

# SOARING

LUTHERAN SERVICES FLORIDA

SUMMER 2001

## Population Growth Spurs LSF Program Expansion

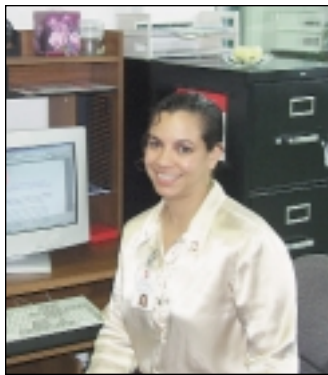
**“ . . . don't forget to do good and to share what you have with those in need, for such sacrifices are very pleasing to him.” (Hebrews 13:15-16, TB)**



Because Florida has experienced a tremendous population growth in the last ten years, the demand for Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) programs and services also has grown significantly. In an effort to better serve children and families in need, Lutheran Services Florida recently added several new programs—**Vocational English Language Training in the Workplace, Naturalization Services, KidCare, and Ryan White Title II.**

### VOCATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING IN THE WORKPLACE

For nearly 20 years, the LSF Employment Program has provided job training and placement services in Tampa and Miami serving both refugees and their employers. Recently, the Tampa Employment Program (serving Hillsborough County) expanded its services to include a new program to teach basic vocational English to refugees with limited English language skills in an effort to help them succeed in the workplace. To qualify for the program, refugees must have resided in the United States for less than five years and also must hold an I-94 Card issued by the federal government to immigrants with refugee status.



*Aida Valentin, English Language Training Program Coordinator*

This new Program benefits refugees and their employers by reducing time required for language translation, increasing opportunities for advancement, and increasing employee productivity. Refugees find it convenient to attend classes held on-site, the employers are reimbursed

for half of the employee's wages during instruction, and the curriculum is tailored to the needs of the employer.

The Program is funded by a \$200,000 grant from the Florida Department of Children and Families. Classes are held at job locations during regular working hours from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Because many clients can be better served with extended hours, LSF also offers evening and weekend classes. Average instruction times range from two hours to eight hours per week at each site. Upon completion of the program, refugees receive a certificate recognizing their accomplishment. For further information or to volunteer, please contact Aida Valentin, Program Coordinator, at (813) 877-9303.

### NATURALIZATION SERVICES

Census 2000 results show that 16% of foreign-born people in the U.S. live below the poverty level. Of those, 21.3% are foreign-born without citizenship and 9.1% are naturalized citizens. The clear implication is that foreign-born people who have attained citizenship have a distinct advantage over those who have not. Becoming a citizen of the U.S. can make a positive difference in the lives of refugees and immigrants and can help them improve their lives significantly.



*(L to R) Leomir Malagon, Dragona Kolundic, and Manstza Diez-Angel, Naturalization Services Staff.*

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## A HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCHES IN FLORIDA

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### MATCHING GIFT PROGRAMS

If you are a member of Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) or Lutheran Brotherhood (LB), you can significantly increase your contribution to LSF through Matching Gift Programs. By using these programs, you can make an even greater difference in the lives of thousands of children and families in need who receive assistance from LSF. For further information, please contact Aid Association for Lutherans, Lutheran Brotherhood, or LSF at (813) 875-1408.

### RECEIVE AN INCOME FOR LIFE THROUGH YOUR GIFT TO LUTHERAN SERVICES FLORIDA

Have you ever said, "I would like to support Lutheran Services Florida (LSF), but most of my funds are invested and I need the income to live on?" If you have, we want you to know that you can make a gift to LSF and, at the same time, receive a fixed and guaranteed income for life. This intriguing gift method is the Charitable Gift Annuity. For over 150 years this has been a safe way to help others while also receiving an income for life.

You will save on taxes by receiving a charitable deduction for a portion of your gift and the income itself will be partially tax-free. Also, you may realize savings on capital gains, gift, estate, and inheritance taxes. In addition, you will be free of management and reinvestment worries. Rates are set according to your age at the time of the gift and range from 6.6% at age 60 to 12% at age 90.

To receive your free brochure describing the many benefits of making a Charitable Gift Annuity, please complete the form below and return to Lutheran Services Florida.



**Ms. Margret Bowles**  
*Chairperson, LSF Board of Directors*

"Surely one does not turn against the needy, when in disaster they cry for help." (Job 30:24)

### Dear Friends,

Census 2000 results show that Florida has experienced a 16% population growth—one of the highest of any state. As a result, LSF also has experienced a tremendous increase in the demand for services—especially for our programs that assist the elderly, refugee families, and troubled youth.

Our dedicated, professional staff members do an excellent job, but sometimes it seems there just are not enough hours in the day and that's when volunteers can make all the difference. LSF welcomes caring people who want to help. Volunteers are needed to provide transportation to medical appointments, teach English to refugees, bring a pet to visit an incapacitated individual, take an elderly person on an outing for lunch or an ice cream cone, or generally help newcomers adjust to living in a new culture.

Volunteers can make a major contribution and a positive difference in so many lives simply by giving their time with compassion and enthusiasm. If you are interested in volunteering, please call (813) 875-1408.

