

mission accomplished



Services that heal, strengthen and provide hope. Winter 2005

Lutheran World Relief Tsunami Program

The Rev. Dr. Gene Thiemann has been asked to work with Lutheran World Relief in the wake of the tsunami. Rev. Thiemann left in February for Chennai (formerly Madras), India to begin his 3-6 month program development and communications position with the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of India which is the umbrella organization for the 11 different Lutheran Church bodies working in India. While in this important and challenging role, Rev. Thiemann will be training local development workers and helping to develop worthy projects for Lutheran World Relief (LWR) support, as well as being a crucial part of the communication process. He will also be developing important disaster relief strategies for the future.

When asked what types of projects he may help develop, Rev. Thiemann said, "the best projects to support will be those in which the people themselves participate in the planning and implementation. This means we need to wait and see what their unmet needs are, and what they want. It could be help for fisherfolk—perhaps with boats, nets or improved markets. It could mean reconstructing buildings, or elevating them or in other ways making life for people near the shores more safe. LWR, for a long time, has favored the marathon over the sprint. LWR will be there for the long haul, and long after many other agencies have gone home."

Although India did not suffer in the same way as Indonesia or Sri Lanka, nearly 10,000 are confirmed to have died along

Continued on inside bottom, left-hand page.

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Return to the Common Good!

As I write this letter it has been one month to the day since the devastating tsunami in south Asia turned the whole world upside down. In response to the mind-numbing losses of lives and property, Americans poured out their compassion through prayers, relief efforts and over \$1.4 billion dollars in donations so far!

In contrast to this thrilling and God-pleasing response to neighbors in need, it is troubling to acknowledge the lack of response of the citizens of Colorado to the compelling needs of vulnerable children and families in our own neighborhoods and communities – people whose lives have been swept away by crushing waves of poverty, hunger, addiction, abuse, homelessness, illness, old age, persecution and disability. When they lift their heads from the rubble of life, who do they see rushing to their aid? For many, it seems to be easier to respond to tsunami victims on the other side of the world than it is to help alleviate the suffering of people living in our midst.



A LETTER FROM OUR

President



MY Best DECEMBER

It was December 1st 43 years ago...

Amidst a baby's cry and through her grogginess, she thought they said "what a cute baby being adopted out." That was the last time Marti knew what happened to her child she gave up for adoption.

The times were different, the expectations as well. Marti never saw him, held him, never comforted him, never looked into his eyes. Only her parents knew she had been pregnant. The adoption was closed.

For years, Marti made sure her information was updated with the Colorado Adoption Registry, hoping and praying that her son would try to find her. She went on to happily marry, have two children and later re-marry a fellow widower creating a large, blended family. And still she prayed frequently to find her son.

About a year ago, Marti and her family were vacationing in Virginia. Her daughter and husband were playing on the internet and said "Hey, what should we look up." Without hesitation she said "adoption." With great love and support, her family looked up almost 3000 postings. On number 3000, they came across one that said "I was born 12/1/61 in Denver. I was apparently born a few weeks premature- went home with adoptive parents. If you think we may be related, please e-mail me at..." On the posting, he said his name was Erik.

Marti knew. She knew this was her son. With every emotional and logical fiber she knew, she knew. They quickly sent an e-mail to the address listed and waited. When they did not hear back, they contacted Virginia Tech where the e-mail had originated. Virginia Tech would not give out any information. Discouraged, Marti and her family returned to Denver from their vacation.

Marti says "I just had to go back to my prayer that God would allow him into my life at the right time – and trust that the timing would be right."

Immediately, Marti contacted Lutheran Family Services who had handled her adoption so many years before. Although she kept her information up to date with Colorado Adoption Registry, she had neglected to keep her current address on file with LFS. The caseworker couldn't give out any information, but had received a letter from a man who hoped to find his mother. Through a series of letters and waivers, the caseworker finally said, "I can tell you if his first name is indeed Erik."
"Yes, his name is Erik."

