



**LUTHERAN SERVICES FLORIDA
STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2014**

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LUTHERAN SERVICES FLORIDA STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2014

The five-year Strategic Plan for 2009-2014 for Lutheran Services Florida was developed over a twelve month period in 2008 in a broad collaborative effort involving Board members, top management, program heads, LSF staff, and agency partners (donors, churches, other agencies, etc.). Clients were also involved in this effort, with some sharing their prayers for the future (samples are featured throughout the plan). The primary Strategic Planning Workgroup, whose names are listed at the end of this document, was headed by LSF's President and Chief Executive Officer Samuel Sipes and included 15 program managers. The plan contained herein includes:

- A brief review of LSF's organizational background
- LSF's mission with revisions in our vision and values and a bold new unifying goal
- A description of current program services and those served
- A list of significant accomplishments in the agency's history
- A careful analysis of external and internal trends
- Identification of emerging themes that have influenced planning
- Specific goals and strategies for each program area, new areas to be developed and prayers for those served
- A formula for analyzing new opportunities for ministry that arise in the future

During the same period of developing the Strategic Plan in late 2008, much has happened in the national and global economy that has not only impacted directly on the support for LSF's ministries, but is expected to raise the level of need among those populations served by these same ministries. The developers of the Strategic Plan therefore put forth this plan as being critical to focused management of the current challenge while boldly looking to the future in order to stay true to our mission of bringing God's healing, hope and help to those in need.

The Strategic Plan was approved by the LSF Board of Directors on January 23, 2009.



LSF's Organizational Background

Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) exists to share the love of Jesus Christ by providing healing, hope, and help to people in need. It does so without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, national background, gender or income. Since its formal organization in 1982, it has touched the lives of over 850,000 through its various ministries.

LSF traces its history to 1973, when Florida Lutheran judicatories and congregations were asked to provide refuge for Ugandans driven out by political turmoil there. In a short time there was an influx of other needy refugees coming from Viet Nam, Cuba, and other areas of the world. About the same time, there were serious numbers of elderly individuals statewide in need of guardianship, a pre-school was needed for farm worker children, and shelters were needed for homeless and troubled youth. Facing this great number and diversity of needs, Florida Lutheran church leaders soon recognized that a more formal structure for providing social ministry was necessary to meet them.

*LSF is organized to
serve people in
need.*

In 1976 the Florida Lutheran Council on Social Ministry was formed by the major Lutheran church bodies in the state. In 1982 the Council was restructured and incorporated to become Lutheran Ministries of Florida. That name was later changed to Lutheran Services Florida. LSF has been designated as a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of the Florida-Georgia District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) and a Social Ministry Organization (SMO) of the Florida-Bahamas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The

President of the Florida-Georgia District and the Bishop of the Florida-Bahamas Synod serve as voting members of the LSF Board of Directors.



In addition to the support provided by the District and the Synod, LSF also receives funding from individual Lutheran congregations; local, state, and federal contracts; various United Way agencies; civic organizations; private foundations; and individual donors. It is anticipated that LSF will provide over \$34,000,000 in services in 2008, with less than 8% spent on administrative support and fund raising.

LSF's Mission, Vision and Values

Lutheran Services Florida has deep roots in the religious and social services communities of the areas we serve. As community needs and consumer preferences have changed, we have sought to respond to them. The agency's ministry continues to be vibrant and relevant as we position ourselves to respond to future needs. To guide our ministry we have adopted mission, vision and values statements.

MISSION:

A mission statement describes the purpose of the organization. We have adopted the following mission statement:

Lutheran Services Florida serves to bring God's healing, hope, and help to people in need in the name of Jesus Christ.

VISION:

A vision statement describes how the organization will operate now and in the future. We have adopted the following vision statements:

- *LSF sees itself and its employees as called and committed servants of Christ doing God's will by serving the needy, the frail, and the powerless with integrity, faith, love and kindness in order to change lives, restore dignity, work for justice and bring healing, hope, and help.*
- *LSF is a leader in the State of Florida in providing human services.*

LSF's purpose is to bring God's healing, hope, and help.

VALUES:

The values statements describe the deeply held beliefs about how we as an organization will conduct our work. We have adopted these values statements to guide our ministry:

- *We derive our basic values from a Biblical understanding of God's loving creative and redemptive activity in Christ Jesus.*
- *We seek partnerships with congregations to serve people in need.*
- *We recognize that no one agency or group can be fully effective when working alone; and we therefore seek relationships with other faith-based organizations and/or community-based organizations with similar missions.*
- *We do not discriminate in the provision of services.*



- *We do not discriminate in hiring; we seek staff members who are culturally competent and committed to serving others.*
- *We intentionally seek former clients capable of joining our staff, and we encourage promotion from within.*
- *We believe that our success should be evaluated by our abilities to serve those in need and change their lives for the better.*

BOLD UNIFYING GOAL:

In addition to the Mission, Vision and Values we have adopted, we also believe it is important to set goals that not only force us to stretch our sense of what we can accomplish and that also serve to unite an organization around a single, common purpose. As part of this strategic planning process, our LSF staff has worked to develop a single goal that signifies a bold vision for our future and which will also serve as a unifying focal point for our organizational effort.

