitchen improvements.

LSS believes in the **infinite worth of every individual**. Our mission is rooted in whole-person care, and we are proud to be a part of the solution to rebuild Wisconsin's treatment infrastructure in this region.

We respectfully request your support for this \$1 million investment, not only in a building, but in the lives of individuals and families affected by addiction.

Lastly, while some supporters couldn't be here today due to short notice, we have included letters from:

- Eau Claire County Department of Human Services
- Chippewa Falls Area Chamber of Commerce
- Market & Johnson
- City of Chippewa Falls
- Northwestern Bank

Your support can help restore access to lifesaving treatment and bring stability back to our communities. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Tara Treglowne, Chief Operating Officer
6737 W Washington Street, Ste. 2275
West Allis, WI 53214
Phone: 715.456.5675
Email: tara.treglowne@lsswis.org



**To: Joint Finance Committee Co-Chairmen
Representative Mark Born and Senator Howard Marklein**

Dear Representative Born and Senator Marklein,

On behalf of the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce and our regional partners, thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support for critical funding assistance toward the purchase and revitalization of the former L.E. Phillips Libertas Center, located at 2661 County Highway I in Chippewa Falls.

This facility, a long-standing residential substance use treatment center that served the Chippewa Valley for over four decades, is a vital resource in addressing the growing behavioral health and addiction crisis in our region. Its abrupt closure—compounded by the recent healthcare service losses at HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire and St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls—has left a significant gap in care and treatment options for individuals and families in Northwest Wisconsin.

Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS), with a 50-year legacy of providing substance use disorder treatment across the state, has taken a bold step by acquiring the Libertas facility. With your support, LSS intends to renovate and reopen the center as a 50-bed residential treatment facility, expanding access to life-saving recovery services for those who need them most.

We respectfully urge the Joint Finance Committee to prioritize funding assistance to make this project a reality. Your leadership will help restore a critical health resource to our community and ensure the state's ongoing commitment to combatting addiction and supporting recovery.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David Minor
President & CEO
Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce



May 16, 2025

To: Joint Finance Committee Co-Chairmen

Dear Representative Born and Senator Marklein,

We appreciate the opportunity to include this letter of support requesting assistance with the purchase of the currently shuttered L.E. Phillips Libertas Center facility, located at 2661 County Hwy I in Chippewa Falls, Wis. This residential substance use treatment center is a critical resource to our community.

Finding treatment services is difficult in many areas of Wisconsin, including Chippewa Falls. Northwest Wisconsin has recently been hit with healthcare closures including HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire and St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls. At the same time, the Libertas Center in Chippewa Falls closed its doors without notice or public explanation, after providing substance use treatment services in Chippewa Falls since 1977.

Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS) has provided treatment for substance use disorder in our state for 50 years and they recently acquired the former Libertas Center building. Through the purchase and renovation of this facility, LSS plans to open a 50-bed treatment center to serve individuals in need of recovery services.

Please support assistance with the purchase of this facility so LSS can provide this critical resource for our community and the state.

Sincerely,

Gerald H. Jacobson

May 22, 2025

To: Joint Finance Committee Co-Chairmen

Dear Representative Born and Senator Marklein,

I appreciate the opportunity to include this letter of support requesting assistance with the purchase of the currently shuttered L.E. Phillips Libertas Center facility, located at 2661 County Hwy I in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. This residential substance use treatment center is a critical resource to our community.

When Hospital Sisters Health System closed its hospitals in the Chippewa Valley in 2024, the disruption to our local health care system was enormous. As the former board chair of both HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire and HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls, I saw firsthand the critical importance of the L.E. Phillips Libertas Center to our community. Until it closed in February, 2024, the Libertas Center had provided compassionate, effective substance use treatment services to our community since 1977. As you may know, finding treatment services is challenging in many areas of Wisconsin, including the Chippewa Valley, and the closure of the Libertas Center along with the HSHS hospitals only made an already difficult situation much worse.

We were excited (and candidly relieved) to learn that Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS) recently acquired the former Libertas Center building with plans to renovate it and open a 50-bed treatment center to serve individuals in need of recovery services. LSS is well positioned to take this project on, as it has provided treatment for substance use disorder in our state for 50 years. Our community is grateful LSS has stepped forward to help. While my wife and I have no connection to LSS, we think this project is so important to our community we are among those individuals who have pledged to personally support it financially. But more help is needed for LSS to finish the renovation.

Which is why I am writing to ask you to please support assistance for LSS so that it can reopen the L.E. Phillips Libertas Center facility and provide this critical resource for our community and the state. It is badly needed.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey R. Malloin
Eau Claire, Wisconsin



City of Chippewa Falls

30 WEST CENTRAL STREET, CHIPPEWA FALLS, WISCONSIN 54729

May 16th, 2025

To: Joint Finance Committee Co-Chairmen

Dear Representative Born and Senator Marklein,

We appreciate the opportunity to include this letter of support requesting assistance with the purchase and modernizations of the currently shuttered L.E. Phillips Libertas Center facility, located at 2661 County Hwy I in Chippewa Falls, Wis. This residential substance use treatment center was a critical resource to our community that was abandoned in early 2024 with the closures related the HSHS in the Chippewa Valley. Reopening this facility as a substance use treatment facility will greatly fill a significant void in the region's healthcare needs.

