



Statement on Disability Pride Month

In 1990, Congress passed and then President George H.W. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), declaring that the rights of people with disabilities are civil rights. In the U.S.A., the ADA made it clear that it: 1) is unlawful to discriminate against people based on their having a disability; 2) requires employers to provide employees with reasonable accommodations; and 3) imposes accessibility requirements on public accommodations. The intention was not to penalize anyone, but to ensure that everyone was included to the best of their abilities as respected and valued participants in our society.

In our fiscal year 2021-2022, LSS served 4,179 individuals, 64% of whom have at least one diagnosed disability. For some, these are noticeable physical disabilities such as requiring a walker or wheelchair. For some, there are medical disabilities like diabetes, heart disease or HIV. Still others have intellectual or developmental disabilities like autism spectrum disorder or Down syndrome. Many of these disabilities are exacerbated by homelessness, where individuals have limited- to-no access to medical care, therapy, proper rest, healthy and sufficient diets, as well as suffer abuse and trauma while homeless. Many of those we serve experience multiple disabilities that further compound their ability to fully take care of themselves.

In this case, they along with seniors and children experiencing homelessness are the most vulnerable in our community and deserve our attention and care.

At LSS, we do not take the challenges and experiences of those we serve lightly, and this includes those with disabilities. Our focus is to support and guide our participants to their highest level of capability, taking into account whatever disabilities they may have. Either we provide the needed service ourselves, or we refer the participant to a professional service provider partner that can. We also work against discrimination and disparagement of individuals with disabilities.

Individuals with disabilities are people in our programs, our communities, our region and our families. We fully embrace the notion that they deserve to live safe, housed and beloved, and we will continue to do so.

Appreciatively,

Carol Roberts, PhD
CEO