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South Carolina

News from
Lutheran Family Services
in the Carolinas

South Carolina Connections

Taking on the New Year

New years for so many of us means time with friends and family, and a traditional meal of black-eyed peas, collards, and pork. Many of us will make a resolution we might keep for a week, we may stay up late to watch the ball drop, and then life goes on as usual. For children and refugees 2010 will not be life as usual.

In 2010, children like Jessica will come into the care of LFS after suffering unspeakable abuse. Her life will be disrupted, however unstable it is at the time, by a knock on the door. A smiling caseworker, a stranger, will give her a short amount of time to gather the things most dear to her, put her in a car, and take her to a new home where more strangers will care for her.

Refugees like Ameda, find herself on a plane calming the fears of her five-year-old son, while the baby in her womb

kicks. She will be exhausted from the trauma and violence she has lived through for the last six years. She will have only minutes to gather the things she needs to care for her little Johan and herself before she leaves the only home she has known for her short eighteen years.

In this New Year, consider what would you take? What would you grab as most precious to you if all you knew and loved was being taken from you through no fault of your own? At LFS, we work hard to provide for children like Jessica and families like Ameda's. With the help of faithful supporters we provide them with clothes, food, a safe place to live, and a community of faith to lift them up. The lives of the vulnerable we serve have been laced with trauma and violence, but in 2010, as they come into our care they will be welcomed by smiles, help, and hope for peace.

Wrapped in Love Festival

This Valentine's Day, LFS Carolinas is hosting the Wrapped in Love Festival, a day of fun and festivity for our children and refugee families. We invite you to join us at Redeemer Lutheran Church at 525 St. Andrew's Road, Columbia, SC for a day of fun and games on Saturday, February 13th from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Admission is one twin bedding item: pillow, comforter, sheet set, or waterproof mattress cover.

We are also looking for individuals and youth/adult groups to provide the following to help make the day a success for our children.

Food: Hotdogs, buns, mustard, ketchup, onions, relish, chips, fruit, cookies, drinks, cups, plates, napkins, plastic utensils.

Games and Prizes: Games and activities for the children to participate in (think carnival games) and prizes. Examples include: fishing, ring toss, bing bag throw, etc.

Arts and Crafts: We need groups to bring the necessary items, instructions and volunteer support to help with a craft of your choice.

Volunteer support: Help distribute food, set up, clean up, advertise, plan, collect bedding items, etc.

Bounce House donation

Please contact Mitzie Schafer to sign up: 803-461-2613 or Mitzie.Schafer@LFSCarolinas.org.

Ongoing Needs

Refugee Program

Each year LFS welcomes more than 120 refugees into South Carolina with the help of Co-Sponsoring Congregations. The government provides a one time \$425 stipend with which LFS must provide them with a place to live, utilities, a job, etc. You can help ease their transition and welcome them through the following:

Full Co-Sponsorship: Gather a team within your congregation to set up a refugee/family in a new apartment, provide them furnishings and clothes, assist with transportation to job interviews and medical appointments, enroll the children in school and to be their first friend here in South Carolina.

Furniture: Due to the economy we have seen a decline in the number of congregations able to participate in full co-sponsorships. Having additional items on hand allows refugees to receive the most basic and needed items if co-sponsorship is not available.

Volunteer: Volunteers are always in need in refugee to provide transportation, ESL assistance, and direct help to case-managers on a case-by-case basis.

Children's Programs

We serve more than 45 children between the ages of 14 and 21 each year in four youth group homes for children who suffer from mental and emotional disorders. About 90% of these children have also been abused and neglected. LFS Carolinas prides itself on going above and beyond simply providing room and board for these children.

The children in our therapeutic foster care homes have often bounced around foster homes as many as 10 or more times. LFS provides additional training and support to our TFC parents so they have the support needed

to provide consistency and dedication to the child. We serve more than 90 children each year in this program.

Children in our programs need backpacks and luggage, school supplies and sports and recreational equipment.

Veterans Program

LFS operates two homes for homeless veterans through a partnership with the Veteran's Administration. The VA provides a \$33 per diem for each client, but the actual cost is \$60. Veterans (male and female) receive housing, financial counseling, job skills training, and more. Canned and dry goods help keep the operational costs to the program down.

All Programs Need:

Gift Cards Wal-Mart or Visa Gift cards to help meet the immediate needs of clients as they come into care. Many of the folks who come into care leave their situations on a moments notice for safety reasons. They do not have time to grab or they do not possess basic items like appropriate seasonal clothing.

Personal Hygiene Kits Soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, shaving cream, razors, body lotion, comb/brush, pads/tampons, toilet paper, towel, and alarm clock.

Cleaning Kits All purpose cleaner, sponges, dish detergent, trash can, trash bags, mop, broom, laundry detergent, paper towels, and can opener.

Linens Twin bedding: pillows, comforters, sheets, blankets, waterproof mattress covers, etc.

Donate Today and Become a Partner in Hope!

There are many ways you can support LFS Carolinas as we help the vulnerable people in our communities. To learn how your gift can make a difference contact Mitzie Schafer at 803-461-2613.

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