GOAL:
LSF will double the number of people whose lives are significantly impacted reaching 65,000 people and providing \$100 million in services annually by 2019.

Especially as the current economic situation negatively affects the lives of many individuals, it is the intent of LSF to continue to help people change their lives for the better, and therefore we believe that a goal that will resonate across our entire organization will provide significant increase in the impact our agency makes.

Over the next ten years, LSF will double the number of people whose lives are significantly impacted by our ministries with a goal of reaching 65,000 people and providing \$100 million in services annually by 2019.



Dear God, I pray to get a house with my mom and my sister and to live happy.

The prayer of an LSF client

LSF's Major Programs

LSF ministries provide critical services to vulnerable populations. In many cases, these services are offered to people in times of crisis, such as in the aftermath of a natural disaster, when someone is a new arrival to our country and is frightened and confused, when a frail elderly person has been abused or exploited, or when a child has been removed from his or her home because of abuse or neglect. In all cases, the services LSF provides are designed to help people change their lives for the better.

The services LSF provides are designed to help people change their lives for the better.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

LSF provides a broad range of services to children and families in need. Our child and family services include preschool programs, case management services, adoption, youth shelters, counseling and specialized treatment, and teen court. Following is a list of LSF's child and family service programs:

- **Teen Court** - This program offers an opportunity for first time youth offenders between the ages of 10 and 17 to appear before a jury of their peers for sentencing and sanctions. Youth volunteers fill the roles of prosecuting and defense attorneys, bailiffs, clerks and jury members under the supervision of local attorneys and other adult volunteers.
- **Case Management** - The LSF Child Welfare Case Management program is funded by the Florida Department of Children and Families to provide child welfare services in Lee and Charlotte Counties. These services include in-home protective supervision, relative/non-relative placement and supervision, and foster care.
- **Adoption Assistance** – This program works in relation to Child Welfare Case Management in situations where it has become impossible to safely return children to the family home and the courts have terminated parental rights.
- **Child Care Food Program** - This program ensures that children under 13 years of age in day care and/or after school programs receive healthy, well-balanced food every day, thereby improving their diets and helping them build good eating habits.
- **Head Start** - This program works to improve the quality of life for at-risk, pre-school children by providing comprehensive services to families in poverty-stricken areas populated largely by struggling, low-income families and migrant workers. Every child in the program learns basic educational



skills in a clean and safe environment and receives a well-balanced breakfast, lunch, and a healthy mid-afternoon snack daily. Parents receive referrals to medical, dental, and mental health professionals.

- **Emergency Shelters** – This program reunites families torn apart by conflict due to the ungovernable and truant behavior of troubled teens. Programs include short-term, residential shelters for runaways and troubled youth (ages 10-17), and it provides both individual and family counseling.
- **Family Preservation** - This is a non-residential, crisis counseling program for troubled youth and their families. This program provides individual and family counseling services, helping families resolve conflict and remain together.
- **Substance Abuse Counseling** - This program provides research-based substance abuse prevention services through education and other activities. It also provides outpatient substance abuse treatment for youth ages 12 to 17 years of age. Treatment consists of 12 weeks of individual and family counseling with the goal of abstinence in the community.
- **Sexual Abuse Treatment** – This program provides counseling and supportive therapy to children and their families who are victims of sexual abuse in conjunction with child welfare officials and law enforcement.

*Dear Lord, I pray I can
just live with someone that
shows they care for me.
That is all I pray for.*

The prayer of an LSF client

SERVICES TO THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED

LSF provides a variety of services to senior citizens and to the disabled and infirmed. A brief summary of LSF's services to the elderly and disabled follows:

- **Guardianship** - LSF is appointed guardian by the court to serve and protect adults who have some physical or mental incapacity. Case managers ensure that clients live in clean, healthy, and safe environments; receive nutritious, daily meals; and are provided appropriate medical care. Case managers also organize clients' financial affairs, including paying bills; they monitor insurance issues and apply for benefits; they manage client income and assets; and advocate to protect their rights.
- **Geriatric Care Management** – This program provides services to seniors separated from families who are beginning to experience physical, emotional or other challenges associated with aging. The program offers a range of assessment and facilitative services both to the seniors as well as concerned family members.

- **Ryan White HIV/AIDS Services** - This program seeks to prevent the hospitalization of people living with HIV/AIDS by eliminating barriers to healthcare services and improving the quality, availability, and organization of health care and support services.

SERVICES TO THE DISENFRANCHISED AND MARGINALIZED

LSF provides a variety of services to people who live in the margins of society. These services are designed to help new arrivals, the unemployed, and the homeless become self sufficient.

