

## SECTION E – REPORTS OF SYNOD RELATED AGENCIES

1. Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries
2. Gemma Services
3. Global Refuge
4. KenCrest
5. Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania (LAMPa)
6. Liberty Lutheran
7. Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia
8. Lutheran Settlement House
9. Philadelphia Religious Leaders Council
10. Seafarers International House
11. Women of the ELCA

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### DIAKON LUTHERAN SOCIAL MINISTRIES



We sincerely appreciate and celebrate our partnership with the Southeast Pennsylvania Synod and its congregations. United in purpose and guided by compassion, Diakon continues to extend services that strengthen children, families, individuals, and older adults across our communities. In 2025, Diakon programs served over 67,000 people.

Diakon's mission states: *In response to God's love in Jesus Christ, Diakon will demonstrate God's command to love the neighbor through acts of service.* That mission continues to guide our work as we expand behavioral health services, foster care and adoption programs, at-risk youth services, and family preservation supports, while also serving older adults through community-based senior services. We are also prioritizing the expansion of affordable housing for families and individuals of all ages.

Within the Southeast Pennsylvania Synod, Diakon Youth Services supports teens and young adults in Delaware, Chester, and Bucks counties through a range of programs that promote accountability, stability, and positive decision-making. Bridge serves youth ages 11 to 18 through accountability-focused counseling and monitoring to help prevent out-of-home placement. Some participants also engage in the Weekend Alternative Program at the Diakon Wilderness Center near Boiling Springs, which provides structured, experiential support. In addition, the Pathways Forward Program works with young adults, offering an opportunity for

those who successfully complete it to have felony charges reduced or dismissed. In 2025, over 1,100 youth were served through Diakon Youth Services.

Diakon Family Reunification and Preservation Services continued to grow throughout the year, supporting children and families in Bucks and Delaware counties. The reunification program helps children and youth transition safely from out-of-home placements, such as foster care or residential settings, back to their families. The intensive family preservation program provides in-home support to help ensure long-term stability and success following reunification. In 2025, these programs served nearly 700 children and caregivers within the synod's territory.

Diakon Behavioral Health Services also expanded its programming in Chester County by adding the Children's Review Team, which served 66 individuals in 2025. This program brings together a supportive group of professionals and natural supports to work alongside families, ensuring they have the resources and guidance needed to succeed.

Additional services within the synod include Diakon Adoption & Foster Care, which works with resource families to provide safe, supportive homes for children and teens in Bucks, Montgomery, Delaware, and Chester counties. Diakon also continues to serve as the prime contractor for Pennsylvania's Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network (SWAN), coordinating public adoption services across the Commonwealth. In 2025, this work impacted the lives of nearly 7,800 children, youth, and family members throughout the Southeast Pennsylvania Synod.

We give thanks for the gifts of our staff, volunteers, congregations, donors, and board members. Through their compassion, dedication, and faithful partnership, Diakon touched the lives of thousands of people in 2025.

Shari VanderGast, *President/CEO*

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## GEMMA SERVICES



## SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD ASSEMBLY REPORT, 2026

Gemma Services was formed in 2019 by the merger of two long-standing Philadelphia-area nonprofits: Silver Springs – Martin Luther School and theVillage. Each of them was founded in the 1800s as orphanages and evolved through the years to meet the growing needs of their communities. Today as one organization, Gemma represents 300+ years of service to youth and families facing extreme challenges in the Greater Philadelphia area.

Guided by the vision of a world where every person knows they matter, Gemma Services' mission is to accompany people of all ages through life's challenges using individualized, data-informed support. With three locations in Greater Philadelphia and via telehealth, Gemma assists more than 3,000 youth and families each year through mental health, child welfare, prevention, and education programs.

Gemma's programs include:

**Residential Treatment Program** – The Residential Treatment (RT) Program provides 24/7/365 clinical treatment and trauma-focused care for children and youth between the ages of six and 14 years old who need an intensive out-of-home placement due to the severity of their emotional and behavioral challenges. **Last year, 100 youth participated in this program.** Youth are referred to us by a medical professional once determined that their behaviors are presently not safe for them to live in a home setting. These behaviors might include self-harming, aggressiveness, sexualized behaviors, and more. Most of the youth have experienced significant traumas including physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect, abandonment, family violence, and more.

The RT Program provides a holistic environment that embraces a trauma-informed approach to help youth to heal and strengthen their coping skills so they can return to live safely and successfully in their homes and communities. Each child's family and caregivers are included as full partners while they participate in the program, however approximately one-third of the youth we assist in this program have no family involved in their lives.

