

RIMROCK Echoes



ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”

PROVERBS 22:6

IN THIS
ISSUE:

Retirement Announcements
& a Welcome to
the New CEO

St. John's & Lutheran
Social Services of MT
Annual Report

A Special Gift
Given In Memory
of a Loved One

Sneak Peek
of the Summer
Concert Lineup

ANNUAL REPORT

2015

ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN MINISTRIES



Anticipation grows for summer opening of the WyndStone senior living project located in the Billings Heights and constructed around the Little White Church. WyndStone is a joint venture between St. John's and St. Vincent Healthcare. This project will provide 83 apartments for independent and assisted living. At the beginning of 2016, 63% of independent living apartments have been reserved and selected by Charter Members. If interested in becoming a Charter Member, contact our WyndStone Retirement Counselor at 406-655-7700.

FOUNDING AND MISSION

As a social ministry of 23 Lutheran congregations for over 52 years, St. John's Lutheran Ministries has remained a community of diverse people sharing God's healing presence. Our mission is to provide living opportunities within nurturing environments of hope, dignity, and love.



2015 marked the first full, successful year of Senior Independence of Montana providing skilled home health care to a total of 245 people. Preparation is well underway for licensed Hospice care to be launched in 2016. Senior Independence is a joint venture between St. John's, the Billings Clinic and Big Sky Senior Services.

PEOPLE SERVED

In 2015, St. John's Lutheran Ministries provided housing for over 1,250 senior adults; daily care for 151 children within the on-campus Center for Generations; internships, classes and learning opportunities to 374 students; plus rehabilitation and pharmacy support to over 150 residents within rural communities.

ANNUAL REPORT

2015

Lutheran Social Services
OF MONTANA

PHILANTHROPY

Generous donors make it possible for St. John's to provide compassionate care to people in need. To ensure the future of St. John's and Lutheran Social Services of Montana, please consider these ministries within your planned giving.

For questions or assistance
you may call the Foundation Office at

406-655-5332

You may also go on-line at
www.sjlm.org or
www.lssmt.org to send your
gift of hope, dignity and love.

THANK YOU!

Since 2002, Lutheran Social Services has operated under the auspices of St. John's and been united in the same mission. In 2015, staff across Montana assisted 63 individuals dealing with an unplanned pregnancy and facilitated 9 domestic adoption placements. Although the number of parents who choose adoption for their babies is declining nationwide, the number of couples hoping to adopt remains stable, including 8 LSS families ready and waiting to receive a child. In 2015, search and reunion requests were fielded from 27 LSS birthparents and adoptees, and 3 reunions were orchestrated. For the 10th consecutive year, LSS was awarded a Dave Thomas Foundation Grant to help match foster children with forever families. Our Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter worked with 34 children and 85 families, which resulted in 7 foster children finding permanent homes. Therapeutic counseling services were provided by LSS to 81 clients in 2015, including services provided to Lutheran pastors across the State.

2016

GOVERNANCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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SECRETARY

Jyl Story..... *King of Glory Lutheran Church*

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FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Rachel Simonson... *Financial Planner*

Rod Wilson..... *Trailhead Realtors*

Jim Walker *Retired*

LSS WELCOME!

In 2015 and 2016, Lutheran Social Services gladly welcomed two new Birthparent/Adoption Counselors to their staff; Krista Hellem and Tasha Houlihan. Krista is located in the Missoula office and can be reached at 406-549-0147. Tasha is in the Billings office and can be reached at 406-647-3583. We are grateful to have such wonderful additions to our staff. LSS will be hosting an adoption workshop in April. Our staff will be educating and preparing 8 new families from across the state for a successful journey through the adoption process. Lutheran Social Services continues to share in the joy of Joining Hearts in Hope. Since February of 2015 to present, we gratefully have placed 6 newborns and 4 young children with our waiting families.

We thank you for your remarkable and generous support! Your kindness touches people of all ages with hope, dignity, and love.



KRISTA HELLEM



TASHA HOULIHAN

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and stay up to date on St. John's news!

A Time of Thanks and Transitions...

At this year's Annual Meeting, May 1, 2016, we will bid retirement congratulations to Kent Burgess who has faithfully served as St. John's Chief Executive Officer for the past 25 years. At the same meeting, we will welcome and install David Trost who was recently selected by the Board of Directors to be St. John's new executive leader. Mr. Burgess announced his retirement in 2015, allowing the Board to implement a thorough transition process inclusive of a national search. The Search Committee reviewed multiple resumes, and conducted several interviews, prior to determining that Mr. Trost was the right leader to continue moving the St. John's mission forward.



