



LSF NAMES NEW VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAM SERVICES

Dr. Peter Ledecy was recently promoted to the newly created position of Vice President, Program Services. He brings to this position more than 20 years of experience in social services and healthcare. Serving as Director of the LSF-Southwest Region for the past two years, Dr. Ledecy played a leadership role in the Naples, Ft. Myers, and Sarasota areas ensuring that those most in need—at-risk children, troubled youths, families in crisis, and the incapacitated—received shelter, care, and necessary social services. Under his direction, the LSF-Southwest Region was chosen by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) as the Case Management Organization to serve Central and Southern Lee County following the State's recent privatization of child welfare services.

Dr. Ledecy will be responsible for over 60 programs. The Directors of the five LSF Regional Offices and the LSF Director of Program Design and Development will report to him.

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE HONORS JUDITH BUNKER



Ms. Judith Bunker, LSF Director of Disaster Response and Church and Community Relations, was chosen by LDR to receive the "Bringing Help and Hope Award" at the recent LDR Biennial Conference—"Spirit in the Desert"—held in Scottsdale, Arizona. Ms. Bunker is only the fourth person to be honored with this important award. "I was surprised and humbled, as well as delighted by this great honor. So many people have worked hard with me over the years and I really want to share this

award with them.," said Ms. Bunker.

Although Ms. Bunker retires from LSF, she will remain active as a volunteer serving on the LSF Advocacy Steering Committee and continues to serve as a member of the ELCA Council. Judith Bunker has directed the Lutheran Services Florida Disaster Response team for nearly 10 years following the horrific destruction left in the wake of Hurricane Andrew that devastated Miami and the surrounding areas. During her tenure, tens of thousands of survivors of Florida's hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and wildfires received immediate aid and on-going assistance to rebuild their homes and their lives. Additionally, as Director of the LSF Church and Community Relations Program, Ms. Bunker also served as the liaison between various LSF programs and the Lutheran congregations throughout Florida.



LSF APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR OF CHURCH AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Ms. Danielle Kearney recently was promoted to the position of Director of Church and Community Relations, succeeding Ms. Judith Bunker who retires from LSF this month. Ms. Kearney will be responsible for developing relationships with the Lutheran congregations and communities throughout Florida to provide support to develop and implement social ministry programs and help congregations form partnerships with LSF. She also will be responsible for Lutheran Disaster Response in Florida, including training and preparation, as well as relief efforts.

Ms. Kearney has been employed with LSF since the agency was founded nearly 23 years ago, and she has played a pivotal role in developing the LSF Refugee Resettlement and Immigration Program. Under her leadership, more than 50,000 refugees and immigrants have become self-sufficient and succeeded in building new lives in freedom.

MR. WELLS GOES TO WASHINGTON

James A. Wells, LSF President and CEO, was in Washington, D.C. recently to attend the White House National Conference on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives with President Bush. While in our nation's Capitol, Mr. Wells maintained a busy schedule meeting with U.S. Senator Bill Nelson and Jim Towey, White House Faith-Based and Community Initiative Director, as well as visiting the offices of other legislators including U.S. Senator Bob Graham and the Hon. Michael Bilirakis. Additionally, Mr. Wells met with Jill Schumann, Lutheran Services in America (LSA) President; Bob Miles, incoming LSA Board Chair; and Ruth Henrichs, exiting LSA Board Chair, as well as with others from LSA and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS).



(l to r) Lynette Engelhardt Stott, Director of Governmental Relations, LIRS; Lisa Carr, Director of Public Policy, LSA; Sen. Bill Nelson, (D-FL); James A. Wells, LSF President and CEO; and Barbara Below, Director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care's Social Ministry Organizations.

HEALING, HOPE AND HELP

"CARING FOR HEALTH: OUR SHARED ENDEAVOR"

By Sue Nardy, RN Parish Nurse

The Parish Nurses of the Florida/Bahamas Synod have joined forces with Lutheran Services Florida to promote health and foster wellness, health education, and care through the Lutheran congregations. One of the first results of this collaboration is the Parish Nurse Program Information brochure, printed courtesy of Lutheran Services Florida.

Parish Nurses act as facilitators, referral agents to community resources and medical services, health counselors, advocates, educators, volunteer trainers, lay ministers, encouragers,



and "friends and prayer partners." Their responsibilities include making home, hospital, and nursing home visits. Parish nurses assist and are responsible to clergy and their congregations. Their work may be in a paid or a volunteer position, and they often serve in a collaborative arrangement with a sponsoring hospital or health care system. It is the goal of all Parish Nurses to be "healing agents" working to carry out God's will. The spiritual dimension is central to the Parish Nursing practice that encompasses people's physical, psychological and social concerns.