Finding treatment services is difficult in many areas of Wisconsin, including Chippewa Falls. Northwest Wisconsin has recently been hit with healthcare closures including HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire and St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls. At the same time, the Libertas Center in Chippewa Falls closed its doors without notice or public explanation, after providing substance use treatment services in Chippewa Falls since 1977.

Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS) has provided treatment for substance use disorder in our state for 50 years and they recently acquired the former Libertas Center building. Through the purchase and renovation of this facility, LSS plans to open a 50-bed treatment center to serve individuals in need of recovery services.

Please support assistance with the purchase and modernization of this facility so LSS can provide this critical resource for our community and the state.

Sincerely,

Brad Hentschel
City Planner
City of Chippewa Falls, WI
715.726.2729
bhentschel@chippewafalls-wi.gov

Home of The World's Purest Water

715-726-2701 • FAX - 715-726-2759



To: Joint Finance Committee Co-Chairmen

May 14, 2025

Dear Representative Born and Senator Marklein,

I am writing to express my support for Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan's request for state support to open a 50-bed treatment center, at 2661 County Highway I in Chippewa Falls, formerly operating as the LE Philips Libertas Center.

Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS) has provided treatment for substance use disorder in our state for 50 years and they recently acquired the former Libertas Center building. Through the purchase and renovation of this facility, this treatment center will serve individuals in need of recovery services and would serve as a critical resource to our community and Western Wisconsin.

Chippewa County has a population of approximately 63,600 citizens and spans approximately 1,041 square miles being primarily rural. Chippewa County has 11 unique villages/cities with a poverty level of approximately 10%.

As the President of the Chippewa Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, we represent over 715 businesses and over 19,000 employees. Our mission is to represent our members by supporting and encouraging a vibrant and prosperous business community. While the Chippewa Falls area has diverse industry with a strong business mix, it is important to have access to quality health care to continue to retain and attract businesses to keep the economy strong in Chippewa County.

Please support LSS's efforts to restore access to substance use treatment services in Chippewa Falls and to serve Western Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allyson Wisniewski'.

Allyson Wisniewski
President & CEO



To: Joint Finance Committee Co-Chairmen

Dear Representative Born and Senator Marklein,

We appreciate the opportunity to include this letter of support for assistance with the purchase of the former L.E. Phillips Libertas Center. As one of the largest employers in the Chippewa Valley, **with over 450 employees**, we know the importance of the services LSS is trying to provide in our region. This residential substance use treatment center is a critical resource to our community.

Northwest Wisconsin has recently been hit with healthcare closures including HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire and St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls. At the same time, the Libertas Center in Chippewa Falls closed its doors without notice or public explanation, after providing substance use treatment services in Chippewa Falls since 1977. The Chippewa Valley is one of the few growing areas in the state, we are desperate to provide the healthcare services that left our region with the closure of HSHS. Supporting this project will not only benefit the entire Chippewa Valley, but also the State of Wisconsin by supporting the growing corridor between western Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS) has recently acquired the former Libertas Center at 2661 County Hwy I in Chippewa Falls. Through the purchase and renovation of this facility, LSS plans to open a 50-bed treatment center to serve men in need of recovery services.

Please support assistance for this critical resource for our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jason Plante'.

Jason Plante
Vice President

Eau Claire County - Department of Human Services

721 Oxford Avenue, Suite 1001

Eau Claire, WI 54703

(715) 839-2300 | Fax (715) 831-5784

www.eauclairecounty.gov

Angela Weideman, Director



March 6, 2025

Pablo Foundation Board of Directors

131 S. Barstow Street Suite 202

PMB 1603

Eau Claire, WI 54701

Dear Pablo Foundation Board of Directors,

Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan has been a wonderful partner to Eau Claire County Department of Human Services over the years. There have been many partnerships with contracted services and as well as referral sources related to family visitation, foster and adoption support, mental health and substance use support, housing, and skill building. The need in the community for this work has only increased and LSS has expanded their services to match the community needs.

With the recent closures of HSHS and Prevea our community has felt the effects of less medical services, providers, hospital beds, and mental health and recovery services. Many local medical services also keep people healthy, offer prevention options, and reduce the need for legally ordered placements. Human Services is seeing increases in the number of people wanting to engage in services especially related to housing, food security, mental health, and substance use recovery. We often sending individuals well outside of the Chippewa Valley for support and services, especially related to substance use recovery.