Kent began his senior living career in 1974 when he joined the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society in Boise, Idaho, first as an Activity Director and then as an Administrative Intern. He served Good Samaritan communities in Arlington, OH, and Idaho Falls, ID, prior to taking a four-year break in 1986 to serve as the Business Manager at Holden Village in the North Cascades Wilderness of Washington State. It was from Holden, joined by spouse Linda and kids Dean, Erin and Ian, he relocated to Billings and St. John's. "What a gift," Kent reflected, "for 25 years to have been able to be part of such a wonderful community of people, committed to serving a single mission focused on lifting others higher." The Board will retain Kent for 6-12 months to further assist in the transition and to compile a history of St. John's. He further reflected, "I suspect I'm the only person who has read all St. John's Board minutes, beginning with that formative meeting held at the Starlight Terrace in 1958. I've always wanted to write a short history of the St. John's ministry and will now have the time to dedicate to a project I've always thought important."

David Trost is a native of Minnesota who graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead, MN. He subsequently attended Montana State University-Billings to complete his Masters in Health Care Administration. Following an internship at Eventide in Moorhead, David was employed in senior living serving communities in Great Falls, MT, and Fort Collins, CO prior to having Kent recruit him to St. John's twenty-one years ago. He has worked in a number of increasingly responsible positions at St. John's, beginning as the Administrator of the licensed nursing home and transitioning to become the Executive Director of Mission Ridge. Most recently he served as the Regional Administrator overseeing our Management Agreement at Sapphire Lutheran Homes in Hamilton and our communities in Laurel and Red Lodge. David was appointed St. John's Chief Operating Officer in 2014. "David is uniquely suited to lead St. John's into the future and to continue our legacy of high quality care," offered Jim Ochiltree, the Chair of St. John's Board of Directors. David and his wife Michelle, along with their children Caleb, Parker and Hayden, are active members of King of Glory Lutheran Church. Michelle is completing her Doctorate in Nursing Practice at Montana State University this spring. Michelle has accepted a position as a Family Nurse Practitioner for St. Vincent Healthcare and will be practicing at their Broadwater Clinic.

Going forward, St. John's and our resident depositors are eagerly awaiting the opening of the WyndStone project in Billings Heights later this summer. Relocation of Faith Lutheran Church from Box Elder, of which Kent fondly refers to as The Little White Church, will anchor the new community as its worship center. "It has been an amazing 25 years," said Kent. "I remember when St. John's was one building and Mission Ridge was a horse pasture. I'm so thankful for everyone who has graced this place and who helped shape this ministry, presently serving more than 1,900 seniors, 500 children, and 200 students on an annual basis. Our ministry with Lutheran Social Services, and now our commitment to serve seniors in the place they call home through hospice and home health, only further St. John's legacy of offering a true continuum of care. I'm thankful that David will continue the mission based leadership for which St. John's is known and that he and the team will lead the successful opening of the WyndStone."

Ochiltree reflected, "St. John's is thankful for Kent's vision and leadership over the past 25 years. We look forward to seeing him volunteering and directing traffic with our Summer Concerts, something he got started some 19 years ago."

Congratulations, Marlene!

St. John's beloved Human Resources Director, Marlene Moran, has announced her retirement effective April 15, 2016. April 6th marked the 15th anniversary of her service to the St. John's mission. We give thanks and celebrate all that Marlene has meant to St. John's through these critical years of development. Her professionalism is without question, but it is her heart for people, and her heart for the good of our residents and children that will most be remembered.



In reality, Marlene's position was renamed many years ago to Vice President of Culture Development more correctly identifying her important organizational role. In addition to human resources Marlene also supervised our child development center, the Center for Generations, while also leading our staff education efforts. At a critical time in the life of our Cottage development, Kent asked her to take over supervision of our nursing home and assisted living cottages. In true Marlene fashion, without telling anyone, she went and earned her nursing home administrator's license. When Kent asked her why she said, "I don't want to hold any position I'm not qualified to hold." As stated, her professionalism and commitment are without question. Thank you Marlene for everything you have done to advocate for staff and for your leadership throughout the years. What a blessing you have been.

As we prepare for this retirement we also welcome Kelly Schallenberger as our new Director of Human Resources. Kelly has worked in the St. John's HR department for over 10 years. We are thankful for this continuity of service and are confident that Kelly will do well in service to the St. John's community.

Philanthropy Debit Card



St. John's has partnered with Montana Health Federal Credit Union (MHFCU) for the new Philanthropy Debit Card program.

Each time you use your St. John's debit card, a percentage of the purchase will come directly back to us. What an easy way to make a difference!

If you are a current MHFCU member, you can simply request a new SJLM debit card. If you are not a current member and are interested in learning more about the program, contact MHFCU at 259-2000 for details.