- **Refugee Resettlement** - This program helps refugees resettle in Florida communities and become self-sufficient so they can care for their families on their own. Services include housing assistance, translation and English as a Second Language tutoring, referrals to medical professionals and other service providers, employment services, and referrals for cultural orientation, mentoring services, linking refugees with church and community groups, and case management.
- **Immigration Assistance** - This program was established in response to the need for affordable immigration counseling and assistance services. LSF counselors and accredited immigration specialists help immigrants navigate the complex documentation process and also help those who want to become US citizens.
- **Employment Services** - This program provides employment counseling, placement and support services for clients who are WAGES (Work And Gain Economic Self-sufficiency Act) participants, refugees, and/or homeless individuals. LSF also maintains a Job Bank containing a wide selection of jobs catering to both skilled and unskilled workers.
- **Services to the Homeless** - This program provides safe, clean, temporary and permanent housing for homeless families with young children. The transitional programs Second Chance and New Beginnings are designed to gradually move former foster children and families through several stages until they are able to become independent. The permanent housing programs ACCESS, Partners, and CHANCE, are designed to assist families with locating and moving into their own housing.



DISASTER RESPONSE

Because of the frequency of tropical storms and hurricanes affecting Florida, disaster response is one of the most visible components of LSF's work. Given the fluctuating and unpredictable need associated with disaster response services, LSF is continually working to ensure that our disaster response program has the capacity to meet the demand for our services. LSF partners

with Lutheran Disaster Response, other organizations and Lutheran congregations for both preparedness and response to disasters.

- **Disaster Preparedness and Training** – LSF through Lutheran Disaster Response-Team Florida provides materials to assist churches and individuals to make appropriate preparations for a disaster and conducts preparation and response training seminars and workshops.
- **Volunteer Response Coordination** – As the local agent for Lutheran Disaster Response in Florida, LSF coordinates volunteers who clean out and rehabilitate houses, help with repairs and assist those who are packing up their remaining belongings so they can rebuild their lives as well as their homes.
- **Care for Children Affected by Disaster** – LSF offers a variety of programs for children and adolescents affected by disasters. These programs help children cope with disaster and help adolescents learn basic skills so they can take an active part in the recovery of their communities.
- **Emotional and Spiritual Care** – LSF provides mental health and spiritual counseling to help individuals affected by disasters and provides respite retreats for pastors and those assisting with response.
- **Financial Assistance** – Hardship grants are provided immediately to individuals whose needs have not been met by other avenues of public and governmental assistance.
- **Training Volunteer Groups** - LSF coordinates training to church groups willing to be part of an effective response team.



Dear God, I don't know... I just wish my family can get along. Just one day of peace without arguing and fighting.

The prayer of an LSF client

LSF's Accomplishments

LSF has had a significant impact on the people we serve. As an organization, we have championed and led the way in many innovative practices. Since 1982, LSF has developed a reputation for excellence and quality in its work and has often received awards and recognition as well as invitations and requests to provide more services to those in need.

The following are just a few of the awards and recognitions that LSF has received:

- Recognition of Credibility, Integrity and Achievement by the Council on Accreditation since 2005
- 2008 Recognition for Leadership in Human Care Services by the Florida-Georgia District, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
- Program for "Most Meals Served in 2007" and "Excellent Nutrition Practices" Certificates of Appreciation by the Florida Department of Health for the Child Care Food
- Finalist for Nonprofit of the Year 2007 by the Tampa Bay Business Journal
- Top 25 Nonprofits 2006 Ranked by Operating Budget from the Tampa Bay Business Journal
- Nonprofit Organization of the Year 2006 by the Tampa Bay Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- 2004 Bringing Help and Hope Award by Lutheran Disaster Response
- 2004 Outstanding Servants of Christ Award from Grace Lutheran Church, Arcadia, FL
- 2002 Commendable Performance by the US Department of Health and Human Services
- 2002 Superior Performance by the Community Trust Corporation, an agent of the Florida Network of Youth and Family Services
- 2002 Deemed Status Rating by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
- The 2002 Silver Award by the United Way
- The 2000 Pacesetter Award by the United Way
- Membership Recognition by Lutheran Services in America
- Appreciation from the Community Rebuilding Ecumenical Workforce, Inc.

LSF has been recognized in the state and the nation by:

- *The Council on Accreditation*
- *The US Dept. of Health & Human Services*
- *Lutheran Services in America*
- *The Florida Dept. of Health*
- *The Florida Dept. of Juvenile Justice*
- *The United Way*

Organizational and Environmental Assessments

LSF operates in a dynamic environment. This is demonstrated in both subtle and dramatic ways, including the utilization of evolving best practices for serving at-risk children, awareness of the changing needs and expectations related to senior services, and recognition of the vast need for rebuilding in the wake of natural disasters.

We are also affected by increasing societal challenges, not least of which is the declining economy and government budget cutbacks to nearly every area of social ministry outreach while the populations served in that outreach are expected to rise. In addition, we face such growing challenges as the trends toward privatization of social services, increased regulation of non-profit organizations and economic difficulties resulting from the global economic recession.