The International Parish Nurse Resource Center in St. Louis, Missouri reports that approximately 10,000 Parish Nurses serve congregations in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and other parts of the world.



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LSF-MIAMI-DADE REGION

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LUTHERAN SERVICES FLORIDA FOCUSES ON ADVOCACY

By Lisa Carr, MSW, Director of Public Policy
Lutheran Services in America

Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) has formed a public policy committee and is partnering with Lutheran Services in America (LSA), Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS), and other organizations advocating for people in need. As Director of Public Policy for Lutheran Services in America, I met with the LSF Board of Directors at their January meeting and gave a presentation about the importance of public policy. I later gave an update on what is happening on the national level at the first meeting of the LSF Advocacy Steering Committee.



Lisa M. Carr, MSW,
Director of Public Policy
Lutheran Services in
America

James A. Wells, CEO, Lutheran Services Florida (LSF), was in Washington, D.C. recently to attend a conference with President Bush and Jim Towey, White House Faith-Based and Community Initiative Director. Mr. Wells also met with Senator

Bill Nelson (D-FL) and the staffs of Senator Bob Graham (D-FL) and Rep. Michael Bilirakis (R-FL). These meetings provided an opportunity to tell elected officials about Lutheran Services Florida, the programs and services the agency provides, and the people in need it serves throughout Florida.

LSF is focusing on public policy advocacy because the Agency believes it is important to strive constantly to improve the quality of services provided to its clients—be it day care to at-risk children from low-income families, resettlement for refugees who have fled persecution, protection for the frail elderly, or shelter and counseling for troubled youths. The LSF staff believes that service goes hand-in-hand with justice and by increasing awareness and advocating for change in unjust public policy, the quality of the services they deliver to clients is improved. The goal is to help people in need rise above poverty and become self-sufficient.

People often hesitate to get involved in advocacy because they equate it with activities such as demonstrations at the Capitol and public protests or they have a vision of well-paid lobbyists in expensive suits. While demonstrations and public protests are legitimate advocacy strategies, these activities are just a small part of the story. The majority of advocates are just regular people who believe passionately in social justice.

Advocacy is just a matter of seeing a need and finding a way to address it. To advocate is literally "to plead the cause of another" which most of us do all the time on behalf of our neighbors, our families, and our friends. Policy advocacy is the next logical step taking that pleading into the political arena on behalf of people we don't know personally. Advocacy is a practical way to translate such basic values as respect for human dignity and concern for children, the elderly, the helpless and those who have no voice of their own into policies and laws.

Advocacy is a core part of our American democracy that covers a broad range of activities. You can be a policy advocate if you are willing to:

- Speak up;
- Help others receive services or benefits to which they are entitled;
- Challenge government systems that don't work;
- Vote for, laws, budgets, and policies that do work; and
- Be a voice for others, especially those less fortunate.

I invite you to join in our advocacy efforts! Become informed and get involved by volunteering for LSF, your congregation, or your community and begin advocating by making calls or writing letters to legislators about issues of concern before your state legislature and the U.S. Congress. You can make a difference through advocacy.

Many thanks to Nancy Amidei and her publication "So You Want to Make a Difference: Advocacy is Key", which I used as a reference in writing this article. For more about OMB Watch series called Tools for Advocates, go to www.ombwatch.org.

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HOW TO CHANGE THE WORLD

In the past few months we have been commemorating the Supreme Court Decision *Brown vs. The Board of Education*. This is one of

the most significant social justice actions our nation has taken since the Emancipation Proclamation. By courageously deciding that schools must not segregate on the basis of race, the Supreme Court changed our country's entire school system. This act of social justice made a monumental difference in our world.

"Social Justice" is another way of naming what we do when we make policy changes in our social contract. These changes ensure that more people have access to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Unfortunately, the terms "social justice" and "public policy" evoke mixed reactions. For some people, they mean change and often that is harmful or upsetting; for others the terms may mean that at long last a wrong has been righted and an injustice redressed. Whatever position is taken, social justice cannot be ignored, since it seeks to address the root causes of injustice and poverty.