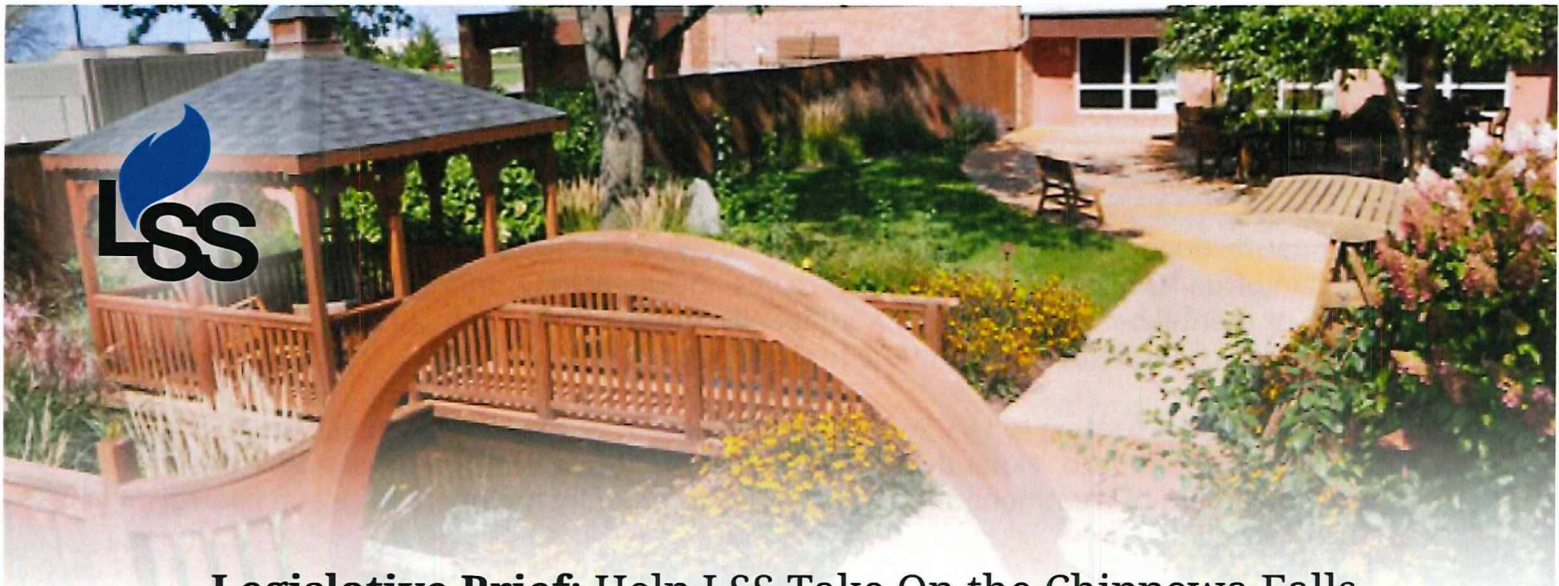
LSS is willing to step forward to help the community in a time of need and financial uncertainty. This will benefit the individuals, families, and communities of and near the Chippewa Valley. Human Services would encourage you to fund LSS because the community need is there for substance use and mental health services, and LSS provides great services, referrals, and partnerships within in Wisconsin. Having the Libertas Center and Fahrman Center as modern operational facilities to address mental health and substance use would be life altering for those struggling with mental health challenges and addiction and our communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angela Weideman".

Angela Weideman

Human Services Director



Legislative Brief: Help LSS Take On the Chippewa Falls Substance Use Crisis with a 50-Bed Residential Treatment Center

Executive Summary

Nearly 50 million American adults battled a substance use disorder in the past year (National Survey on Drug Use and health, 2023). Yet, finding treatment services is difficult in many areas of Wisconsin, including in Chippewa Falls.

Recently, Northwest Wisconsin was hit with major healthcare closures including HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire and St. Joseph's Hospital. Simultaneously, without notice or public explanation, the Libertas Treatment Center closed its doors after providing substance use treatment services in Chippewa Falls since 1977.

Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS) recently acquired the former Libertas Treatment Center at 2661 County Hwy I in Chippewa Falls. Through the purchase and renovation of this facility, LSS will open a 50-bed treatment center to men in need of recovery services.

The Community Need

At the lowest point of his substance use journey, Chuck spent time incarcerated, lost several peers to their addictions, and was estranged from his children. At a recent check-in with Shelley, our program supervisor, Chuck said that the lessons he learned at LSS helped him decide for something different in his life. Chuck reports that he has been sober for over five years. He continues to attend recovery meetings and has found a support system that he uses every day." He says, "It's not always fun to do the right thing, but it does pay off. I get to be out here every day. I get to be with my kids every day. At thirty, I have my driver's license. I can drive my truck to Walmart to get work materials. I can buy fishing equipment because I have money that I worked hard for!" Chuck hopes to own his own construction company in 10 years. "I'm well on my way there," he said.

Without hospitals and substance use treatment centers in the Chippewa Valley, there is a critical healthcare gap for people like Chuck and the general community. In fact, among the top five issues impacting Eau Claire County residents, poor mental health, substance misuse and alcohol misuse are at the top (2024 Eau Claire County Community Health Assessment).



We know through the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) that individuals with addiction often have co-occurring health issues, including lung or heart disease, stroke, cancer, or mental health conditions. Additionally, per the NIDA, from 2011 to 2021, over 321,000 U.S. children lost a parent due to overdose.