As part of this strategic planning effort, the LSF staff has carefully assessed the environment in which we operate and has identified various trends that are likely to impact the types of services we provide in the future, how we structure those services and where we locate them, and how we organize the administration and management of our agency to support our services. Following is a brief summary of those trends.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

External Trends

- Significant legislative and public policy changes have occurred in how child and family services are provided and funded.
- The needs of children and families are expected to grow. It is expected that funding for services will not be able to keep up with increased demand.
- There will undoubtedly be more intensive focus on case management and the flexibility of services.
- There will probably be a decline in the utilization of residential and shelter care; these will be replaced with more home-based services. The remaining residential and shelter care facilities will probably become more specialized facilities, to provide care for clients with specialized needs.
- Careful analysis suggests there will be increased opportunities for growth in the areas of child nutrition, sexual abuse treatment, substance abuse counseling, head start, case management and community-based care.
- The declining economy and government budget shortfalls will continue to have a major impact on the funding of child and family services.



Internal Assessment

- LSF has significant experience in providing vital and relevant child and family services
- Procedures must be developed to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the agency's information systems/technology.

- Staff retention is a concern.
- LSF's accreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA) is an advantage in the child and family service arena.

SERVICES TO THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED

External Trends

- As the baby boom generation ages, the need for services will grow placing additional strain on the service delivery system.
- Courts are often inconsistent in their regulation of guardianship services.
- There will be an increasing need for senior services as baby boomers mature.
- The number of senior citizens retiring to Florida places the state ahead of all other states in the growth of its senior population.
- Senior citizens have changing goals and expectations in the services they receive. Many seniors prefer to stay in their homes longer and have services brought to them, rather than to go to a long-term care setting. Overall, the types of services needed by seniors in the future are more likely to be provided in seniors' homes than in facilities.
- The senior service industry is showing signs of a shift from a medical model to a "hospitality model" where care is coordinated rather than simply provided. This change corresponds to best practices in senior care, where services are designed to enhance individual choice and autonomy.
- The decision-makers related to senior care are often the adult children of seniors.
- The declining economy and government budget shortfalls will continue to have a major impact on the funding of services to the elderly and disabled.

*Dear God, I wish that all
my troubles will go away.
And that I could start all
over again.*

The prayer of an LSF client

Internal Assessment

- LSF is blessed to have staff members with considerable expertise in managing and coordinating care for seniors.
- LSF Guardianship programs are not consistently managed and are not held accountable to the same standards across regional boundaries.
- Many of the LSF guardianship wards are indigent, but some have considerable financial resources. For some, estate management is an important special need.
- LSF has the capacity to build on our expertise and provide Geriatric Care Management, Durable Power of Attorney services and Pooled Trust services for seniors.

SERVICES TO THE DISENFRANCHISED AND MARGINALIZED

External Trends

- There are growing numbers of working poor and unemployed.
- Florida is a major destination for refugees, asylees and immigrants to the United States.
- The flow of refugees into the United States is related to changing political situations in the world and is therefore inconsistent, with more refugees at some times and fewer in others.
- Cuban asylees are significant consumers of government funded resettlement services. If and when US policy toward Cuba changes, there will be an immediate impact in this whole area of service.
- The declining economy and government budget shortfalls will continue to have a major impact on the funding of services to refugees, immigrants, the homeless and other disenfranchised and marginalized individuals.

Internal Assessment

- LSF has expertise in employment services and support services that could be used by the broader population of unemployed and underemployed.
- Employees working with refugees tend to have “feast or famine” workloads due to the inconsistent flow of refugees.

DISASTER RESPONSE

External Trends

- LSF’s successful history of disaster response has attracted positive attention. This has created additional opportunities for LSF to expand its disaster-related activities.
- LSF is viewed as a highly capable responder and a desirable partner to other organizations serving individuals affected by disasters.
- Consumers and the public have high expectations of LSF. This creates a need for an increased emphasis on service coordination. It may also imply opportunities for expanded capacity and for geographic expansion.
- Disaster services, by their very nature, operate in an unpredictable environment of highly fluctuating resources and demands.
- The declining economy, a reduction in contributions and church support, and government budget shortfalls will continue to have a major impact on the funding of disaster response.



Internal Assessment

- Maintaining sound disaster response readiness requires that the infrastructure must be in place prior to a disaster if there is to be proper and timely response. However, most people donate generously *after* a disaster.

- Disaster response is a very visible component of LSF's work, which makes it both an opportunity and a potential risk.
- LSF has not fully responded to the fund-raising potential afforded by the high number of people serving as disaster response volunteers or by the high number of those who have survived various disasters and feel a positive connection to the agency.

ADVANCEMENT

External Trends

- During difficult economic times, many charities see a decline in giving.
- The most reliable donors are those who have a personal connection to a charity.
- Emerging donor groups are women and young executives.
- There is a shift from denomination-specific support to broader, more ecumenical support.
- Donors now are less concerned with name recognition and more with accountability.
- Time commitment often precedes financial commitment, particularly for women donors.
- Solicitations via internet and e-mail are increasingly effective.