Consider these facts:

- Colorado ranks 47th in K-12 education funding as a share of state income.
- Colorado ranks 50th in the nation in on-time immunization rates.
- Colorado ranks 48th in the percentage of low-income children covered by health insurance.
- Colorado ranks 45th in the share of low-income individuals enrolled in Medicaid.
- Colorado ranks 42nd in providing prenatal care.
- Colorado ranks 48th in the nation for state funding for higher education.
- The high school graduation rate in Colorado fell from 76 % in 1990 to 70 % in 2004.
- Colorado is ranked 28th in quality of life for children (19th in 1996).
- Colorado is 6th in per capita income and 46th in charitable giving.
- Colorado is required to refund \$459 million to taxpayers this year while planning an additional \$263 million in budget cuts for the coming fiscal year.

Every day, in partnership with you, LFS ministers to the personal disasters that leave lives broken, isolated and vulnerable. It is a privilege. But for four straight years we have watched as funding for the most vulnerable people in Colorado has been steadily slashed or eliminated in response to the most restrictive state tax structure in the United States. Our legislators vow to do something about this structural funding problem this year, even though they have failed to take action in the past. They need your help to do so. They need to hear from you in order to sustain the political courage to do the right thing for those who require help to survive, let alone to thrive.

Over the years you have been faithful and generous in personally responding to human need through LFS and you are making a difference in troubled lives! You have remained steadfast in walking with the vulnerable while others walk away. In 2005 we have the opportunity and the moral obligation, to halt the rush to the bottom of funding for child welfare, education, health care and human services. Please continue to be champions for children and families by calling or writing your state congressional delegates NOW, and tell them that it's time for the state to remove the financial and statutory obstacles that keep us from providing a safety net for vulnerable people that we can be proud of!

Let's make Colorado #1 in returning to the common good!



Jim Barclay, President/CEO

HEART CLUB Reception

May 25, 2005

Special thank you gathering for all Heart Club members. Socializing, hors d'oeuvres, and getting to know more about the latest LFS news, to be held at the exciting Cherokee Ranch & Castle.

The Heart Club is our leadership giving group and includes all donors who have committed to an annual giving level of \$500 or above. If you are interested call LFS for more information!

SAVE the date!

LFS Golf Tournament, September 12th



To be held at Arrowhead Golf Club. Featuring extreme elevation changes, abundant wildlife, rolling terrain, dramatic vistas and thousands of feet of ancient red sandstone rocks towering majestically above the earth.

April 9th Gala: "Steppin' Out" for Others!

Plaza at the Mart Big Band Theme

Black Tie Optional

Music by Hot Tomatoes Orchestra: Masters of Swing, Famous for Jazz \$150/ticket

\$200/patron ticket

\$1200/valuable

5:30-7pm Social Reception

7:00pm Dinner

7-9pm LFS Program

8:30-11pm Live Music, Entertainment & Dancing

Silent Auction throughout evening

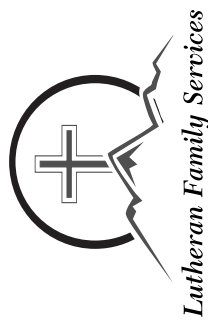
Additional incentive - \$50,000 match offered by the Iams, the Neumanns and Thrivent Financial.

February 10th...

we hosted an event especially for our younger adult friends and supporters. This Social Get Together for appetizers and fun was at Lord's newest restaurant. The Ninth Door. It benefited Lutheran Family Services. Watch for future Gen X events!



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mission accomplished

mark your calendar

the Gift that keeps on giving

Lutheran Family Services is working towards a wonderful new goal, creating an endowment that will be matched UP TO \$200,000, allowing us to accumulate a total of \$400,000. *However, this money must be raised by July 31st, 2005.*

Jerry Paul, an LFS board member, started the fundraising effort in a major way. In late September of 2004 Jerry and Deb Paul threw a house party. Friends and colleagues were invited. Some knew of LFS, some had never heard of our agency. Jerry and Deb set forth a challenge. The challenge was to get involved, to learn more and to contribute financially. In an amazing gesture of generosity, Jerry and Deb put forth their own matching challenge. Deb and Jerry committed to personally match up to \$25,000 in funds brought in for LFS as a result of their party.



