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News from
Lutheran Family Services
in the Carolinas

Connections

Building a Future

Six years after stepping off a plane from Africa, Guy Nesenda has several titles he is proud to be called: husband, father, student, and most recently homeowner. Titles he says he owes to hard work, sacrifice and the support system he found in Charlotte, NC.

Before coming to the United States, Guy was studying political science at a university in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Unfortunately, problems with security in his home country forced him to relocate to the United States.

Arriving at the airport in 2003, Guy had several goals he wanted to achieve but knew it was going to take hard work. He sought out social support which helped him find an affordable place to live, and more importantly to him, a learning institution where he studied medical office administration.

Guy knew that in order to be successful he would have to stay focused on his goals. "You have to know what you need and what is important for your life," he says. "I worked hard to save money so I would be able to get what I needed in the future."

Those needs soon grew after meeting his wife Joelle at church

and welcoming the birth of two beautiful children, Alice and Dan. With his family growing, Guy knew it was time to find a permanent place to raise his children. Fortunately, with the hard work and careful spending habits he had cultivated, attaining a home was well within his grasp. But the process was complex and Guy knew he needed help.

Determined to achieve his goal of homeownership, Guy entered the LFS Carolinas Supportive Housing program in August 2008 and began meeting monthly with LFS Case Manager, Angela Thorpe. She worked with both Guy and Joelle to develop goals geared towards increasing their income and skill sets. In addition to monthly informational workshops, Angela worked with the couple one-on-one in obtaining his credit report and creating a standing budget. Through the program they also gained mentorship, learned financial skills, coping mechanics, goal building and increased life skills..

Before long, Angela helped Guy and Joelle fill out an application with their bank, linked them with a realtor and worked with them through the process of getting a home inspection.

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LFS Month 2010

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

John 15:12

March is LFS Month in North Carolina

Select one Sunday in March to celebrate LFS Day with us and to help your congregation learn more about the ways in which we are working together to bring hope to our neighbors.

Pray Your prayers bring support and encouragement to LFS Carolinas. We ask that you continually lift up LFS Carolinas- our staff, our partners and especially the people we serve- in your prayers.

Give When you make a financial contribution to LFS Carolinas, you are providing hope to someone in crisis, a child in need of a safe, loving home; a homeless veteran in need of caring support; a family on the verge of financial catastrophe.

Honor You can give a gift honoring the lives, accomplishments, and memories of the people who are important to you. Donations to LFS in lieu of purchased gifts are lasting ways to honor friends and family on special occasions such as birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, and holidays.

Volunteer Walking hand-in-hand with your hurting neighbors not only brings healing and hope to their lives but also an abundance of joy and greater satisfaction to your own.

Remember A gift in support of the ministry of LFS Carolinas through your will, a life insurance policy, gift annuity or other planned gift leaves a legacy of caring and may have practical benefits for you.

[Download a bulletin insert to use on your selected day.](#)

[Black and white copy.](#)

Highlights

On Saturday, February 27, 2010, Foster Care received a helping hand in both North and South Carolina.

In North Carolina, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans hosted Working Together Works! At the event Thrivent members assembled 150 Easter baskets for children in our foster care program.

“The LFS team made everything run smoothly and empowered joy in the ministry. Their presentation and management was beautiful and colorful. Participants were blessed to be a blessing! Thank you for making this possible, and spreading the good news of glorious partnership in our Lutheran lives and beyond,” said Susan Yount, Lutheran Engagement Associate with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.



In South Carolina, USC Heisman Trophy Winner George Rogers joined foster care staff to host TEAM HOPE, a Therapeutic Foster Parent Recruitment Party.

Rogers shared his story with guests and stayed to pose for photos and sign autographs.



Money Talks

Shelley Mobley Therapist, Lutheran Counseling Center, Charlotte

Money has historically been a taboo subject among Americans. Most take the attitude that “it’s private, it’s personal, and it’s nobody’s business.” Many people, therefore, grow up never talking about money or learning money management skills from their parents. Today, advertisers are marketing directly to our children with subtle messages about things they “need” to be cool, popular, or good at something. Credit card companies market directly to older teens and college students. Our children are learning from savvy advertisers, rather than us, how to make spending decisions. Couples, parents and families must learn to talk about good financial practices and choices.

Here are some ways we can talk as families about money matters:

- Talk about your faith, values and goals and their financial implications. These conversations will guide your spending decisions. Consider what your faith and values tell you about what is important and where your time, talents and money should be spent.
- Discuss (keeping it age appropriate) family household finances, including the cost of maintaining a household, comparing values, reading labels, buying on sale and using coupons. Get children involved in the shopping and saving.
- Differentiate between needs and wants for family members. Making a budget and monitoring it each month helps keep us on track. Challenge TV, radio, and print media advertisements that tell us we must have the latest and greatest thing. Use yearly housecleaning and room cleaning to talk about the wisdom of past purchases now being thrown out or donated.
- Teach financial management with mock checkbooks, prepaid credit cards, allowance and savings accounts.

Discuss the value of saving. Open a savings account. Talk about purchases you do not make because you decided to save the money or use it for something else. Set up a “Save, Spend, Donate and Invest” (Thrivent for Lutherans- I think this needs some clarification or a link to a website or something) piggy bank at an early age to develop smart money choices.

It is important to remember that financial management skills are, for the most part, behaviors learned from an early age and are strongly influenced by values and attitudes toward money that are formed predominately from within our families. Make this the year that your family will have regular, meaningful money talks.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans offers award-winning financial education workshops and tools specific to children (Parents, Kids and Money), teens (Parents, Teens and Money), and adults (More than Money Matters), in addition to financial representatives whose mission is to partner with individuals and families to achieve their financial goals. Contact your local Thrivent Financial representative today. See “find a representative” on thrivent.com!

Building a Future Cont.

“Without the help of LFS it would have been very hard to organize myself to buy a home,” says Guy.

The work they put in all culminated in June 2009 when Guy and his family turned the key for the first time to enter their new home. Now, he hopes that his outlook on life will be passed to his two young children as they grow up in the United States.

“I want to teach my children real life. I want them to follow Christian values, respect their parents and do what’s right. School is very important and I want them to be useful to society,” says Guy. “I want them to know what I did to succeed and then go do more than what I did.”



Cover: Guy and Alice inside their new home. Above: Alice, Guy and Dan



Lutheran Family Services in the Carolinas

Since 1976, LFS Carolinas has served the Carolinas' most vulnerable people. We provide safe haven for children in crisis, adults with special needs, refugees, and individuals and families at risk of becoming homeless or struggling to recover from man-made or natural disasters. We offer accredited programs that promote healing and wholeness and collaborate with faith and civic organizations, other human service providers and government agencies.

As a social ministry organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we respond to Christ's call to serve all people, regardless of race, religion, orientation, national origin or creed.

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