The RT Program provides therapeutic living environments that include individualized treatment, supervision, care, and nurturing for each youth. Our approach includes outcome-oriented treatment, psychiatric evaluations and medication management as necessary, trauma-informed therapies, case management, behavior management, and health care. While in our care, we provide for the youth's clothing, mental health, and physical health needs. Additionally, our programs include therapeutic activities programming to ensure that the youth experience joy and opportunities for creative expression.

**Community Based Programs** – During FY 24/25 (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025), our **Community Based Programs assisted 2,340 children, teens, and families and/or caregivers** through our Philadelphia offices in Mt. Airy and Southwest Philadelphia, as well as virtually.

Our Community Based Programs include:

- **Adoption & Permanency Services** are provided for children and adolescents who have experienced loss, separation, abuse, neglect, and other trauma. These services are for children who have been placed in the homes of foster or kinship families because their legal families currently are unable to provide the care they need.
- **Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)** services are based on the science of learning and behavior and involve the process of implementing basic behavioral interventions to create meaningful behavior changes. ABA services are typically provided to children, youth, or young adults diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and include assessments and 1:1 interventions to help them improve their behavioral, social, communication, and adaptive skills.

- **Family Based Mental Health Services (FBMHS)** is an intensive, data-informed, and family-focused approach to support children, adolescents, and their families. The primary goal of Family Based Services is to assist families with maintaining their child in the home and to keep families intact, rather than an out-of-home placement for the child. FBMHS provides intensive individual and family therapy, as well as case management support in a family's home and community by a two-person team.
- **Foster Family Care** includes services for children from Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties who cannot reside in their own homes presently. The program works with families, county agencies, educators, and others involved in the life of a child, teen, or young adult to identify the best possible home for their unique needs.
- **Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS)** offer intensive support in home and school settings for children, youth, and young adults up to age 21 experiencing serious emotional or behavioral struggles or skill deficits. Our IBHS program is designed to give each child the tools they need to face challenges with a greater sense of strength and resilience and improve overall behavioral functioning.
- **Outpatient Mental Health Services** include individual therapy, family therapy, and medication management for children and teens, ages 2 to 18. Credentialed therapists use evidence-based practices including Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) and Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) in working with children and teens.
- **Prevention Services** include our **Family Empowerment Center, Family Support Program, and LaunchPAD Program**. The goal of these programs is to support youth and families to overcome challenges, strengthen community supports, and prevent further involvement with the child welfare system.

**Martin Luther School – During FY 24/25, 307 students attended Martin Luther School.**

Martin Luther School (MLS) is a growing K-12 special education school for students who need an out-of-district placement due to emotional and behavioral challenges. Students are referred to MLS over 50 Philadelphia-area school districts and charter schools once their home school district has identified them as having severe emotional difficulties and determined that they would benefit from an out-of-district placement with intensive supports to help them meet their social, emotional, behavioral, and academic goals. Additionally, approximately half of the students who participate in Gemma's Residential Treatment Program attend Martin Luther School.

To meet the needs of our growing student body, in 2024 we purchased a property one mile from our Plymouth Meeting location to serve as the future home of Martin Luther School. By moving and expanding MLS, we are creating a school campus with ample space for innovative and best-in-class educational programming. We are completing phased renovations, including a new gymnasium, and are advancing planned improvements to the property which include added parking and a new multipurpose athletic field. We anticipate students starting the new school year in September on the new campus.

**Your Partnership** – More than 50 Lutheran congregations of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod actively support Gemma Services as we accompany youth and families. We are grateful for these generous and supportive partners. Relationships with congregations of other denominations, individual friends and supporters, community groups, and philanthropic

foundations combine to comprise a mosaic of support that demonstrates “fervent love is an action.” Gemma Services is proud of our founding (as Silver Springs – Martin Luther School) as a Lutheran Social Ministry Organization and pleased to share that Kristen Gay, Ph.D., President and CEO of Gemma Services serves on the board of Lutheran Services in America.

To learn more about our programs, please visit [www.gemmaservices.org](http://www.gemmaservices.org). If you would like to schedule a visit to one of our locations or learn how you can become more involved in Gemma’s work, contact Amanda Bryant, Director of Donor and Volunteer Engagement, at (610) 825-4440 x3307 or [Abryant@gemmaservices.org](mailto:Abryant@gemmaservices.org).

We are grateful for your partnership. Thank you for helping us work toward creating a world where every person knows they matter!

