

# Newsletter Grace at Work

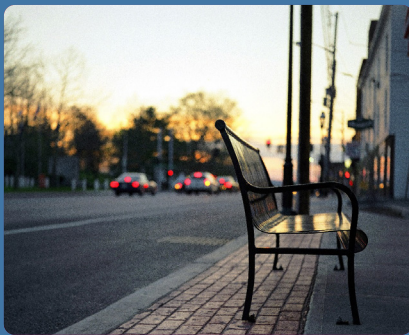


Lutheran Social Services of Northern California

WINTER 2024

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**OUR MISSION:** To promote stability and honor the dignity of those we serve by providing supportive housing services that lead to self-sufficiency.



Major Rogers College Initiative Program Manager.

## College Initiative

Findings from the state's Legislative Analysts Office reveal that more than half of California's community college students have faced housing insecurity in the past 12 months, and about 500,000 (one-quarter) of those students have experienced homelessness. Students from low-income backgrounds often elect to launch their higher education program at community colleges as an affordable way to achieve their dreams. Sadly, students who experience homelessness achieve lower GPAs and drop out of college at higher rates than their peers, further perpetuating generational poverty. Thus, state funded colleges and university systems launch basic needs programs to help lower income students remain in school to disrupt the cycle of poverty.

With more than 20 years of serving transition age youth (18 -24), it was natural for LSS to collaborate with college campuses to help their students with housing challenges. Our college program began in 2019 with Consumnes River College, and now LSS serves college students (24 and under) at 6 more community colleges in Northern California. Each college brings different resources to the partnership which calls for creative and flexible solutions. Our College Initiative is an extension of our commitment to lifting youth out of poverty and helping them achieve their academic and professional goals. Thus, LSS has built a bridge between the housing and academic worlds.



*Aaron Owens is a college graduate who participated in LSS programs, and after a brief pursuit of other professional avenues, returned to LSS to 'pass it on.'*

## LSA Inaugural Lived Voices Fellowship



*LSA Inaugural Lived Voices Fellowships Participants*

In early 2024, Lutheran Services in America launched its inaugural cohort of emerging leaders from across the nation, amplifying the voices and perspectives of communities often excluded from housing, health services, education, and economic opportunities. These fellows experienced significant personal and professional growth, coming together as a powerful network of change agents.

Deisy Madrigal, Program Manager at LSS Sacramento, brought her extensive background in the behavioral health field to the fellowship. A native Spanish speaker, Deisy often served as her family's interpreter after they immigrated to the United States, gaining early exposure to complex concepts in healthcare, law, and life necessities. These formative experiences ignited her passion for helping others.

Deisy expressed her appreciation for the supportive and action-oriented environment at LSS, sharing: "LSS is a community of people committed to change and the well-being of others." Although participating in the LSA Lived Voices Fellowship was a challenge for her schedule, she fully embraced it with the encouragement of her Deputy Director and colleagues. Her project centered on enhancing language accessibility for essential services. However, being part of the fellowship expanded her perspective. "The people who joined this first fellowship came from far and wide, bringing deep, lived experiences from around the world. Their stories—and the stories of the people they serve—opened my mind to the countless barriers to health, housing, and economic equality that exist globally," Deisy reflected.



*Deisy Madrigal Program Manager*

In Sacramento, Deisy has launched a project through the Continuum of Care, where she serves on the board, to ensure homeless services are available in the predominant languages spoken in the area. While she takes pride in the progress achieved, Deisy's commitment to fostering a community of social justice advocates has only grown stronger.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to Deisy for her leadership and dedication to improving the well-being of our community.

## Emeritus Board Member Spotlight

The Emeritus Board is a distinguished group of individuals who have served on the Board or in leadership roles at LSS with exceptional dedication. Their steadfast commitment to the mission and values of LSS ensures their ongoing contributions remain integral to the agency's success and its ability to serve those in need.



**NANCY NIELSEN** is a name well known within the LSS of Northern California community. A respected leader in San Francisco, Nancy served LSS as Deputy Director, where she played a pivotal role in the renovation and relocation of LSS to Golden Gate Avenue. As an active member of the San Francisco Interfaith Council, Nancy continues to offer invaluable guidance and foster connections that enhance LSS's impact on the communities it serves.



**LOIS PEACOCK's** dedication to LSS spans over 35 years and exemplifies her passion for wellness and community care. Through her leadership in the Health Care Ministries of the California-Nevada-Hawaii District of the LCMS, Lois has been a tireless innovator in building community support structures as the role of the church has evolved. Her energy, pragmatism, and commitment to addressing social justice issues bring strength and vision to the work of LSS.

## Announcements

### Tax Season Is Near

#### Volunteers Needed

- No Professional Experience Needed
- Volunteers are provided training
- (Training/Certification begins December 2024)
- Volunteer virtually or In-person
- Flexible Hours

Learn More



[www.lssnorcal.org/what\\_we\\_do/vita-volunteer.html](http://www.lssnorcal.org/what_we_do/vita-volunteer.html)

## COAT DRIVE!

**\*New & Gently Used\***

**Drop offs M-F, 10am - 3pm**

**2450 Alhambra Blvd Ste 101**

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Lutheran Social Services of Northern California

Winter 2024

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