Internal Assessment

- LSF has never had a successful fundraising program.
- There is a need to improve the coordination of agency public relations, church and community relations and fund-raising activities.
- LSF's role in and commitment to ministering to people in need is not always well publicized or understood.
- There is a need to recruit new donors and to strengthen relationships with existing donors.
- There is a need to target key congregations and media outlets for more visibility.

HUMAN RESOURCES, FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

External Trends

- There is increased regulatory scrutiny of and accountability expected from all organizations, including non-profits.
- The environment in which LSF and other similar agencies operate is becoming increasingly litigious.
- The economic downturn is resulting in rising unemployment.
- Government funding of social service programs is being reduced.
- Social service organizations are being asked to do more with less.
- Many social service organizations are finding it difficult to survive.

Internal Assessment

- LSF's size and infrastructure put the agency into a competitive position when compared with other smaller organizations.
- Staff retention is a concern.
- LSF needs to continue to monitor salaries and benefits to ensure that they are competitive.

- LSF's growing size and regional structure place new demands on leadership to ensure that all staff is "connected" to the organization.
- To keep pace with programmatic expansion, LSF must develop the administrative and management infrastructure to support such growth.
- Acknowledging the wide range of risks faced by LSF, it is a necessity that a comprehensive risk management strategy be fully integrated into all programs and facilities.
- From a risk management standpoint, more attention must be given to cross-training and developing succession plans.
- Development and implementation of procedures enabling greater exchange of data between administrative and program areas are needed to better inform and support program management.



Dear God, I pray for my baby to make it by being born normal and healthy. Also that I graduate high school. Find a good job.

The prayer of an LSF client

Significant Organizational Changes and Strategic Themes

LSF strives to ensure that our programs and services are *relevant* to the current needs of society, designed so that we can be *accountable* for our actions and function in the most *responsible* manner possible. In short, we strive to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us. Part of that stewardship role means having an organizational culture that supports regular evaluation of our activities and goals and the mechanical structure to do so.

The needs of the people we serve and our ability to meet those needs continue to change. The goal of this strategic planning effort is to evaluate critically how LSF can respond most successfully and proactively to the present and expected situations and needs in society. In some cases, this will require doing more of what we already do. In others, it may be necessary that we cultivate new expertise so that we can respond more readily to those changing needs.

As we manage the challenges of the present day, we must also boldly look to the future in order to stay true to our mission.

As we approach our planning for the future, there are some emerging themes that may characterize our future efforts. These include:

- *Recognizing that as we manage the challenges of the present day, we must also boldly look to the future in order to stay true to our mission.*
- *Developing a more unified agency-wide identity for a more unified and effective mission.*
- *Increasing our focus on coordinating and managing services.*
- *Leveraging community relationships, existing infrastructure and expertise for our growth.*
- *Exploring new options and ways of delivering services.*
- *Increasing our focus on developing programs that promote self sufficiency.*
- *Increasing the visibility and support of the agency among stakeholders.*
- *Increasing the recognition of the agency as an advocate for the needs of our clients.*

LSF is in a strong position to look at our future strategically. We are blessed with sound financial and organizational positions that allow us to pursue areas that we could not have considered in the past and that may be difficult for other organizations to enter. Both our accreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA) and our history of strong program management set us apart from many other organizations. These benefits do give us an additional mandate to utilize our strengths wisely for the good of those we serve.

This plan lays out our anticipated goals and directions for the future, one in which we expect to continue to be a significant force in helping people improve their lives.

Goals and Strategies

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Our Prayer: Heavenly Father, we pray for the children who have had to watch their parents say good-bye and for those who never got the chance. We pray for the children who have never tasted birthday cake, who cannot find any bread to steal, who do not have rooms to clean up, and whose pictures aren't on anyone's dresser. And we pray for those children whose monsters are real, whose nightmares come in the light of day, and for the ones who will grab the hand of anyone kind enough to offer it. Use us as your vessels to protect them, give them shelter, feed their bodies and their souls, give them love, healing and hope for a better future. Amen.

There are many children in our society who cannot live up to their full potential. Some are victimized by poverty, by emotional, physical, or even sexual abuse. Some are victims of life in a dysfunctional family; some are growing up without proper guidance. We are making a difference in the lives of children and families.

Our child and family services have grown significantly, primarily as a result of Florida's child welfare and juvenile justice privatization initiatives. However, we are beginning to feel a strain caused by state budget cuts, and we are challenged by changing public policies related to child and family services. Despite these challenges, we are strong in comparison to many other provider agencies. We are committed to seeking opportunities to improve the lives of children and families by providing state-of-the-art services, including preschool and child development services, youth shelters, case management, counseling and family preservation.



Goal 1: To expand services to young children to promote healthy emotional, educational and physical development.

Strategic Directions:

1. Seek out opportunities to replicate PEPPI Head Start and provide early childhood development services in response to the needs of children in other communities.
2. Seek out opportunities that expand our role in promoting child nutrition in response to the needs of children and communities.
3. Continue to be innovative in our administration of the child nutrition program to produce exceptional results.