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**GLOBAL REFUGE**  
**Section E, Addendum 1**

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**KENCREST**



**KenCrest**  
Your Dreams. Our Mission.



**Annual Report to Southeastern PA Synod Assembly 2026**

Founded in 1905 by a Lutheran deaconess, KenCrest continues our dedication to honoring the **Imago Dei** in all by providing early learning services to **children and families** in Philadelphia and residential- and community-based supports to **people of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD)** in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Connecticut.

**We are proud to announce the following leadership transitions that have occurred since the 2025 SEPA Synod Assembly:**



**Marian Baldini** retired after 10 years leading us. Bishop Penman blessed the conclusion of her time at KenCrest at her retirement dinner.

← **Aurora Kripa** took the helm as CEO in December 2025. She has been with KenCrest since 2018, moving through the roles of consultant, Chief HR Officer, and Chief Operating Officer (COO).

Aurora’s move created a space for **Patricia Hillis-Clark**, formerly our VP of Programs, to step into the COO role.

**We also welcomed two new leaders to our C-suite:**

**Arthur Anderson** from Grand View Health as Chief Financial Officer

**Wendy Parsons** from Holy Family Univ. as Chief Philanthropy Officer

**We celebrated our 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary on June 4, 2025!**

**In honor of this milestone, we:**

- hosted four **zoo events** for the individuals and families we serve in all three states
- held a successful **Taste the Possibilities** fundraising event at Arcadia University
- published a new **history book** reflecting the changes at KenCrest since our founding



In January 2026, we welcomed **four new Lutheran members to our Boards of Directors.**

Thank you to each of these individuals, and the congregations that support their service: **Emily Eisenberg, Sara Calderon, Ellen Conroy, and Rev. Karen Nelson.**



We made a commitment to rebuilding and growing our connection with the Lutheran church by hiring **Deacon Ali Clark** as our full-time Faith Engagement and Outreach Coordinator. **Read more about what she does and how you can get involved** on page 14 of the spring issue of our [Possibilities Magazine](#).

**4,333** TOTAL INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED IN 2025



**3,228**  
IN PENNSYLVANIA



**1,066**  
IN DELAWARE



**39**  
IN CONNECTICUT

**Program Overview:**

## Residential Programs:

- **Group Homes**
  - Two to four adult residents live in each community home, located in safe, accessible neighborhoods to foster community building.
  - 24/7 person-centered support focuses on independence, community engagement, and living a meaningful life.
  - **400+ individuals supported**
- **Supported Independent Living**
  - Coaching tailored to help individuals with I/DD and autism find and maintain their own place to live.
  - Supported skills include daily-living activities, enabling technology, money management, and community access.
  - **50+ individuals supported**
- **Lifesharing →**
  - Families, couples, or individuals provide a family-oriented home for a person with disabilities.
  - Providers support participants' physical, medical, emotional, and social needs.
  - KenCrest supports Lifesharing families for the duration of program participation.
  - **\*New\* birth family Lifesharing + Lifesharing for medically complex children**
  - **50+ individuals supported**



## Community-Based Programs:

- **Community engagement programs**
  - We have a variety of community-based supports for individuals in our residential programs as well as those who live with their families or in other arrangements.
  - Participants can engage in hobbies, attend classes, and explore their interests, all while building valuable life skills.
  - **80% of individuals we serve engage in weekly community activities**
- **Project SEARCH**
  - This onsite job training program provides classroom instruction and practical job training at Phoenixville Hospital – Tower Health.
  - Our goal is for individuals to achieve paid community employment.
  - **4 students graduated in 2025; 6 students are currently enrolled**



- **Employment Coaching**
  - Comprehensive services include career development planning, resume support, coordination of workplace accommodations, real-world training, and more.
  - **200+ individuals supported; 25 new job placements in 2025**

## Programs for Children:

- **Early Learning Centers** →
  - Seven locations in Philly serve families through Pre-K Counts, Early Head Start, and Head Start.
  - All centers are STAR-4 level PA Keystone Stars and staff are TraumaSmart certified.
  - **780+ children enrolled in 2025**
- **Early Intervention**
  - We serve children from birth to five years old with physical, occupational, speech, and nutritional therapy, as well as behavioral supports as needed.
  - Services are provided in the home, childcare settings, or any community environment the child attends with their family.
  - **Over 2,400 children served in 7 counties**
- **Transitional Homes for Medically Fragile Children** →
  - These homes support children with complex medical conditions, including tracheotomies, central lines, oxygen, feeding tubes, chromosomal disorders, and neurological conditions.
  - Families are encouraged to visit frequently and receive hands-on training to prepare to transition their child into the family home.
  - **26 families served in 2025**
- **SWIFT Support** – to prevent preschool suspensions and expulsions
  - Support Specialists work directly with early childhood educators to identify root causes of behavioral challenges and implement positive behavior strategies.
  - **\*New\* 12-Month SWIFT Support Certification Program** available nationwide
  - **Over 80% of children supported through SWIFT remained in their early learning centers.**