The community is turning to LSS. As a trusted nonprofit with 143 years of service, LSS is uniquely positioned to expand substance use treatment in Northwest Wisconsin improving access to treatment and empowering community members to regain control of their lives.

The Plan

LSS will open a 50-bed, medically monitored and transitional residential treatment center that will serve adult men (ages 18-65+) who will self-refer or be referred by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) County unit or a correctional facility. While referrals could come from other parts of the state, priority will be given to the Chippewa Valley area. Women will continue to receive services through a well-established LSS program located in Eau Claire, WI.

The new 50-bed LSS treatment center will offer daily evidence-based treatment methods for clients throughout each week of stay including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Feedback Informed Treatment with Motivational Interviewing and Trauma Informed approaches. Clients will participate in a variety of group activities and therapy sessions designed to inform, educate and motivate them as they heal, recover, and prepare for their transition home and within the community. Visiting and supervised recreation will be offered on weekends. Clients who are eligible may also engage in educational and other opportunities (e.g., GED/HSED virtually, employment outside of the facility, etc.).

The typical stay for medically monitored clients will be four to six weeks, based on the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria, as well as each individual's unique needs and overall progress. For transitional residential clients the average stay will range from 30 to 120+ days. LSS anticipates that most clients served at this new facility will need both medically monitored and transitional residential treatment services. Upon discharge, clients will be referred to a continuing care option such as an outpatient clinic and/or recovery coaching from LSS, as needed.

To aid in our clients' healing and recovery, LSS will upgrade the former Libertas Center facility, incorporating minor trauma informed modifications to the environmentally friendly building. "Slight adaptive reuse" design elements are crucial for recovery as they create surroundings that acknowledge and address the complex relationship between mental health challenges (including trauma) and addiction. Renovations will ensure that clients experience spaces that are welcoming and safe.



In addition, the facility's outdoor space creates healing connections to nature that will help reduce anxiety and stress for our clients and provide wellness breaks for our colleagues. The lush and beautiful 12-acre park-like grounds offer walking paths that allow access to a gazebo, rock garden, and outdoor seating throughout – elements that are known to boost mental clarity and improve overall physical health.

Legislative Considerations

Legislative approval and support of \$1 million in state funding will assist in the purchase and renovation of the LSS substance use center (total estimated cost of \$3 million), while also providing operating support for the life-enhancing programming that happens within. Following the abrupt closure of the Libertas Center, legislative support will buoy the community by ensuring substance use treatment is accessible to more individuals in the Chippewa Valley who struggle with addiction. Through our partnership, we also will ensure the community is continuously building a robust network of service providers with the intention to destigmatize substance use treatment, so people seek help.

Conclusion

At a time when the Chippewa Valley most needed help for drug and alcohol addiction, local hospitals and substance use treatment centers closed posing significant challenges to the community's healthcare infrastructure. Community leaders and organizations are actively working to address the resulting gaps in services, and LSS will play a significant role in bringing things back into balance in Northwest Wisconsin.

Discussions about LSS opening a 50-bed substance use treatment center in Chippewa Falls is already gaining an enormous amount of excitement and gratitude by the community. Our in-depth knowledge and expertise in this space also indicates there will be a ripple effect that positively impacts family members, schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, and the greater Chippewa Valley area.

Thank you for considering partnering with LSS to transform lives in this great community for the better.

References

1. <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/addiction-statistics-demographics>
2. Community Health Assessment - Eau Claire County | City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin
3. <https://nida.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/2024/05/more-than-321000-us-children-lost-a-parent-to-drug-overdose-from-2011-to-2021%20on%202025,%20April%2011>



Community Impact Report 2024

You Can Impact Your Community.
You Are Making a Difference.
You Will Change Lives.

You renew *connection*

Your compassion ensures a forever family for Nolan

When Baby Nolan was placed with Foster Mom Vicky at age 4 months, he had already lived in three different homes. After several months, it was clear that returning to his family of origin was not best for Nolan. By that time, Vicky realized she loved Nolan and wanted to do whatever it took to be his forever mom. LSS stood alongside Vicky, helping her understand the lengthy legal process that ensued and referring her to appropriate resources to support Nolan's development. Nolan and Vicky are now a forever family!

Every child needs a supportive family in which to grow, learn, and thrive. Your partnership wraps children like Nolan in love so that in their forever family they can heal from past trauma, build resilience, and open their own hearts to receive love.

You renew *independence*

Your love shelters Henry in his new home

Chronic health issues led to Henry losing his job and home, forcing him to live in an abandoned RV deep in the woods with no electricity or running water. He felt lonely and hopeless. He became hospitalized and was diagnosed with severe dehydration and depression. He was referred to LSS Gaining Ground, a well-coordinated system of support to meet the comprehensive needs of the people it serves.

Our case worker walked beside Henry to develop goals. She helped Henry complete housing applications, update his Social Security and Disability status, and advocate for access to other community-based resources. In time, Henry found an affordable apartment. He sees doctors to manage his health concerns and receives Meals on Wheels. Henry is flourishing.