Goal 2: To expand services for healing children and dysfunctional families.

Strategic Directions:

1. Seek out opportunities to replicate our successful Sexual Abuse Treatment Program in response to the needs of children and communities.
2. Seek out opportunities to replicate our successful case management program and expand services to victims of abuse and neglect in response to the needs of children, families and communities.
3. Seek out opportunities to replicate our successful Teen Court program in response to the needs of young people, families and communities.
4. Expand programs and services to address the negative effects of substance abuse on children and families.

Goal 3: To anticipate and respond to changing public policy and best practice standards related to child and family services.

Strategic Directions:

1. Monitor changes in public policy and funding priorities related to out-of-home care for children and make timely changes in the focus of programs as appropriate.
2. Expand and diversify funding sources in LSF youth shelters.
3. Develop policies, procedures and management systems to ensure we meet or exceed contract and public expectations.

SERVICES TO THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED

Our Prayer: Creator God, may there never be a time when we forget the elderly, the abused, the sick, the disabled, and those who have no families to be their advocates. May we through LSF continue to be a bridge to provide for their needs. Amen.

Because of advancing age, illness or disability, many of our neighbors live in despair. They are often lonely and vulnerable; many fall victim to abuse, neglect or exploitation. LSF provides a variety of services to the elderly, disabled and those suffering from chronic illness; including Guardianship, Geriatric Care Management, and Ryan White HIV/AIDS services. These services are designed to restore hope and dignity as well as to provide access to needed services.

Goal 1: To expand services to address the needs of vulnerable seniors and those of the infirmed and disabled in order to promote healthy, safe, and dignified living.

Strategic Directions:

1. Seek out opportunities to replicate our successful Ryan White program in response to the needs of clients and communities.

2. Expand the new and already successful Geriatric Care Management services and replicate them in response to client and community needs in underserved areas of the state.
3. Develop and roll out new programs and services that are relevant to clients, are viable and that use and build agency expertise and capacity. (Examples: Special Needs Pooled Trusts, Durable Power of Attorney and Estate Management.)

Goal 2: To respond proactively to changes in demographics, economic considerations, client needs, and best practices to ensure programs and services are relevant, effective and viable.

Strategic Directions:

1. Change the business model of guardianship programs to ensure services are effective, cost efficient and responsive to changing client needs.
2. Closely monitor the effectiveness and viability of services.



Goal 3: To anticipate and respond proactively to changing public policy and best practice standards related to the elderly, the disabled and the infirmed.

Strategic Directions:

1. Monitor changes in public policy and funding priorities related to seniors, the disabled and the infirmed and make timely changes in the focus of programs as appropriate.
2. Develop policies, procedures and management systems to ensure we meet or exceed contract expectations and the expectations of the public.

SERVICES TO THE DISENFRANCHISED AND MARGINALIZED

Our Prayer: Father of the fatherless and Protector of the poor, we give you thanks for your grace to those who cry out in our society who are homeless, unemployed, living in poverty, and seeking a new start in a new land as a refugee. As you are God who sees every need, use us as your instruments to bring them dignity, hope and life. Amen.

These are challenging times for people living in the margins of our society. Each year, thousands of people enter our country to flee persecution or find a better life. They often arrive with little more than the clothes on their backs. Likewise, many others who are not new arrivals to our shores have slipped through the cracks of society and find themselves without a job or a home. LSF provides a variety of services to help promote self-sufficiency among the homeless, unemployed and working poor.

Goal 1: To promote self-sufficiency and dignity in living and employment for the homeless, the unemployed and the working poor by responding proactively to the increasing needs for services in these populations.

Strategic Direction:

1. Use the agency expertise gained through working with refugees and immigrants in finding or improving employment opportunities to provide similar services to other needy people.
2. Use the experience gained through working with the Miami Homeless Trust to partner with other communities in offering services to the homeless.

Goal 2: To promote the safe and successful resettlement, societal integration and life advancement of refugees and immigrants through services that anticipate and respond to changes in public policy and best practice standards.

Strategic Directions:

1. Monitor changes in public policy and funding priorities related to refugees, asylees, immigrants, the unemployed and homeless and make timely and appropriate changes in the focus of programs.
2. Develop policies, procedures and management systems to ensure we meet or exceed expectations of our contracts and of the public.
3. Develop an effective business model to ensure that needed and viable services continue when public immigration policy changes

DISASTER RESPONSE

Our Prayer: Understanding God, you know all those whose lives have unraveled and who have experienced shock and grief from disasters of all kinds. Grant them your courage and your strength that with hope and faith they will experience the help they need and prevail over their time of trial. Amen.

LSF has developed a national reputation for excellence in responding to disasters. Because of Florida's location in a hurricane-prone area, disaster response is a vital and needed service.



Goal 1: To expand services that assist with restoring lives, homes and communities following a disaster by building and supporting congregational response teams and volunteers in Florida and by developing new partnerships in the southeast region of the U.S.