## **Notable Accomplishments:**



### **Rev. Harvey Davis Family Fund**

- **27<sup>th</sup> year** providing gifts for KenCrest children in need
- **423 children** served (15% increase over 2024)
- **Ten churches across SEPA** hosted giving trees and toy drives, fulfilling 105 children's wish lists
- Two SEPA churches served as drop-off locations for gifts, **increasing local engagement**



## Enabling Technology (or Assistive Technology)

- The **Lutheran Services for the Elderly Endowment Grant 2023** awarded us \$36,000 over 3 years to provide cost-free Assistive Technology to adults aged 60+ living in Philadelphia.
- In March 2026, we opened our **new model SMART home in Philadelphia** to expand access to enabling technology beyond our current model SMART home in Pottstown.
- ➔ The image to the right showcases five different assistive tech devices in one of the bathrooms at our new Philadelphia model SMART home.
- **109 homes of individuals with I/DD or senior adults updated with assistive technology**



## Educational Opportunities



In February 2026, we hosted our first annual **Self-Advocacy Conference** to support our individuals in improving personal and legislative advocacy skills.



We joined the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals to offer professional development for our DSPs in 2023. The **37 newly certified DSPs** since June 1, 2025, bring us to a total of 71.

**KenCrest would like to thank the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod and its congregations** for all the support you have given us this year! We look forward to continuing to develop our relationships with you as we all work together to serve God's beloved children.

Please reach out to **Deacon Ali Clark** to explore shared ministry opportunities or to connect with the appropriate KenCrest staff member for any questions you may have.

**Email:** Alison.Clark@KenCrest.org

**Cell:** 215-421-5537

**Find Us On Social Media:** [f](#) [@](#) [in](#) [▶](#)

Submitted by Deacon Ali Clark, Faith Engagement and Outreach Coordinator

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**LUTHERAN ADVOCACY MINISTRY IN PENNSYLVANIA**

**Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania (LAMPa)**

*Church Together in Pennsylvania for the sake of the world God loves*

In response to God’s love in Jesus Christ, we advocate for wise and just public policies in Pennsylvania that promote the common good. Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania is a shared ministry of seven Pennsylvania synods and ELCA Service and Justice. Through LAMPa, Lutherans called to be part of God’s healing and reconciling mission in the world are supported to voice their faith convictions in the public square with and on behalf of our most vulnerable neighbors and the world we share, while seeking to create a more just Commonwealth.

In 2025, LAMPa marked 46 years of ministry with gratitude for a legacy of community building and justice seeking. We worked together on state legislation addressing hunger and poverty, housing insecurity, health care, climate change, immigration and discrimination. We equipped people of faith to stand against hate, to bridge divides and work for peace. We trained and organized to prevent political violence and protect vulnerable neighbors – helping disciples act at the local, state and federal levels. We helped congregations and leaders stand together against attempted intimidation by white supremacist groups and threats to immigrant communities.

We published a study guide to accompany the newly approved ELCA social statement on Faith and Civic Life – now offered as an official resource for the whole ELCA.

As 2026 began, we partnered with United Lutheran Seminary to host our second program based on lessons from Dietrich Bonhoeffer – this time in companionship with the life and writings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Our annual day in the Capitol saw another year of record attendance with more congregations sending teams to learn and return to inspire others and support one another as they act on behalf of neighbors near and far.

As marginalized communities are under attack and safeguards for human rights, religious liberty and human and environmental health are increasingly threatened, LAMPa is striving to connect and equip growing numbers of disciples seeking to respond faithfully in their communities and with state and federal policymakers.

I give thanks to God for you and for the support of Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Policy Council representatives Bruce McCullough and the Rev. Leah Woehr-Grande.

With deep gratitude for all of the ways in which you support LAMPa’s ministry,

Tracey DePasquale  
LAMPa Director

## LIBERTY LUTHERAN



Artman

Paul's Run

The Hearth at Drexel

The Manor at York Town

Victorian Village at Hatboro

The Village at Penn State

Lutheran Congregational Services

Lutheran Disaster Response – Eastern Pennsylvania

LCFS West Philadelphia Senior Community Center

### Synod Assembly Report 2026

#### Mission Statement

Liberty Lutheran faithfully accompanies individuals and families who are facing life changing situations through an empowering approach that honors their choices and well-being.

