

## Lutheran SeniorLife Synod Report: 2019

More than 15,000 people were served by the programs and services of Lutheran SeniorLife in 2019.

And to paraphrase from the theme of the 2019 Lutheran SeniorLife Annual Report: “every picture has a story,” every one of those served were blessed in some way by the more than 1,500 employees who work each day to provide **Abundant Life**<sup>®</sup> opportunities to those who the Lord brings into the care of Lutheran SeniorLife.

One woman whose husband is now a participant of the LIFE Butler County program recently said in a video produced to promote the benefits of the program said: “They (LIFE) are providing services to my husband, but they’ve given me my life back.”

Just as she benefitted indirectly from the program, many others directly and indirectly make those blessings possible day-in and day-out. Staff, donors, congregational volunteers, pastors, vendors—each one is a critical component of the ministry of Lutheran SeniorLife, and all are appreciated.

As a Social Ministry Organization of the Southwestern Pa. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, this is Lutheran SeniorLife’s opportunity, through its annual report to the synod, to remind all of you how much your support means to us and to those we serve.

The brand statement of Lutheran SeniorLife – **Abundant Life**<sup>®</sup> is taken from John 10:10, where Christ tells us that He came that we may have life, and have it more abundantly. There is no indication that His children are less valuable, less important or, for that matter less impactful in His ministry as they age.

The LIFE (Living Independence for the Elderly) programs of Lutheran SeniorLife are a prominent example of that.

Pastors and congregations have responded strongly to those programs because they serve those with fewer financial resources. Participants must be on medical assistance and eligible for skilled nursing services, yet the goal of the LIFE programs is to provide those services to seniors so that they continue to live at home.

Most services are provided at the LIFE centers, where participants are transported at no cost to them or their families.

The LIFE programs are also collaborative.

LIFE Butler County, which celebrated its 10th anniversary this year, is a partnership with Butler Health System.

LIFE Beaver County—the location of Lutheran SeniorLife’s original LIFE program—and LIFE Lawrence County are partnerships with Heritage Valley Health System; and LIFE Armstrong County, the most recent LIFE program of Lutheran SeniorLife, is a partnership with Armstrong County Memorial Hospital (ACMH).

And pastors and congregation members also are part of those partnerships as they serve in a variety of volunteer roles.

All continued to thrive in 2018.

The VNA (Visiting Nurses Association, Western Pa.) requires a harmonious interaction among providers, referral sources and families served; and in 2018 the number served grew to more than 1,200 people daily through a combination of Home Health Care, Palliative Care and Hospice. In addition, more than 1,000 of those participants are living more safely at home because of Telehealth monitors and a Personal Emergency Response System.

The SilverSmart™ Technology initiative at Lutheran SeniorLife continued to demonstrate value by educating staff about new technological solutions that enable those we serve to remain safe at-home and connected to the people who are important to them.

SilverSmart™ continually makes staff and those served aware of technological developments that may improve **AbundantLife**® opportunities.

One of the most recent developments was the initiation of a Rendeever Virtual Reality program at some of the independent living venues at Lutheran SeniorLife.

Wearing high-tech goggles, which residents described as “very cool,” seniors are able to experience dramatically realistic “tours” such as viewing the pyramids, participating on a Safari, or touring exotic locations around the globe.

As with most technologies, Lutheran SeniorLife neither sells nor provides the service, however the technology associate on staff continues to make colleagues and residents across the system aware of developments that may help; some as simple as automated medicine dispensers and others as fun-filled as the Rendeever tours.

The Health & Wellness Ministry, a partnership between the Southwestern Pa. Synod and Lutheran SeniorLife, is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019.

This ministry has worked with more than 100 congregations and other ministries in 2018. Initiated as a Parish Nurse program to help meet an identified need by pastors and congregations, it has grown to include a variety of health & wellness initiatives including blood pressure screenings, educational programs and related services.

The program provides training and direction to congregations with volunteers willing to help meet those needs.

It also is meant to be an educational and informational resource to congregations throughout the synod.