Strategic Directions:

1. Support the mission of Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) both publicly and privately.
2. Plan disaster related relief activities and publicize the plan for such activities jointly with LDR.
3. Establish a plan in collaboration with LDR and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans to expand the role of Thrivent Chapters in disaster services in Florida and the Gulf Coast of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas.
4. Expand LSF collaborative relationships in the southeast region of the United States.
5. Offer LSF disaster response capabilities in areas outside of its current geographic base when needed.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Our Prayer: Almighty God, at this time of financial difficulty and increased human challenge, guide us in fulfilling our mission to bring your help and healing to the vulnerable who are in need. Incline the hearts of stakeholders, communities, churches and all our partners to dedicate themselves with us to our sacred mission. Amen.

External Relations includes strategies focused on agency relationships with the general public and with external stakeholders. The CEO maintains the overall leadership role in external relationship activities, including working with donors, providing advocacy with governmental entities, maintaining contact with national and regional church bodies and working with community groups. However, every staff member shares a responsibility for representing LSF with external stakeholders in a positive, consistent and coordinated way.

As the key functional area related to external relations, Agency Advancement is charged with developing and implementing strategies to secure financial support and with encouraging the volunteer and congregational support necessary to implement agency programs and services. Agency Advancement is also charged with keeping donors, volunteers and the general public informed of LSF activities and with publicizing opportunities to share in these ministries through their time, talents and resources. The ministry of LSF is enhanced by the direct involvement of congregations, church groups, community organizations and individuals. It is the role of Agency Advancement to nurture these relationships.



Goal 1: To promote LSF's services to the vulnerable young and old, the marginalized and disenfranchised, by expanding fund-raising efforts and by developing and diversifying the agency's donor base.

Strategic Directions:

1. Develop and implement a planned giving program.
2. Increase focus on special events fund raising.
3. Increase focus on corporate giving opportunities by initiating calls on corporate leaders.
4. Enhance and nurture foundation support for agency programs and services through grant-writing.
5. Increase the use of web-based strategies to raise funds and to communicate LSF's message to our stakeholders.
6. Develop annual fund and major donor strategies.
7. Coordinate with Board members and other key leaders to secure introductions to friends, colleagues and corporate contacts.
8. Develop high impact volunteer opportunities on programs as appropriate.

Goal 2: To expand the communication of the agency's work with vulnerable populations in such a way as to engage the public in both support for and knowledge of LSF's ministry.

Strategic Directions:

1. Obtain consultation to assist in the development of a consistent "branding" strategy for the agency and its programs.
2. Continue and enhance the publication of newsletters, brochures and other public relations materials that can be made available in electronic and print formats.
3. Expand efforts to inform the public at large about the agency's work through print, broadcast and other media.
4. Create effective marketing strategies for individual programs and services, targeted to specific audiences.

Goal 3: To enhance LSF's relationships with the national church bodies, local judicatories, congregations and other church entities in support of LSF's goals.

Strategic Directions:

1. As LSF develops special events, identify opportunities for volunteer service, inform congregations of these opportunities, and invite them to serve as LSF's agents in recruiting volunteers for these services.
2. Continue to improve communications with congregations through newsletters and other strategies.
3. Develop strategies to reach out ecumenically to partner with a broad range of denominations and faith-based organizations on matters of common interest.

Goal 4: To coordinate advocacy efforts to educate federal and state public policymakers about issues of importance to the lives of the people served by LSF.

Strategic directions:

1. Track selected initiatives in the State Legislature and the U.S. Congress for their impact on LSF constituencies.
2. Educate legislative officials around issues of importance to LSF and the people we serve.
3. Collaborate with other groups in the developing and shaping of public policy initiatives.

ORGANIZATION-WIDE SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

Our Prayer: Most Holy Trinity, we praise you for the opportunities you give us to serve you in social ministry. Grant us the grace to practice good stewardship, acknowledging and reverencing your work in all creation. Help us to plan, manage and administer the duties you give us in the best way possible for ourselves, those we serve and to your greater glory. Amen.

In recent years, non-profit organizations in general have operated in an environment of public demands for accountability, heightened scrutiny by donors, greater oversight by governmental entities and other funding sources, and tightened regulation of business management, human resource and quality assurance functions. In the context of this environment, LSF is positioned to experience significant growth and diversification of its programs and services, geographic expansion of service sites and increase in the diversity and number of funding streams.



As the organization continues to grow in size and complexity, systematic approaches to financial management, information technology, human resource management and quality assurance will continue to demand the attention of agency leadership.

Goal 1: To provide the agency with a decision support system that integrates financial and programmatic data/metrics. The intent is that LSF practices be consistent with best practices in use by both for-profit and not-for-profit entities of similar size and diversity.

Strategic Directions:

Provide decision makers with real-time/on-line access to financial and statistical data in a decentralized, paperless, virtual office environment.

Goal 2: To ensure that we consistently meet or exceed the information technology needs of the agency.

Strategic Directions:

1. Develop a technology “forward look” and gap analysis to facilitate capacity-related decision making.
2. Identify opportunities to fund and build excess capacity for the agency and to utilize any excess capacity by providing business support services to other non-profit organizations.