Board members Jerry Paul and wife Deb, present a check to LMC Foundation. From left to right: Cheryl Haggstrom (LMC), Jim Barclay (LFS), Deb Paul (LFS), Kenneth W. Eggeman (LMC), Jerry Paul (LFS), John Van Veen (LMC)

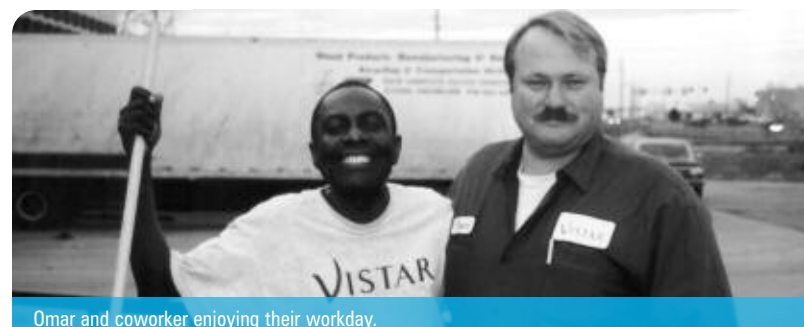
"Deb and I have been long time supporters of LFS and are big believers in this cause, this effort, the human concern, the urgency to help those who otherwise might not be able to help themselves; whether that's kids, struggling moms, lonely and isolated older adults or immigrants trying to make a better life for themselves. This cause/effort is really important to us. We're in the position where we can do something about it... and we must help!" said Jerry.

To date, Deb and Jerry Paul's party has raised \$29,225. This was compounded by their challenge agreement to contribute a \$25,000 match. Consequently, the net amount of revenue generated for the Paul Party totaled \$54,225! Other solicitations for the endowment fund have raised an additional \$17,720.

On January 20, 2005 a check for \$71,945 was presented to the LMC Community Foundation for the Lutheran Family Services Endowment Fund. The LMC Foundation matched it dollar for dollar giving us a balance of \$143,890 towards our \$400,000 endowment goal! What an amazing way to start 2005! We continue to welcome any LFS Endowment Fund donations.

Did you know?

The Lutheran Family Services Foster Care program is eligible for the Colorado Child Care Contribution Tax Credit (CCCC). For donations designated to foster care services, you will receive both a tax credit and tax deduction. Read the enclosed brochure for additional information.



Omar and coworker enjoying their workday.

Planning for the future

Imagine a world that has been turned upside down, inside out and somehow has landed you in Colorado. This is the situation that faces many new refugees on a daily basis. Unlike other immigrant groups, most refugees come to this country out of necessity with a survival need. For refugees the future is at best uncertain. The Refugee & Asylee Programs of LFS takes these families and begins to teach and guide them through the process of rebuilding their lives and hopes. Often, refugees arrive with very little English and the skills needed to survive in American society are very different from the skills they used and developed in their home country. A supportive employment environment is essential to success in their new life.

A wonderful portion of the Refugee & Asylee program helps these individuals find gainful employment. The government mandate for new refugees is to have them working no later than their fourth month in the U.S. Fully authorized to work with refugee status under Section 207 of the Immigration and Naturalization Act, these refugees are dedicated and loyal to the companies that employ them.

Jeanette Smith of AirServ says "It is a win-win situation - it's a win for AirServ because we get a very dedicated reliable employee and it's a win for the employee because they get their foot in the door with a job in the U.S. Additionally there are many self-rewards as we give back to the community and watch these people become successful."

Omar has a family of 9 to feed, clothe and house. Without his job at Vistar/VSA, he would be unable to do that. Even with this job, Omar struggles. However he is glad to be in this country and to have the opportunity to support his family.

LFS is in need of additional companies and organizations that will hire refugees and asylees. Companies that need full-time employees in the areas of janitorial/cleaning, factory work/assembly, kitchen help or domestic skills such as sewing are a great fit for refugee employment. Each jobs helps!

Jeanette at AirServ says she would recommend employing refugees to others and would tell them about the extensive support system she has had with LFS throughout the hiring process as well as the continual follow-up.