Everyone deserves a safe, stable home. Through your generosity each person's specific situation is addressed by assessing the underlying issues that led to homelessness and providing wrap-around services and care coordination to ensure housing is sustainable.



You renew *purpose*

Your dedication lights the way to Laura's bright future

Laura experienced significant trauma in her young life. As a junior in high school, she was acting out in anger and aggression. She was referred to LSS School Centered Mental Health (SCMH) for robust, holistic services that provide help at school and in her home. Our licensed therapists worked with Laura and her counselors, teachers, staff, and mom to help develop a treatment plan for her. Our family coach met with Laura's mom at her home and in the community to provide counseling and resources in support of the health and well-being of her entire family.

Laura worked with our therapist to strengthen her coping skills, address her anger responses, and find healthier ways to express her needs. She has rebuilt her relationship with her mom and siblings. She graduated in May 2024 and is now attending college.

Students like Laura need help to heal and cope before they exhibit harmful behaviors towards themselves or others. Your compassion provides a pathway to well-being.



You renew *confidence*

Your generosity helps Kenny find his way

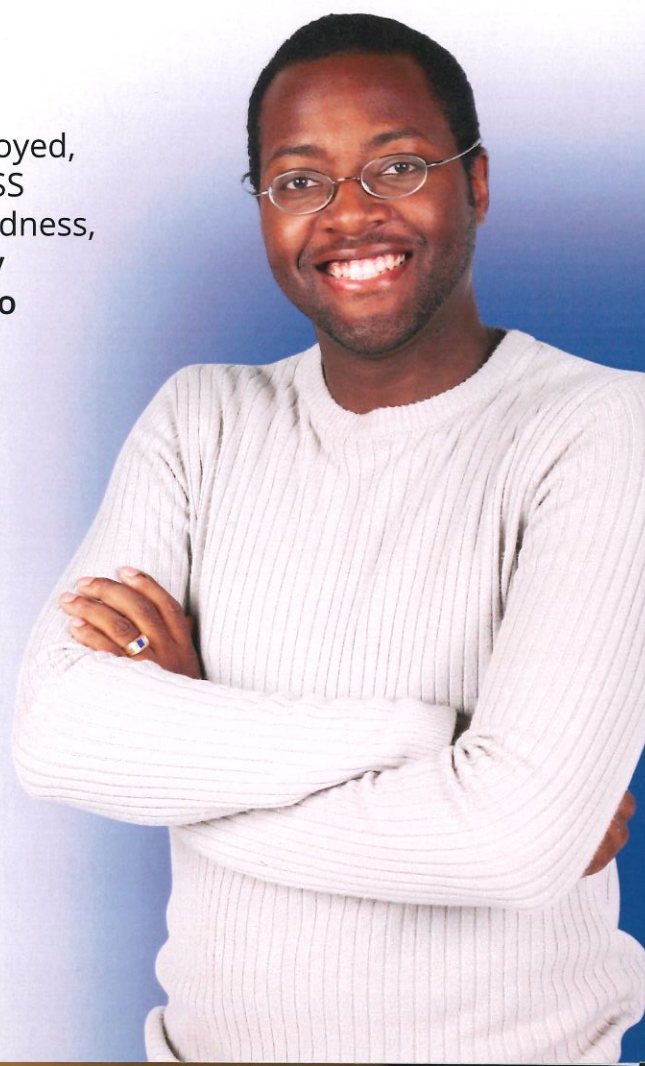
When Kenny first arrived at LSS Clubhouse he was unemployed, nearly homeless, and grappling with thoughts of suicide. LSS staff and other Clubhouse members accepted him with kindness, warmth, and understanding. **"They guided me through my dark depression. They pointed me in the right direction to healing and happiness again,"** Kenny said.

LSS Clubhouse offerings are based on a recognized international model that provides social contact in a structured, meaningful daily routine for those diagnosed with mental illness. The program has proven vital in relieving feelings of hopelessness which lessens the risk of psychiatric hospitalization.

Kenny received our transitional employment services and was assigned a position as property caretaker at a senior living apartment complex. Eventually, the company hired him as an employee.

Recovery is a process that is seldom linear. Because you care, people in recovery will always have a supportive community in which to use their God-given gifts to serve.