Why should we be concerned about social justice? As Christians we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves. This surely means equal treatment and care. What we want for ourselves, we also strive to provide for others. When we read the parable of the Good Samaritan, we are struck not only by the need to care for the wounded traveler on the road, but we also know that we are required to do something to make the road safer for all travelers. When we read about

the prodigal son, we know it is the story of a father's forgiveness, but we also are reminded that sons and daughters do stray and make bad choices and we are called upon to act to make the world they go into safer from drugs and exploitation of any kind. This is the call of social justice to which every Christian must respond.

Although Social Justice often is separated from social ministry, they are intricately intertwined. When we establish food pantries to feed the hungry, we also should make every effort to change policies that create hunger. Offering loving and holistic childcare is an important ministry, but it can be even more meaningful when wedded to actions that create better wages and training for those who care for our children. Lovingly made quilts for runaway kids are a blessing indeed, but when we advocate for public policy changes that provide teens with alternative ways to resolve family conflict, stay in school and build productive lives, then we are truly changing the world.

Each of us has a special calling – a feeling for a particular ministry to the poor, the marginalized, the stranger. As we continue our ministries of care, let us look at that we feel called upon to do for others less fortunate or more needy while at the same time seeking ways to change or make public policy that creates a better world for ourselves, our families, our neighbors and our world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith Bunker".

Judith Bunker
Director, Church and Community Relations
Director, LSF Disaster Response

**IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE IN JESUS CHRIST,
LUTHERAN SERVICES FLORIDA, AS AN AGENT OF ITS
PARTICIPATING CHURCH BODIES,
SERVES TO BRING GOD'S HEALING, HOPE AND HELP
TO PEOPLE IN NEED.**



Dear Friend,

Freedom and responsibility – these were the themes of the homily on Sunday, July 4th. These words evoke a sense of pride in our country, but they should also stir us to action. Our capitalistic system that encourages people to work hard to build a better life allows refugees who make it to our shores to become

homeowners and entrepreneurs, but what about those who are not so fortunate? Millions of refugees remain in camps, thousands of homeless families live in vans, too many children are abandoned and abused, and though people want to work, many can't find jobs. This is where LSF makes a difference. Please take a moment to visit our website (www.lsfnet.org) to learn about our important work. We need you to partner with us to help people in need and advocate for social justice. Call me at (786) 367-0052 to arrange for a speaker to come to your church or your group.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Von Werne

Regional Director, LSF-Miami-Dade

A REFUGEE'S STORY

By Jorge Rodes

I first met the Mendez family when they came to Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) shortly after arriving in Miami after escaping Castro's totalitarian regime in Cuba. Like so many other refugees who had come before, I could see they were struggling and I knew they would have difficult times ahead. They had left everything they held dear behind in Cuba—family, friends, and their home—to search for freedom, and now they found themselves in a strange country with an unfamiliar language and they were alone and fearful.

I knew they had two small children and they were concerned

about being able to provide for them, so my first thought was to reach out and let them know that we were here to help them build a new and better life. As I began speaking to them in Spanish, I soon sensed they were beginning to feel they were among friends. I explained that the LSF Refugee Resettlement Program staff members would be with them every step of the way helping them find a clean and safe place to live, enrolling their children in school, assisting with transportation needs, helping them become familiar with their new culture and community, and also helping them learn English by enrolling them in special ESL (English as a Second Language) classes. I also told them that the LSF Employment Program staff would help them find jobs so they could become self-sufficient and eventually care for their family on their own.

After providing for the family's immediate needs, one of the first things we did was to develop a customized employment plan for Mr. and Mrs. Mendez. They were anxious to begin working and said they were willing to take any job that was available. We soon found jobs for both of them working in a flower warehouse. Although the work was physically difficult, requiring long hours standing and working in cold temperatures, they approached their work with enthusiasm and also found time to participate in additional training to qualify for better-paying jobs. Eventually, both found new jobs with increased incomes. Mrs. Mendez became a licensed Miami-Dade County Child Care provider and her husband succeeded in

becoming a licensed security officer. They worked hard and saved their money and, in less than two years, they were able to buy their own home. Recently, Mr. Mendez came to my office to thank me for everything we have done for him and his family and, with tears in his eyes, he said, "I sleep well now because I know that here my family is safe and my children have opportunity. Thank you so much."



Jorge Rodes, LSF Employment Specialist

Jorge Rodes was an attorney in Cuba before coming to the U.S. in 1994. Since he joined Lutheran Services Florida nearly eight years ago, he has helped nearly 2,000 refugees find jobs. His leadership skills are inspiring to all who know him. He is active in his community, his clients continue to remain in touch with him over the years, and he is a devoted husband, father, and grandfather.