For any company in need of good employees, please contact Rhoda Hoffberg at 303.225.0190. We welcome creative ideas for employment. LFS will provide interpreters for training purposes and will help with all necessary employment related paperwork.

LFS would also like to thank those at Vistar/VSA and AirServ for their commitment to diversity and for helping refugees to begin new, productive lives in the United States.

Collins' floods. Retired to Fort Collins since 1997, Rev. Thiemann serves as the Pastoral Assistant at Redeemer Lutheran Church. LFS is interested in helping with tsunami relief and has looked for ways to be involved. Jim Barclay, president and CEO of Lutheran Family Services put it best, "It is my sincere hope that you will be able to communicate with me during your time in India so that LFS might provide prayer support for you and those you serve and perhaps respond to needs that you may find going untouched. We have already had inquiries as to how LFS might become involved and now God has delivered you to lead us! We await your insights, stories and opportunities for service with great anticipation! God bless you and keep you safe and strong in faith and service!"

the long eastern and southern coastlines. Another 5,000 are still missing. For many years, Lutheran World Relief has supported both relief and long-term development or self-help projects in this area. Rev. Thiemann has been privileged to visit this part of India with some frequency during his 20 years of work in communications and development with LWR.

"In light of the horrendous suffering in the tsunami's wake, it was not a hard decision to say yes to LWR'S request and to help make Christ's love visible in a world of woe," says Rev. Thiemann.

Rev. Thiemann brings many years of experience and accomplishments to this project. He has worked with Lutheran Family Services disaster response program to offer assistance to people suffering from devastation from Colorado's wildfires and Fort

Thanksgiving Basket & Angel Tree Christmas projects

Angel Tree Christmas Project and Thanksgiving Basket Project tie our community together in authentic ministry partnerships. The care and compassion demonstrated by individuals, organizations and churches crossed the barriers of language, religion and economic situation touching each person with God's love.

A Very Special Christmas

The door opened, somewhat tentatively. A small face peered out and instantly a grin transformed her face. Swett and Crawford were at the door in the first of two trips, delivering food, clothes and household items as part of Angel Tree Christmas Project. This Muslim family had come to Colorado with little more than the clothes on their back. Fleeing from persecution, this wheelchair bound mother, father and children ended up in Denver as just one of the refugee families LFS has helped to begin re-building their lives.

Ann Malpby of Swett and Crawford was asked by her company to find a family they could help. She tried several avenues and felt very led by God to contact Lutheran Family Services. Instantly there was a fit. "I know the role of God is to spread love, and what better way to spread his love than by touching this family. Some people in my company weren't sure about the family being practicing Muslims. They didn't think they would appreciate Christmas. But what better way to get to know the holiday than to show our love," said Ann.

Nor only did their adopted family appreciate the gifts, but they turned around and gave back. Having made friends with other families in their apartment complex, they shared what they had received from Swett and Crawford with their neighbors.



receiving home project: underway

Lutheran Family Services of Colorado was awarded a contract with Jefferson County to create a Receiving Home for young children who need emergency foster care. From July 2003-July 2004, Jefferson County had over 225 children placed in foster care on an emergency basis. These children needed a safe haven and there was none available. Our Receiving Home will be this safe haven where children can be placed 24 hours a day. There will be room available for 6 children at a time (ages birth-12 years) and their stay may be anywhere from a few days up to 3 months. LFS will provide foster parents, programming and a treatment manager to oversee the cases. The county will provide counseling and other services to the children.

As the county and LFS work together on the massive remodel to make this home habitable for the children and foster parents, Jefferson County area Lutheran churches and other community organizations have been asked to adopt a room. Jefferson County will provide basic furnishings, however, each room needs to be painted and decorated and made to look and feel like a home.

There will be opportunities for ongoing support through donations, yard work and help as this amazing project unfolds. Far beyond the need for money and items, the Receiving Home Project goes to the heart of serving in an authentic capacity, filling these rooms with love, making sure these children have something to hold on to in a time of such need. *Please call Doyle Lott, Program Director at 303.217.5846 or Kirsten Nelson, at 303.217.5857 for an updated list of items and services that are needed.*

Favorite December [continued from page two]

Marti had found her son. The process of reunification began. First with letters, then phone calls and counseling and finally Erik came to the place of his birth to visit Marti. They spent three days at a bed and breakfast and talked and walked and talked and walked. An instant connection, so many commonalities it was scary and a mutual desire to get to know each other forged an immediate bond.