Community of the Cross Award

Lutheran Seminary Award to St. John's "Community of the Cross"



The Reverend Dr. James Nieman, President of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, recently announced that St. John's Lutheran Ministries has been selected as 2016 recipient of a prestigious award. Within a February 19th letter addressed to St. John's President and Chief Executive Officer, Kent Burgess, President Nieman wrote:

"It is my pleasure to inform you that the faculty of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) has voted to honor St. John's Lutheran Ministries with the Community of the Cross award . . . presented to a community, institution, congregation, or any collectively functioning Christian group whose activities manifest the invitation of our Lord to take up the cross and follow him, and whose services is directed to the world around it, both Christian and non-Christian, and whose satisfaction and honor clearly derive from the gospel."

President Nieman stated of this award, "It is the highest group honor our faculty can bestow, reflecting the respect and esteem with which they regard the recipient." In telling why LSTC faculty voted to confer this award to St. John's, he observed these reasons:

- Since its founding in 1963 by twenty-three Lutheran congregations of Montana, the work of St. John's now spans the entire state of Montana and offers a wide array of services to people without regard to religious preference, race, gender, age, diagnosis, or disability.
- Through its multiple campuses across the state, St. John's provides a full continuum of senior living care, and through its facilities in Billings, it shows a model of intergenerational engagement that includes both children and senior adults.
- St. John's has managed Lutheran Social Services of Montana, which has provided mental health counseling services, adoptive services, disaster response work, and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee services.
- St. John's became the second organization within the United States to develop Green House Cottages, a model for long-term care designed to provide a home environment.
- Since 2003, St. John's in collaboration with local ELCA congregations, served as a learning context for a dozen seminary interns, half of whom were from LSTC.
- St. John's has been an active ecumenical partner as well as supportive of and welcoming to people from all faith traditions, including those who identify as non-religious.
- In these and many other ways, St. John's stands as a model of bearing the cross in daily life through being an exemplary social service ministry. All of this embodies LSTC's own commitment to prepare leaders for a public church.

President Nieman concluded, "Please accept my sincere congratulations on the selection of St. John's Lutheran Ministries for this year's Community of the Cross award."

Within reply, Kent Burgess wrote, "The honor of receiving the Community of the Cross award is deeply appreciated by the St. John's community. Our sincere thanks to LSTC and the faculty for this award and for the recognition and encouragement it gives to our ministry across Montana and Northern Wyoming."

On Sunday, May 15, 2016, Kent will receive this award on behalf of St. John's during commencement exercises at LSTC.

Hartsell Gift

At year-end 2015, St. John's Lutheran Ministries received a wonderful \$50,000 estate gift from Ruth M. Hartsell, given in loving memory of her daughter, Helen Jorgensen. Helen died of cancer at a young age in December, 1995. Prior to her death, she was one of St. John's first staff Physical Therapists and a driving force behind what was then an expanding rehabilitation program. Professional colleagues fondly reference Helen as a legendary presence at St. John's – a woman with relentless enthusiasm who was committed to providing highest quality care for residents and patients. Current President and CEO of St. John's, Kent Burgess, wrote of Helen, "She drove us to be better than we were yesterday."

The expressed hope of Ruth within her will has already become fulfilled through the purchase of some of the most progressive rehabilitation equipment available for use in physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy. This equipment is now in use at multiple locations across the St. John's community.

In wake of Ruth's kind gift, Shellee Ager, Director of Rehabilitation Services and Transitional Care, responded, "This generosity is overwhelming! We are so pleased to now have equipment that is up-to-date and capable of serving our patient needs. I wish Helen was here to see all this. I think she would have a very big smile on her face."

Helen's mom would also have a very big smile on her face if she could now see how her philanthropy is impacting compassionate care at St. John's on behalf of those in need of healing therapy. Thank you, Ruth, and thank you, Helen!



Seeds of Kindness Donor Event

On Friday, March 4, appreciation was expressed to friends and supporters of St. John's Lutheran Ministries during an evening of music and celebration. The gala featured soul-stirring performances by musical guests from the nation of Slovakia.

"Seeds of Kindness" is the name of St. John's annual funding campaign. Gifts received sustain the lives of our beloved residents in need of hope, dignity, and love; our staff who require life assistance and educational development; and our children nurtured within the Center for Generations, as they daily interact with residents, staff, and one another.

"Seeds of Kindness" gift commitments for 2016 were lovingly offered by St. John's Staff and Board leaders at the conclusion of 2015. You and all people are welcome and invited to plant a seed that will grow to become the fruit of God's love also.



Jozef Luptak



Boris Lenko



Milos Valent

ST. JOHN'S

LUTHERAN MINISTRIES

3940 Rimrock Road Billings, MT 59102
(406) 655-5600 Fax: (406) 655-5656
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2016 ST. JOHN'S

SUMMER CONCERT



SERIES

SAVE THE DATE

- 7TH OF JULY Black Irish Band
- 14TH OF JULY John Roberts Y Pan Blanco
- 21ST OF JULY Midlife Chrysters
- 28TH OF JULY High Country Cowboys
- 4TH OF AUGUST Guthrie Brown & The Family Tree