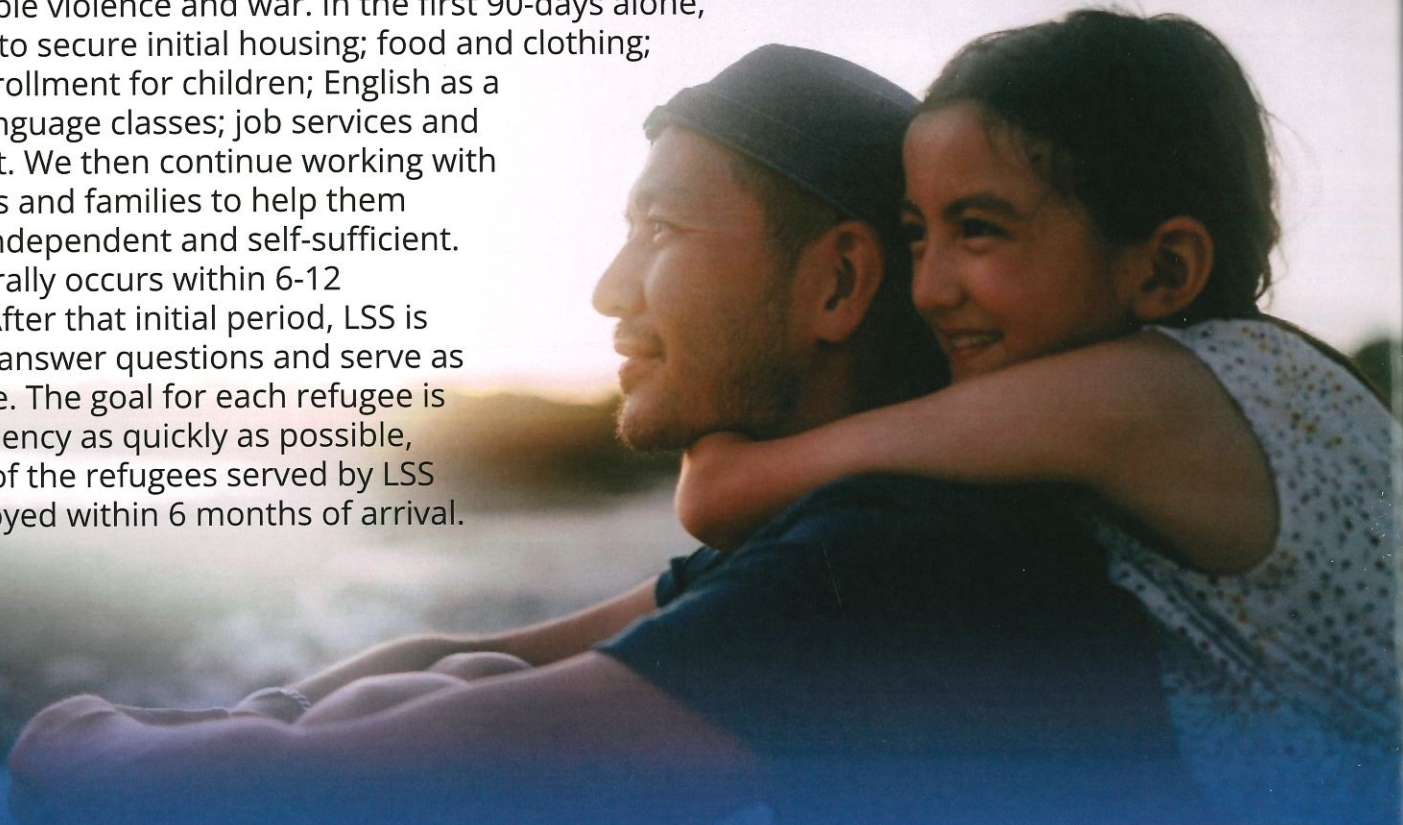
Some names and photos are changed for privacy.



You renew *empowerment*

Your welcoming heart opens doors to new beginnings

In 2024, LSS Refugee Resettlement celebrated 50 years of service. Over that time we helped 11,000 individuals and families lawfully and permanently enter the U.S. after having fled unspeakable violence and war. In the first 90-days alone, LSS helps to secure initial housing; food and clothing; school enrollment for children; English as a second language classes; job services and placement. We then continue working with individuals and families to help them become independent and self-sufficient. This generally occurs within 6-12 months. After that initial period, LSS is on-call to answer questions and serve as a resource. The goal for each refugee is self-sufficiency as quickly as possible, and 88% of the refugees served by LSS are employed within 6 months of arrival.



- Fatima, recently resettled from Afghanistan, works at a major healthcare provider coordinating appointments for newly arrived refugees.
- Sonda, a Rohingya woman, is now a case manager at a local agency assisting in resettling new refugees.
- Ahmad, who served as a judge in Afghanistan, is working at a local immigration service supporting Afghan clients on their path to citizenship.

Building a new life, becoming self-sufficient and remaining independent requires a firm foundation and an occasional helping hand.

