



Lutheran Services Florida

changing lives daily

ABOUT LUTHERAN SERVICES FLORIDA

Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) is a statewide, non-profit human services agency dedicated to providing a wide array of services to people in need regardless of religious affiliation, age or national origin. Founded in 1982, LSF offers more than 60 programs for children and families, including employment services, disaster relief and family counseling.

ABOUT LSF'S SECOND CHANCE PROGRAM

The Second Chance Program at Lutheran Services Florida has been providing critical assistance to youth aging out of the system since July 2006 – supplying them with rent and utility subsidies, and an assortment of life skills training, directly and indirectly related to housing.

Second Chance includes:

- One-on-one sessions.
- Training on money management, opening bank accounts, etc.
- Assistance with housing searches, landlord-tenant issues, lease negotiation, class registration, etc.
- A transition plan that ensures youth will be able to maintain housing and other necessities on their own. (At the time of graduation, youth must be working or in school, and have a savings account.)

OUR SUCCESS

Since its inception in July 2006, four youth have successfully completed the Second Chance Program, and 12 young people are currently receiving assistance. The successful program has exceeded expectations:

- All of the participating youth are enrolled in educational, vocational or job training programs.
- All have remained in permanent housing for at least one year.
- None have been arrested or convicted of a crime while receiving services.

Susie's Story

At age 9, Susie went into the foster care system after her drug-addicted mother abandoned her and her four brothers. At 18, Susie transitioned into the Independent Living Program at Kids Hope United (KHU). Living on her own, she began struggling with paying her rent, utilities and other bills.

"I needed extra help, extra guidance," Susie said.

In February 2007, Susie's KHU caseworker referred her to the Second Chance Program at LSF. As part of the program, she was especially glad for the financial assistance and the trainings on how to manage money. Rental and utility subsidies from LSF allowed Susie to help her low-income family pay for the funeral services of her grandmother, who was "always a big part of my life even while I was in foster care," Susie said. She has even been able to save up enough money to buy her first car.



With support from Lutheran Services Florida, Susie, now 20, is studying sports management at Miami-Dade Community College and plans to transfer to Florida State University. Participating in Second Chance was a "very beneficial thing for me," Susie said.

Shana's Story

At age 16, Shana was pregnant and living with friends of her family who were involved with drugs. She was adamant that her unborn child not be exposed to such an environment and had the courage to look for a way out. She reached for help and was placed into the foster care system through Kids Hope United, a private human service organization that offers prevention, intervention and community-based programs to children and families.

When Shana, now 18, got out of foster care, she was working at a job that did not pay much and she found that she needed more help. That is when Kids Hope United referred Shana to Lutheran Services Florida. She became part of the Second Chance Program, where she received much-needed financial help, such as planning a monthly budget, and emotional support. Shana also received a donated laptop computer and car, both of which have since proven invaluable given that she is currently studying criminal justice at Miami-Dade Community College and has to drop off her 16-month-old son at day care service across town.

Now, Shana's future is a much brighter one. She is extremely grateful to her caseworker at LSF and said that without the organization's help, "I probably wouldn't be making it right now." Shana had enough courage to seek help when she needed it and, through her own resolve and assistance from LSF, was able to greatly improve her situation. She now wants others to know there is no reason for them to feel hopeless in desperate situations when there are organizations like LSF that are willing to help.

***"Without Lutheran Services Florida,
I probably wouldn't be making it
right now."***

OUR FUTURE

Despite the success of the program, Second Chance is in jeopardy of being lost because of financial constraints. Current funding does not cover the program's services or administrative costs associated with helping youth maintain their housing. The loss of the program would adversely affect its current participants and would deprive other youth of a valuable resource.



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