Goal 3: To ensure that LSF remains a good steward of resources.

Strategic Direction:

Continue to identify and evaluate ways to reduce indirect costs by reorganization, better management systems, and potential outsourcing of back office activities.

Goal 4: To ensure that the agency operates with a full cadre of trained, cross-trained and experienced employees.

Strategic Directions:

1. Implement recruitment, training and retention strategies to reduce employee turnover by annual goals established in each program area.
2. Strengthen staff development and new employee orientation programs.
3. Strengthen salaries and benefit packages to support employee recruitment and retention strategies.
4. Develop cross-training strategies to maximize utilization of the agency workforce.
5. Develop a strategy to provide an internal agency career ladder and to promote visible succession planning.



Goal 5: To ensure consistent quality in the programs and services of the agency.

Strategic Directions:

1. Ensure that all programs and services comply with applicable licensure requirements.
2. Ensure that the agency achieves and maintains accreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA).

Goal 6: To establish a comprehensive agency-wide risk management program.

Strategic Direction:

Enhance and refine the comprehensive agency-wide risk management plan to include professional liability, legal strategies, business continuity, financial reserves and other areas of risk.

Responding to New Opportunities

LSF operates in a highly dynamic environment where change is constant. That can require expanding or altering existing services to respond to consumer preferences or unmet needs. It may mean responding to opportunities to be involved in new and different ministries. It may mean responding to requests from other organizations that see LSF as a thriving, innovative potential partner.

These opportunities raise an important question for the organization. With so many potential opportunities and so much unmet need, how can leadership make decisions about which new directions to pursue? The values embraced by LSF call us to be responsive and innovative. Yet, pursuing new opportunities requires investment by the organization. Each potential new program direction or expansion must be assessed for consistency with our mission, vision and values; for its potential sustainability; and for its potential impact.

Each potential new program direction or expansion must be assessed for consistency with our mission, vision and values.

Following are criteria that should be addressed in any assessment:

- **Rationale:** What is the need we are addressing? Why is it important? Is it consistent with our mission, vision and values?
- **Resource needs:** What are the staffing, financing and infrastructure needs of the initiative? Are there potential partners? What are the implications for existing services and agency support systems? Will this initiative replace or expand an existing service?
- **Timeline for implementation:** When will the initiative begin? How long will it take to ramp up?
- **Risk assessment:** What are the “opportunity costs”? What issues of program sustainability should be considered?
- **Evaluation:** What are the proposed metrics and process for evaluating the impact and outcomes of the new initiative?
- **Priority:** What is the priority of this initiative?

Each of the potential new program directions identified as a result of this strategic plan will be carefully evaluated to ensure that it meets these criteria. As new opportunities arise, they too will face rigorous evaluation before the organization commits the investment of time, talent, and infrastructure needed for successful implementation.

LSF leadership will track new initiatives under consideration using a structured process, including the following:

- Each year’s annual operating plan will identify new initiatives for assessment.

- Job descriptions for key leadership staff will include identification of responsibility to lead research and analysis efforts to assess the potential for each new initiative.
- Senior management will track the various new initiatives that are under consideration using a tool such as the grid in Appendix B.
- The CEO/President will provide updates to the Board on initiatives under development.



Dear God, Please help me through this. The problems I'm going through. Thank you, Lord, for hearing me. Love always.

The prayer of an LSF client

Appendix: Summary of Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process was guided by a committee representative of LSF's executive and programmatic staff. The Strategic Planning Workgroup was comprised of the following individuals:

Sam Sipes, President and Chief Executive Officer
David Yarborough, Vice President, Operations
Zenaida Palmieri, Chief Financial Officer
Pamela Beal, Director of Human Resources
Beth Deck, Regional Director
Elizabeth Von Werne, Regional Director
Patricia Leonard, Regional Director
Rubis Castro, Regional Director
Danielle Kearney, Director of Church and Community Relations
Lavern Franzen, Development Associate
Tom Desio, Case Management Program Director
DeeWynn Wiley, Regional Guardianship Director
Shirley Walker, Head Start Director
Jose Mejias, Director of Information Technology
Lakshman P. Batni, Information Technology
Joe McVey, Information Technology
Thomas Weitzel, Communications
Tris MacWilliam, Executive Assistant

In addition to guiding the strategic planning process, the workgroup was also charged with steering the process to develop both organizational and environment analyses. The committee met five times from July through December 2008.

The Board of Directors was also consulted early on and throughout the development of this strategic plan. They offered broad guidance in refining the agency mission, vision, and values and in assessing the agency's strengths, weaknesses, possible opportunities and perceived threats facing the agency. The Strategic Planning Workgroup also engaged managers and staff at all levels of the organization. This was accomplished through face-to-face meetings and an open "BLOG" on the agency's intranet to facilitate feedback and communication regarding the planning process. In addition, all staff members were surveyed, as were church bodies, congregations, donors, partner organizations and clients. A writing team was charged with compiling all of the gathered information and writing the narrative presented in this document.



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