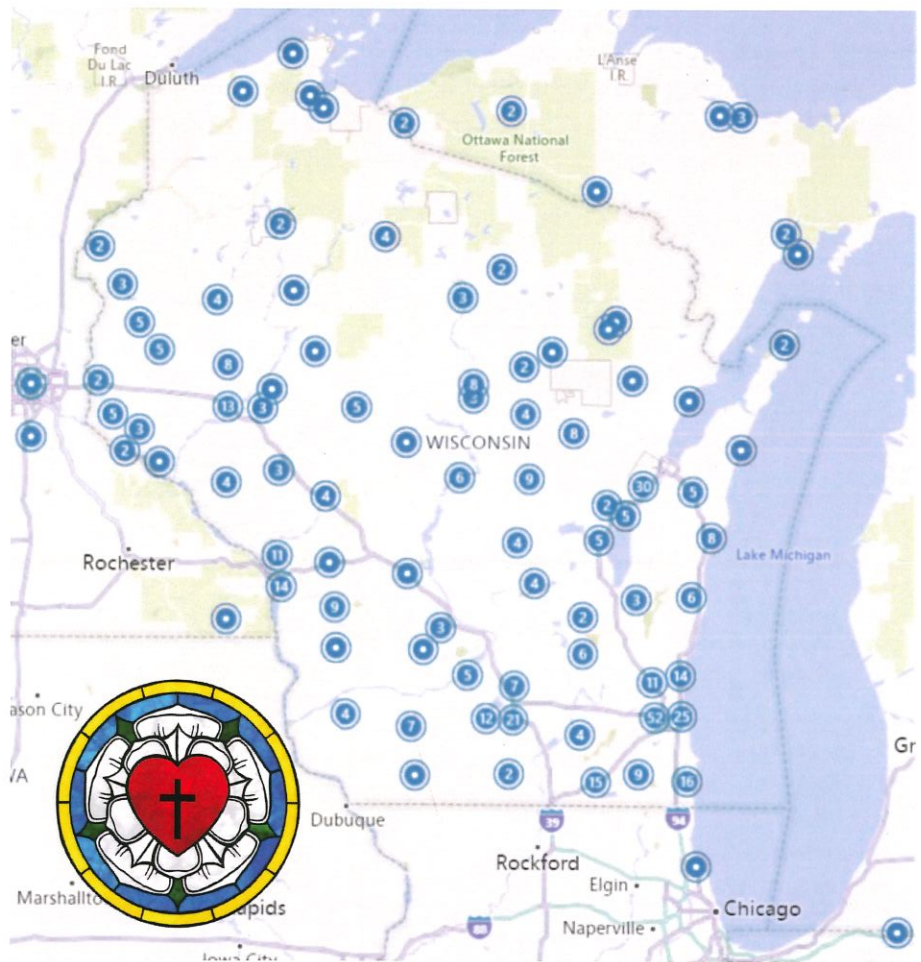
Some names and photos are changed for privacy.

Loving Lutherans:

Renewing the LSS-Lutheran Partnership

LSS and Lutheran congregations have a long history of interconnected social services work. Providing financial support of our ministry is also a long-standing and beloved Lutheran tradition. And that support is only growing!

In 2024, one generous and creative Lutheran donor did something wonderful! With the promise of a \$1 million match on all new and increased gifts received by 12/31/24, this anonymous donor inspired Loving Lutherans and their churches to donate more than \$770,000 to LSS!



Inaugural 2024 *Loving* Lutheran Congregations



We had so much fun consulting with bishops, pastors, and leaders across Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, chatting with members on the phone, and visiting your congregations and Synod events. By year-end a movement had been born, and LSS was eager to keep it going! And because we were so committed and successful, the donor graciously extended the challenge until we reach the full \$1 million!

Let us know if you would like to promote the Loving Lutherans Challenge at your church through temple talks, sermons, adult forums, etc. To learn more, or to see if your Lutheran church qualified as one of the 234 inaugural 2024 Loving Lutherans congregations, visit www.lsswis.org/lovinglutherans/.

Thanks to our anonymous donor and the Lutherans who answered their call, we will strengthen families, inspire recovery, and empower independence for people living in our shared communities who have the greatest needs.

Dear Friends,

As we look back on 2024 at LSS, one word echoes through every story, every milestone, and every act of service: **renewal**. Renewal of purpose. Renewal of connection. Renewal of the compassion we extend to our neighbors across Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

This past year, your unwavering generosity, acts of service, and advocacy have been the heartbeat of our work in the communities where we serve. Through every challenge, opportunity, and triumph your support has been our foundation and our inspiration.

Because you care, 2024 was a year of incredible impact. Your kindness, and financial support empowered us to strengthen families and expand hope in transformative ways. With deep gratitude, here are a few of the milestones that shaped this year of renewal. Together, we:

- **Doubled the reach** of our Superior Futures for Youth services in Upper Michigan which assist young people (ages 12-24) in crisis and provide support to those at risk of running away or experiencing homelessness.
- **Launched new research** on the impact of our School Centered Mental Health family coaches on the social determinants of health for youth thanks to a three-year Wisconsin Partnership (WPP) grant and the chance to team up with academic researchers at UW-Milwaukee's Institute for Child and Family Well-Being.
- **Expanded affordable housing solutions** for residents across Wisconsin combining tax credit housing, property management, and care coordination to address the growing housing crisis.
- **Invested in early intervention services**, reaching families before a crisis, ensuring children and caregivers receive the support they need to thrive.
- **Celebrated 50 years of the LSS Foundation** and the transformative funding that has sustained innovation and helped open new programs to meet evolving community needs.

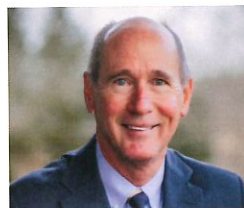
Your ongoing support is more than just appreciated, it is essential. With you by our side, we are not just meeting needs, we are renewing hope and dignity for people rebuilding their lives. Thank you for reaffirming the power of love and possibility in action through your partnership.