At Liberty Lutheran, we are profoundly grateful for your partnership. With your prayers and support, you help transform lives and provide vital assistance to those who are most in need.

This year, Liberty celebrates 25 years of ministry. You have guided and supported us along the way. In November we said goodbye to Luanne Fisher, and welcomed John Barnum, former CFO, as our new President and CEO. He carries on the legacy, leading us into a future filled with possibilities.

### **Benevolent Care: A Lifeline of Hope**

When residents in our senior living communities face financial hardship, keeping them in their current home among friends and loved ones is essential for their well-being. The Benevolent Care Fund ensures they can continue to thrive in the communities they call home—even when their financial resources are depleted.

Last year, Liberty Lutheran provided more than \$2 million in benevolent care across our communities. While the monetary value is significant, the peace of mind and security it brings our residents is priceless.

### **Building Resilient Individuals & Communities**

**Organizational Dollars to Continue Services where Shortfalls Exist**

**\$2,063,000**

Benevolent Care

**\$15,947,000**

Unreimbursed Medicare and Medicaid

**\$18,010,000**

**Total Expenses**

### **Snapshots from Liberty Lutheran’s Senior Living Communities**

#### **Artman – Ambler, PA**

Located on Bethlehem Pike in Ambler, PA, Artman provides personal care, long-term skilled care, memory care and short-term rehabilitation care.

This spring, Artman coordinated a week-long fundraising extravaganza to raise money for their benevolent care fund. The week started with a local vendor buying gold and silver from donors, with a percentage coming back to Artman. Mid-week they hosted a community yard sale, then ended the week with a Big Prize BINGO event.



### **The Hearth at Drexel – Bala Cynwyd, PA**

Located on Belmont Avenue, The Hearth at Drexel offers assisted living and memory care services, featuring four specialized households. Each household offers twenty private apartments designed to meet residents where they are in the moment of the day.

Make makes The Hearth unique is that every household supports memory care needs within a safe, secure, and comforting environment. The team embraces a compassionate aging in place philosophy, creating smaller, relationship centered living spaces where residents receive individualized attention, meaningful engagement, and a genuine sense of home.



### **The Manor at York Town — Jamison, PA**

Adjacent to Warwick Township Community Park, The Manor offers boutique-style living for independent residents.

In March, The Manor opened a new dining area with two restaurants. The York Town Grill offers more casual meals, and is open 12 – 6 pm. The Garden View Restaurant offers reserved seating from 5 – 6:30 pm with a more traditional menu.



## **Paul’s Run — Philadelphia, PA**

Situated on Bustleton Avenue in Northeast Philadelphia, Paul’s Run is a continuing care retirement community offering independent living, personal care, rehabilitation, and skilled nursing care.

From embracing multiple faith traditions at religious services to making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the homeless, the residents at Paul’s Run nourish their faith and give back to the community. In January, a group of residents joined other volunteers at the United Lutheran Seminary campus in Philadelphia for the MLK day of service, packing hygiene kits for local ministries.



## **Victorian Village at Hatboro – Hatboro, PA**

In October, Liberty Lutheran welcomed Victorian Village at Hatboro to the Liberty family. This elegant, 55+ community expands Liberty’s presence in the growing senior living marketplace.

Located near Hatboro’s historic downtown, Victorian Village offers comfort and lifestyle.



## **The Village at Penn State — State College, PA**

Located at Penn State University, The Village offers independent living, personal care, and skilled nursing.

Now that the ground has been cleared, construction begins in April on the Nittany View Villas—two new luxury apartment buildings featuring 10 homes.



Aerial view of the ground where construction began. Architect's rendering of the two apartment buildings.

## **Highlights from Liberty Lutheran's Life Services**

### **Lutheran Congregational Services**

For over 50 years, Lutheran Congregational Services (LCS) has partnered with Lutheran congregations and volunteers to serve people in eastern Pennsylvania and beyond. We strive to help congregations and individuals live out their baptismal promises.

Our programs include disaster response, Lay Eucharistic Visitor Training, and bereavement support programs; we also provide education and facilitation services.

### **Lutheran Disaster Response – Eastern Pennsylvania**

LCS serves as the ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response affiliate for the Northeastern and Southeastern Pennsylvania Synods.

Pennsylvania's weather has become hotter, wetter, and more unpredictable. FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) practices are directing states to take more responsibility for disaster preparedness and recovery.

As a result, we are strengthening partnerships with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and partners in PAVOAD (Pennsylvania Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) in order to reach survivors who face the greatest barriers to recovery.