LUTHERAN DAY AT THE MARLINS

FLORIDA MARLINS VS. ATLANTA BRAVES

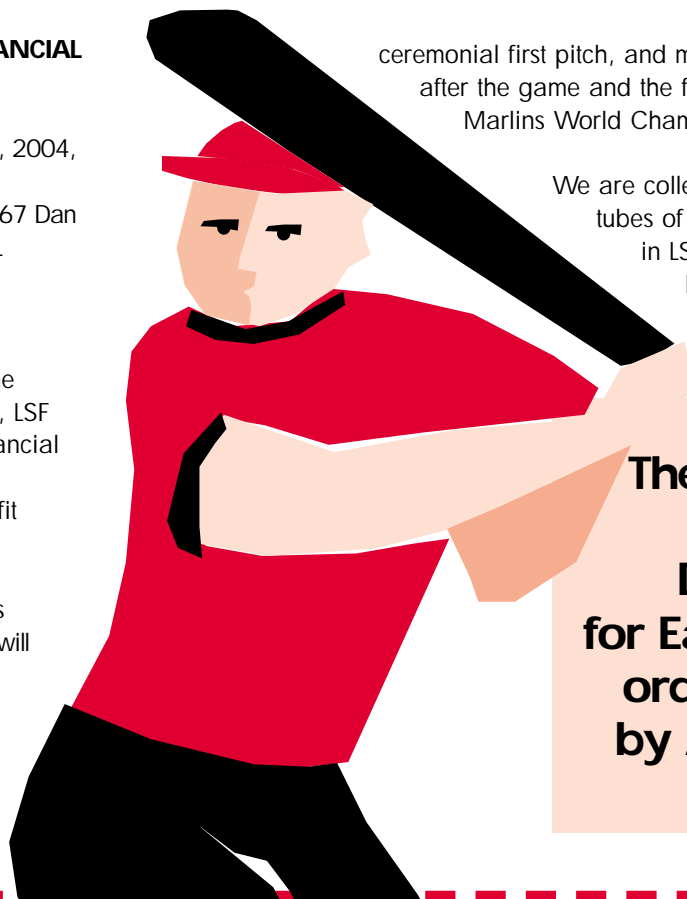
SPONSORED BY THRIVENT FINANCIAL FOR LUTHERANS

Date: Sunday, September 19, 2004, 3:05 pm
Location: Pro Player Stadium, 2267 Dan Marino Blvd. Miami, FL
Ticket cost: \$18.00

Help Lutheran Services Florida by participating in Lutheran Day at the Marlins. For every \$18 ticket sold, LSF receives \$9. Plus, the Thrivent Financial Care in Regions program will supplement up to \$5,000 to benefit Lutheran Services Florida.

This Thrivent Financial Care in Regions project will benefit LSF programs and will "top-off" the Kresge Foundation Challenge to establish an endowment fund to help LSF care for our children most in need.

Enjoy block seating,



ceremonial first pitch, and more. Kids can run the bases after the game and the first 10,000 fans receive a Marlins World Championship Duffle Bag!

We are collecting new toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste to benefit the needy in LSF Programs, the Cooperative Feeding Program and Meals on Wheels, so bring along your donations.

There will be a SPECIAL DRAWING for Early-bird ticket orders received by August 20th.

JOIN IN THE FUN, FELLOWSHIP, AND FUNDRAISING

- Kids Run the Bases • Ceremonial First Pitch • Toothbrush Collection
- SPECIAL DRAWING for Early-bird ticket orders received by August 20th, – TWO winners will walk on the field for batting practice.
- First 10,000 fans at the ballpark receive a Marlins World Championship Duffle Bag

A portion of your ticket price benefits Lutheran Services Florida programs. Sign up now through your Congregational Coordinator, call Gary Kovar at 1-813-676-9505 for more information, or mail this coupon with payment to the Miami-Dade Chapter of Thrivent Financial. All ticket orders must be received by August 30th! Deadline for ticket orders is August 30th!

Name: _____ Church: _____ Mailing Address: _____

No. of Tickets: ____ X \$18 ea. = _____ Phone/Email: _____
(We'll contact you when your tickets are mailed)

I can't attend, but I want to make a charitable contribution to LSF of \$_____ to send _____ needy kids to the game.

Mail to: Lutheran Day Tickets, St. Paul Lutheran Church, 580 Indian Trace, Weston, FL 33326
Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Please publish in your church newsletter, if possible.