With gratitude,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hector Colon'.

Héctor Colón
President & CEO



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric Lorenz'.

Eric Lorenz
Operating Board Chair

P.S. You may have noticed we've decided to renew our brand, launching with this publication! The three flames in our new logo represent completeness, unity, and divine perfection. This symbolism also acknowledges our deep history, bridging tradition and innovation, ensuring that we honor our roots while continuing to be a dynamic, responsive force for strengthening and healing communities.

2024 Financials

Expenses*

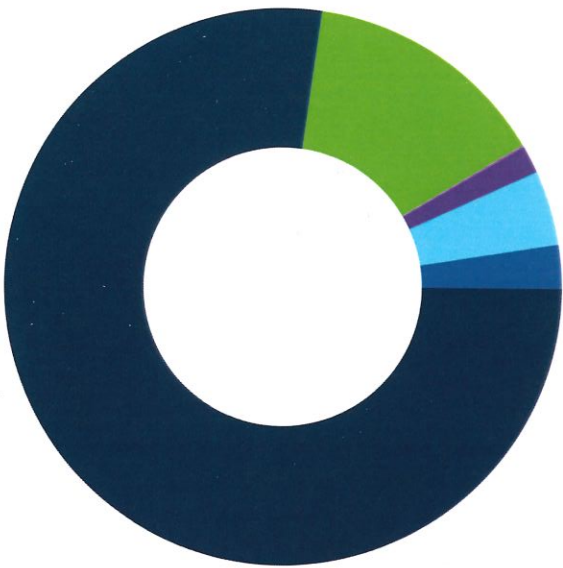
Total Expenses: \$73,901,269



- Program Services
\$65,994,496
- Administrative & General
\$6,670,276
- Fundraising
\$1,236,496

Revenue*

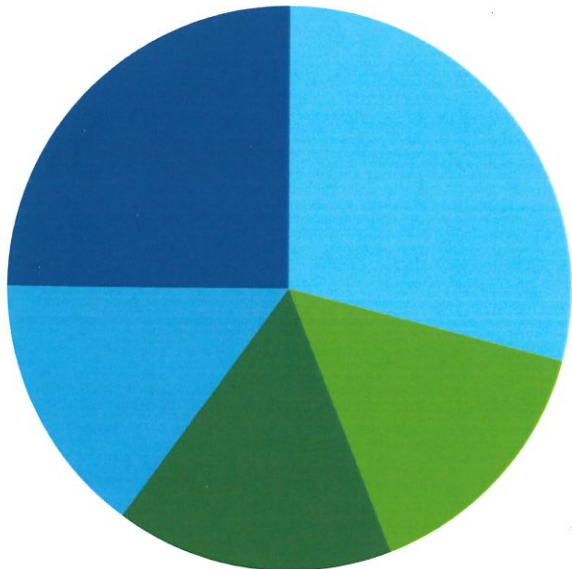
Total Revenue: \$74,392,093



- Federal, State, Local Service
\$57,422,922
- Client Fees, Insurance or Contracts
\$10,572,808
- Grants
United Way: \$80,390
Capital & Other Grants: \$1,198,896
- Bequests & Contributions
\$3,218,114
- Other Income
\$1,898,964

Source of Contributions

Total Contributions: \$4,008,180



- LSS Foundation, 25%
\$989,672
- Individuals, 29%
\$1,171,340
- Corporations & Foundations, 15%
\$608,540
- Organizations, 16%
\$621,908
- Bequests, 15%
\$616,720

*This state of financial positions is prior to audit completion.



6737 W Washington Street, Ste 2275
Milwaukee, WI 53214



Renew your commitment to the future with the LSS Foundation, Inc.

The LSS Foundation has been building a long-term legacy for LSS for over 50 years, providing financial stability annually and extra funding for innovation.

Many donors create a legacy by establishing an endowed fund within the foundation. With an investment \$25,000+ you can leave a legacy in your name, or in memory/honor of a loved one. The gift will support LSS in perpetuity and each gift to your fund is tax-deductible!

For more information, contact Mara Dučkens, Chief Advancement Officer at (414) 416-7843.

LSS Leadership

Héctor Colón, President and CEO
Joe Arzbecker, Chief Operating Officer (2024)
Mara Dučkens, Chief Advancement Officer

Michelle Naples, Chief Integration Officer
Randy Oleszak, Chief Financial Officer
Tara Treglowne, Chief Operating Officer (2025)

LSS Board of Directors

Eric Lorenz, Chair
Joel Treffert, Vice Chair
Héctor Colón, President & CEO
Frank Cumberbatch, Secretary
Mike Groth, Treasurer

Luis Arroyo
Allen Cooper
Keri De Bruin
Dean Gruner
Matt Kirchner

Pastor Bill Knapp
Bishop Felix Malpica
Sue Merkatoris
Dick Pieper
David Remstad

Oralee Schock
Michael Sheppard
Melanie Varin