Lutheran Congregational Services and partners were awarded the Spirit of Civility Award from Common Ground USA for our disaster response work in March 2026.



Thanks to volunteers, Christmas was a safer dryer holiday this year in Berks County.

### **LCFS' West Philadelphia Senior Community Center**

Located at 1016 N. 41<sup>st</sup> Street in Philadelphia, not far from the Philadelphia Zoo, the West Philadelphia Senior Community Center (WPsCC) promotes the well-being of older adults in their community.

Programs and services are designed to build confidence and nurture the body, mind and soul of its members, all while celebrating their lived experiences and wisdom. Of its 1,347 members, 93% participate in at least one activity, with 89% joining in more than one.



“Who’s That Lady”, a new program with 77 enrolled, is gaining momentum. Each week participants share something about themselves. Many are joyful, happy memories, nostalgia of childhoods and raising a family. Some are heart wrenching stories of pain, suffering and loss. The leader’s unique skills help the class navigate every story, with grace, support and love.



The center’s quilting class received a boost from a fellow quilter. Paul’s Run resident donated her sewing machine, fabrics, notions and more when she moved to personal care. She was happy to find a new home where her treasured collection would be appreciated and put to good use. The class was grateful for the tools and supplies, using much of it for their current project.

Respectfully submitted by Julia Frank, Director of Community Outreach,  
on behalf of Liberty Lutheran. [jfrank@libertylutheran.org](mailto:jfrank@libertylutheran.org)

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## LUTHERAN ARCHIVES CENTER AT PHILADELPHIA

### Section E, Addendum 2

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## LUTHERAN SETTLEMENT HOUSE



### Lutheran Settlement House Report

When people visit Lutheran Settlement House (LSH), they're often surprised by how much happens here every day. Maybe you will be, too, when you read this report.

At Lutheran Settlement House, we serve people at every stage of life, walking alongside older adults, families experiencing homelessness, victims and survivors of domestic violence, and neighbors working hard to put food on the table. We accompany people from 40 different zip codes in Philadelphia, and our clients range in age from newborn babies to adults in their 90s. Every day, we provide comprehensive counseling, education, housing, food, and health services through collaborations with more than 70 partners, because together, we can do so much more.

What ties our work together, though, is *how* we do it. LSH is client-centered. That means we meet people where they are, we reveal options when they feel optionless, and we remind people of their strength.

This report offers a glimpse into what's possible when we come together and put our compassion into action. You'll read stories of children healing through therapy, older adults volunteering to make sure their neighbors have enough healthy food, and parents who once faced homelessness preparing to move into their own home. Even in the most difficult times, our work creates community and joy.

You are an essential part of our community. As you read this report, we hope you feel the joy of knowing that you are part of a movement that is transforming lives.

## Client Voices

The community at Lutheran Settlement House, the change that's possible, and the compassion at the heart of our work is because of the people we serve. Their dreams, their joy, and their future are what drive our work forward.

- “This place is a treasure trove. It’s been an absolute game-changer for me. I’m always glad I made this decision to get here.” –Joan Creamer, Center Member
- “I’m living my best life. I’m happy every day when I walk out that door.” –Star, Center Member & Volunteer
- “Being at STAR helps me get through things that I wouldn’t be able to get through on my own. It teaches me to ask for help.” –Destiny, STAR Teen Ambassador
- “The Settlement House is my family. They make me feel warm and wanted.” –Renee, Domestic Violence Survivor
- “I’m different now. I’m more confident. I blossomed into a better person.” –Chanta, Former Jane Addams Place Resident

## Impact Data

### Older Adults

For adults 55+, The Center offers a range of programming for right now and for what’s next. Members can explore fitness and dance classes, personalized health coaching, volunteering to help others, creative arts, trips and excursions, digital literacy classes, healthy cooking, and more. Members learn new skills, meet new friends, and plan for the future.

**200:** Members of our Center for older adults

**64:** Center members volunteered 4,667 hours at Lutheran Settlement House

**316:** Exercise classes offered, leading to 89% of members being more physically active

**12,387:** Meals served to Center members, with 89% of members eating healthier meals

**155:** Center members utilized health and wellness services

**87%:** Center members reported that their support network has grown

### Homeless Services

Jane Addams Place, our family shelter, helps families entangled in the housing crisis to heal from the trauma they have experienced, to explore housing and employment options, and to plan for the future they want and deserve.