At the end of three days Erik met brothers and sisters as well as nieces and nephews. Since then there have been trips and reunions with extended family. Marti met her new granddaughters. Erik met additional extended family.

And on December 1st, 2004 Marti spent her son's birthday with him. She says "It was the first December 1st I met with joy rather than emptiness and sorrow."

Many years have passed since Erik's adoption. With the years, new ways of doing things have emerged. LFS now exclusively deals in open adoptions. When Marti was asked about her views on this she says, "I used to be against open adoptions, but in the last few years I've started to see how great they can be. I wonder if I had been able to be in Erik's life as he grew up, how things might have been different, been better."

LFS believes that no child can have too many people to love them. Open adoptions are not about co-parenting, they're not a shared custody. They are about honoring the child with no secrets, no hidden agenda, never thinking that there is shame in their adoption. As one birth mother said, "I didn't lose a child, I gained a family."



The Masakira family visited by the Stratton family.

Love in any language...

Marla and her daughter Skylar Stratton, of Evergreen Lutheran Church, were able to visit two families. Their church had put together a giving tree and people picked various items to give to these families. Although the families did not speak much English, Skylar says they were so happy to see them, knew how to say "Merry Christmas" and "Thank You."

Warmly united by the fourteen children who asked to be held by the Stratton's during their entire visit, the families communicated as best they could. Even without a language in common, Marla says their time together was full of joy. "It was such a gift for us - probably even more than for them," says Marla.

With just a limited English vocabulary, there was one more phrase both these families knew. When the Stratton's were leaving, both families stood outside their residence and shouted "I Love You" over and over again. God's love truly touched everyone this day.

A special thank you

to the following groups who assisted with the Thanksgiving and Christmas projects:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Abiding Hope Lutheran Church | Peace with Christ Lutheran Church |
| Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel | LFS Harlan Street Staff |
| Anderson, Paige | Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit |
| Antony the Elf (Jon Wilkinson) | Lutheran Women's Sorority |
| Augustana Lutheran Church | Messiah Lutheran Church |
| Bath Nursery and Garden Center | Miner and Miner |
| Bethlehem Lutheran Church | Consulting Engineers, Inc |
| Christ Lutheran Church | Muse, Hannah |
| Clear Channel Communications | Mt. Hope Lutheran Church |
| CoBank | Mt. Olive Lutheran Church |
| Colorado Virtual Academy/Roots & Shoots Club | Norbel Credit Union in Loveland |
| Community First National Bank on Horsetooth | Papa John's Pizza in Loveland |
| Cookies By Design | Peterson, Kristi |
| Evergreen Lutheran Church | Plymouth Congregational Church |
| Faith Bible Chapel | Qwest |
| Faith Lutheran Church | Realities for Children "Bikes for Tikes" |
| Fiser, Jessy | Redeemer Lutheran Church |
| First Lutheran Church | Rothstein, Kass & Company, PC. |
| Fort Collins Nursery | Santa (Mike Berryhill) |
| Girl Scout Cadet Troop 528 in Loveland | Schrader's Country Store on Shields Patrons |
| Glory of God Lutheran Church | Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church |
| Grace Church of Arvada | St. John's Lutheran Church |
| Grace Community Church | St. Phillip Lutheran Church |
| Grace Lutheran Church | St. Stephen Lutheran Church |
| Gulley Greenhouse | Stephen, Katy |
| Hatch, Kayla | Subway Sandwich Shops on Drake, Mason, and Harmony |
| Holy Cross Lutheran Church | Summit of Peace Lutheran Church |
| Immanuel Lutheran Church | Swett and Crawford |
| Jansen, Doreen | Trinity Lutheran Church |
| Joy Lutheran Church | Wal-Mart |
| King Soopers on S. College | Zion American Lutheran Church |
| KISS FM | |
| Ladies' Small Group Bible Study | |

tsunami program [continued from page one]