Ms. Margret Bowles  
*Chairperson, LSF Board of Directors*

**Please send me, without cost or obligation, a copy of the helpful brochure  
*Charitable Gift Annuities***

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**Please mail to:**

Gary Kovar, Director of Development  
Lutheran Services Florida, 2700 W. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Suite 308, Tampa, FL 33607

## POPULATION GROWTH SPURS LSF PROGRAM EXPANSION (CONTINUED)

In 1996, Congress passed legislation that imposed a seven-year limit on supplemental social security benefit payments to disabled and/or elderly refugees. As a result, without attaining U.S. citizenship, many elderly and disabled refugees with serious medical problems soon will be ineligible to receive benefits such as medicaid and, without family or adequate resources, they will be left destitute. These refugees want to become U.S. citizens, but they need assistance with language translation and with the complicated paperwork requirements. As a result, LSF started the Naturalization Services Program in a joint effort with Catholic Charities. Many of the refugees in the Program fled persecution in Caribbean countries such as Cuba and Haiti and are seeking asylum in the U.S. These people dream of becoming an American citizen and the LSF Naturalization Services Program is helping them realize their dreams.

LSF Naturalization Services staff members provide English literacy instruction, conversational English instruction, test preparation, and interpretation services free of charge to qualified applicants. Evening classes are held at the LSF offices from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. and morning classes are held at St. John's Lutheran Church in Tampa. LSF welcomes volunteers who are interested in assisting with English instruction and helping in the citizenship classes. To volunteer, call Danielle Kearney at (813) 877-9303.

### KIDCARE

Currently, more than one out of every five children in Florida, almost 22%, lives below the poverty level. Other LSF Programs, such as the P.E.P.I. Head Start Child Development Center and the Child Care Food Program, greatly improve the quality of life for young children; however, they are unable to provide health insurance.

Studies show that children who have access to healthcare insurance are more likely to get regular physical check-ups and vaccinations, receive necessary medical attention when they are sick or injured, and visit the emergency room less often. Because protecting children always has been a major concern for LSF, the Agency joined forces with the State of Florida to provide children, who otherwise would be unprotected, with healthcare insurance through its new KidCare Program. In compliance with the federal and state Children's Health Insurance Program initiative, which aims to reduce ethnic and racial disparities in access to health care, Florida developed the KidCare Program that provides health insurance for children who otherwise would be left unprotected. LSF is one of only nine fully-funded outreach providers for KidCare in the state.



*Iraida Valles, KidCare Project Specialist.*

This Program provides low-income families with affordable healthcare insurance for their children. Most qualified families pay as little \$15 per month to cover children from birth through age 18 for services including regular check-ups, immunization shots, surgery and hospital stays, prescription medication, vision and hearing problems, mental health assistance, and emergencies. LSF KidCare introduces refugee families, resettled by LSF in the Tampa Bay area, to KidCare services and assists with the application process. Because of this Program, hundreds of children now have access to good healthcare insurance and can look forward to a healthy future. To find out more about this important program, please call Iraida Valles, LSF KidCare Outreach Coordinator, at (813) 877-9303.

### RYAN WHITE TITLE II PROGRAM

Congress approved the Ryan White CARE Act (Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency) in 1990 to address the needs for healthcare and related services of people infected with AIDS and the HIV virus. The CARE Act and subsequent programs were named after Ryan White, a teenager who was determined to educate the public about AIDS before he lost his life to the disease the same year the CARE Act was enacted.

The goal of the LSF Ryan White Title II Program is to improve the quality, availability, and organization of healthcare and support services for people living with HIV disease. By eliminating barriers to healthcare services, the Program seeks to prevent the hospitalization of people living with AIDS.

The Program provides qualified individuals with referrals to healthcare professionals and other services including: emergency assistance, housing assistance, nutrition counseling, transportation assistance, dental care, mental health assessment and treatment, medical care, and case management services.

The Florida Department of Health originally contracted with LSF in 2000 to serve as the lead agency to administer the Ryan White Title II Program in the greater Pensacola area. Recently, this contract was renewed allowing LSF to continue providing assistance to people living with HIV disease.

In honor of Ryan White's efforts and because Florida ranks third in the number of AIDS cases reported nationwide, LSF serves clients of all ages suffering from the disease within Escambia, Walton, Okaloosa, and Santa Rosa Counties regardless of religion, race, sex, or national origin. LSF works with the NorthWest AIDS Consortium (NOFLAC) to allocate funding for services provided by the Program. LSF staff members also work closely with consumer caucus groups to empower and educate HIV infected individuals and the general public. For more information about this Program, please call (850) 453-2772.

# LSF NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

## • SILENT AUCTION AND DINNER

WHEN: September 29, 6:00 p.m.  
WHERE: Phillippi Mansion  
US 41 at Phillippi Creek  
Sarasota

The event also will include dinner and entertainment. Tickets are \$30 per person in advance and \$35 at the door. All proceeds support the Sarasota Guardianship Program that serves incapacitated individuals, 70% of whom are indigent. To donate auction items, become a sponsor, or purchase tickets, please contact Anne Ridings at (941) 365-0045.

## • REFUGEE PROGRAM WISH LIST

The LSF Refugee Program in Tampa desperately needs donations of furniture to help newcomer families furnish their apartments. The Program is requesting new and/or used furniture in good condition, household goods such as towels, bed linens, cooking utensils, pots and pans, and toys for young children. You can make a difference by helping refugees who fled persecution in foreign countries begin to build new lives. For further information, please contact Danielle Kearney at (813) 877-9303.

## "THE NUTCRACKER"

WHEN: Saturday, December 8, 2001 at 8:00 p.m.

WHAT: LSF Winter Fundraising Event

WHERE: Ruth Eckerd Hall  
1111 McMullen Booth Rd.  
Clearwater, Florida

The "Friends of LSF" Winter Fundraising Event will feature "The Nutcracker" performed by the Miami City Ballet Company (Balanchine choreography). This special evening includes priority seating for the well-known ballet loved by children and adults alike, as well as admission to the Dessert Party held on-site immediately following the performance.

To purchase tickets for this event (\$48.00 per person includes the performance and the dessert party) please call (813) 875-1408.