**264:** People called Jane Addams Place home, including 159 children

**38,325:** Nourishing meals served

- 8:** Average months' length of stay
- 25:** Residents connected to ongoing mental health support
- 195:** Participants in community-building activities

### **Food Access**

Our food pantry provides fresh food and nutritional support to food-insecure families, teens, domestic violence survivors, and older adults. Open five days a week and six hours a day, our pantry is among the most accessible and responsive in Philadelphia.

- 322,780:** Pounds of food distributed
- 13,278:** Visits to the pantry
- 430:** Thanksgiving meals distributed
- 85:** Cooking and nutrition classes offered

### **Education**

Education is woven throughout all of our programs. At Lutheran Settlement House, and through our various partners across the city, children, teens, and adults grow their skills and knowledge to live the lives they want and deserve.

- 1,519:** Professionals trained to identify and respond to domestic violence
- 2,237:** Children and youth participated in domestic violence prevention programs
- 170:** Hours of educational, art, wellness, and social-emotional learning for children living at Jane Addams Place
- 167:** Instances of school advocacy for children experiencing homelessness
- 50:** Technology classes taught to older adults
- 68%:** Center members who learned a new skill

### **Bilingual Domestic Violence Program**

Established nearly 50 years ago, our Bilingual Domestic Violence Program (BDVP) provides lifesaving services to approximately 4,000 women, men, children, and non-binary people each year, including counseling, housing support, hospital-based advocacy and training, and violence prevention education.

- 3,876:** Hotline calls answered
- 2,930:** Children, teens, and adults received counseling
- 137:** Nights of emergency housing provided to families fleeing domestic violence
- 168:** Systems advocacy efforts facilitated at 7 healthcare sites across the city
- 879:** Healthcare providers trained to screen for domestic violence

## Program Highlights

FY25 was a year filled with community, compassion, and change. We felt the power of community among older adults building friendships and memories in The Center, and in how they gave back by volunteering in our pantry. We put compassion into action caring for children who witnessed domestic violence and helping families prepare for life after shelter. And most of all, we witnessed the power of people to change themselves, and their communities. These highlights showcase the power of community, the necessity of compassion, and the magic of change.

**Caring for Children Impacted by DV:** Domestic violence doesn't just impact adults. Children who witness domestic violence often experience PTSD and require timely and ongoing support to heal. In FY25, our child therapy program—the only DV-specific child therapy program in Philadelphia—helped 162 young people between the ages of 5 and 18 to not only process their trauma, but to create pathways to stability, healing, and hope. As one parent recently shared, “Therapy sessions at LSH have been truly life-changing for both of my children.”

**Creating Confidence & Community:** The Center plays a vital role in healthy aging for hundreds of older adults each year. Overnight trips and daylong excursions are among our most popular activities. Last year, we offered eight trips, more than any other older adult center in the city. From overnight trips to a camping lodge in the Poconos and a beachfront hotel down the shore to day trips to see a show or go shopping with friends, these experiences create moments of independence, confidence, and community that extend far beyond the trips themselves. Spending time exploring new places promotes social connection, physical activity, lifelong learning, and joy, all of which support overall wellness and healthy aging.

**Older Adults Drive our Food Pantry:** Our food pantry is open five days a week, six hours a day, and we distribute over 320,000 pounds of food each year. How do we do it? We have an unbelievably committed team of older adult volunteers. Center members donated almost 4,000 volunteer hours last year to make sure their neighbors felt welcome in our pantry and left with the food they needed to keep their families healthy. As Star, one of our regular volunteers, recently shared: “I feel good every day when I walk back into my house, knowing I did something good today.”

**Helping Families Thrive After Shelter:** We believe that every person deserves to live a fulfilling, meaningful, and joyful life. At Jane Addams Place, that means helping families plan for the immediate and long-term challenges—and joys—of life after shelter. Our financial literacy program helps families increase their savings by matching up to \$500 per family. This extra money helps prepare families to address the unexpected needs that inevitably arise, while also saving for future goals like a college education or a long-awaited family trip.

**A Sustainable Future:** We recently purchased the building that has been home to Jane Addams Place for the past seven years! Owning our building means permanence—a safe foundation that no lease or market shift can take away. Technically, the purchase was completed in FY26, but much of the groundwork was laid in FY25, and it's too big a deal not to mention here! With a

permanent home for Jane Addams Place, we can focus on what matters most: welcoming people with compassion, connecting families to the resources they need, and reminding the people we serve of their strength. That's how we create change—in people's lives and in our community.