Passavant Community continues to offer a breadth of programs, services and accommodations as varied as any senior-living community in the region.

From the exquisite villas to senior-living apartments; on-campus therapies and services and low-income housing, Passavant offers the full-range of services of a Life Plan Community.

Its chaplaincy program remains a key element of not only its connection as a Social Ministry of the ELCA, but also an unfunded service that differentiates Passavant from many other communities.

This year, many short-videos produced by Passavant Community residents, which include retired pastors, have been among the most popular features shared as part of the Social Media activities of

Lutheran SeniorLife. Many of those can be viewed by visiting [lutheranseniorlife.org](http://lutheranseniorlife.org) and [Facebook.com/LutheranSeniorLifePA](https://www.facebook.com/LutheranSeniorLifePA).

St. John Community in Mars offers many of the same service options as Passavant, with the exception of low-income housing.

On the campus of St. John Community, RoseCrest Assisted Living with Memory support remains one of the most popular destinations for people in the area who have family members dealing with the consequences of Alzheimer's and Dementia, and its 31-bed facility has remained at near capacity for most of 2018.

Lutheran Service Society (LSS), which includes senior centers, Meals on Wheels, affordable housing, and adoption and related services, is planning renovations at the PrimeTime Senior Center in Bellevue.

LSS, once an independent Social Ministry Organization of the ELCA, has thrived during its time as part of the Lutheran SeniorLife family.

Meals on Wheels in Beaver County provides more than 150 meals daily to homebound or disabled adults each day; and is one of the most recognizable programs of LSS.

These meals are prepared and delivered by volunteers for which we are grateful. Those volunteers are examples of how caring individuals are so willing to extend themselves to others, and in addition to delivering meals, also check-in on those who may need a watchful and kind visitor.

In addition, LSS manages The Center at the Mall in Center Township. Hundreds use that center daily for fitness and recreational activities and a variety of other programs.

LSS continues to provide adoption placement services for children with special needs, trains potential foster and adoptive parents and serves a population much more diverse than the traditional senior population served by Lutheran SeniorLife.

The affordable housing options throughout the system also are an expanding part of the ministry of Lutheran SeniorLife.

In addition to Luther Court, on the campus of Passavant in Butler County, affordable housing is offered by LSS at the following locations: Lutheran Village at Chippewa, Beaver County; Von Bora Place, Titusville, Crawford County; Martin's Landing, Girard, Erie County; and Lutheran Village at Jamestown, Mercer County; and Lutheran Place, Oil City, Venango County.

All Lutheran SeniorLife services experienced successful licensure surveys by Medicare and Medicaid during the last year; and according to satisfaction surveys, all entities have achieved a system-wide average approval rating of above 85%, well above the national averages for overall satisfaction.

The leadership at Lutheran SeniorLife believes all of its successes link back to the philosophy of that Annual Report; that Every Picture Has a Story, as does everyone touched by the programs and services of Lutheran SeniorLife.

And one of our goals is to make the story of each one touched a little bit happier.

Lutheran SeniorLife is privileged to operate as a Social Ministry Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Our church partners help Lutheran SeniorLife maintain the compassion, integrity and caring atmosphere critical to fulfilling our mission of providing an opportunity for an **Abundant Life**® to those we serve and their families.

This report to the synod is also an opportunity to remind all of you – friends and partners – that your efforts to help us succeed impacts people – individuals who need our programs and services.

Those opportunities occur through Passavant Community, St. John Community, VNA, Western Pa., and its home care and hospice services; Lutheran Service Society senior centers and Meals on Wheels programs; our LIFE (Living Independence for the Elderly) programs in Butler, Beaver, Lawrence and Armstrong counties...the list goes on.

From our early beginnings over 110 years ago, we think the original founders of Lutheran Service Society, Passavant and St. John, and, in fact, originators of all Lutheran SeniorLife programs, would be proud. As a faith-based Social Ministry Organization of the ELCA, we are ultimately grateful to all of you who have supported us, and are especially grateful for the provision of God.