**Volunteer Spotlight:** Volunteers make our work possible. Last year, 461 people volunteered 8,045 hours of their time to stock our pantry, provide companionship to older adults, sort and organize donations in our family shelter, and beautify our spaces so that everyone who walks through our doors feels welcomed and cared for. Over 100 of the hours donated last year came from Ekram, an amazing volunteer who lives near our Fishtown location. Ekram volunteers in our pantry every week, welcoming people by name and making sure they receive nourishing food. If you've been to our Fishtown site in the last year, you most likely were greeted by Ekram. Thank you for everything you do, Ekram!

## Get Involved

We would love to meet you and the people in your congregation. Below, we've included a few ways that you can get involved with Lutheran Settlement House; we're also open to your ideas!

**Invite us to speak:** We'd love to visit your church, give a temple talk, or speak to adult or youth education groups. To invite us to speak, contact David Chiles, [dchiles@lshphilly.org](mailto:dchiles@lshphilly.org).

**Volunteer:** We have volunteer opportunities for both individuals and groups, including youth groups. To explore volunteer opportunities, contact Audrey Moffatt, [amoffatt@lshphilly.org](mailto:amoffatt@lshphilly.org).

**Come for a tour:** We'd love to host you for a tour. To schedule a tour, contact David Chiles, [dchiles@lshphilly.org](mailto:dchiles@lshphilly.org).

**Make a gift:** Financial contributions help sustain and grow our work. Collections also help stock our food pantry and provide essentials like back to school supplies and comfort kits for children and youth entering our family shelter. To learn about our current needs, contact Erica Zaveloff, [ezaveloff@lshphilly.org](mailto:ezaveloff@lshphilly.org).

This report was prepared and submitted by Lisa M. Jacobs, Grants & Communications Manager on behalf of Lutheran Settlement House.

## RELIGIOUS LEADERS' COUNCIL OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

### Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia

The Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia was founded in 2006 to build relationships of mutual support, to offer a moral and spiritual voice in the region, and to identify local issues of concern for dialogue and action. The Council is one of the programs of Interfaith Philadelphia.

In addition to our Bishop, the Rev. Bryan Penman, there are over 35 senior leaders from different faiths and traditions that represent more than two million people from across the greater Philadelphia region who meet regularly throughout the year.

Highlights from 2025 include:

- The Council organized a series of Love Thy Neighbor Walks during which Council members and dozens of other community members gathered in neighborhoods where immigrant families live, work, and shop for a public demonstration of solidarity and compassion. Walkers connected with neighborhood residents, supported local businesses, and stood tall in their support of immigrants around the city.
- Leading up to Election Day, faith leaders from the Religious Leaders Council shared prayers as part of their bipartisan Peace and Civility video series. Each week, council members shared weekly prayers and messages to promote understanding and harmony across differences.
- Zones of Peace, an initiative of the Religious Leaders Council, elevates the leadership of organizations that
- pioneer creative responses to violence and protect the communities where Philadelphians live, work, and play. This year, the Council recognized its 100th Zone of Peace as the CHARLES Foundation joined this powerful network of houses of worship, schools, and community-based organizations.
- In June, the Religious Leaders Council partnered for the second year with Penn Live Arts on Toll the Bell,
- a powerful city-wide sound installation for National Gun Violence Awareness Day. This event featured a vigil, a reflective walk, live performances, and the simultaneous ringing of bells across Philadelphia to recognize those tragically lost to gun violence.
- The Inter-Seminary Initiative convenes area theological schools and seminaries to foster collaborative relationships that equip future religious leaders for interfaith engagement. In 2025, the Initiative formed a Deans and Presidents Roundtable, held a panel discussion on religions and ethics, and piloted a program for newly ordained religious leaders. We are blessed to have United Lutheran Seminary be a part of this initiative.

Looking ahead, Interfaith Philadelphia and the Religious Leaders Council continue to host programming on Philadelphia's legacy of Religious Liberty in connection with America's 250th Anniversary, youth programming, and the Passport to Understanding: Religious Freedom Walk.

Finally, on May 31, 2026, the 2026 Dare to Understand Awards Ceremony will be held at Congregation Beth Am Israel as Interfaith Philadelphia's founder and CEO, Abby Stamelman Hocky, is celebrated for her 22 years of extraordinary leadership and service.

Information about upcoming events, Zones of Peace, the Religious Leaders Council, the work of Interfaith Philadelphia, or Dare to Understand can be found online at <https://www.interfaithphiladelphia.org/>.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Fritz Fowler  
Bishop's Liaison for Interfaith Affairs

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**SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL HOUSE**

**Section E, Addendum 3 and 4**

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**WOMEN OF THE ELCA (WELCA)**

*(no report submitted)*