

Lutheran Services of Iowa
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Lutheran Services of Iowa (LSI) provides a broad range of services to the families of Story County some of which are funded in part by the ASSET program. They serve a vulnerable yet important group of young families to provide effective skills to enhance the quality of life for these families and the community.

Most notable is the change in their Services Coordinator. For many years the Early Childhood Program was well served by the leadership of Ms. Lisa Heddens who left behind a well- established program which attracted families because of the open and welcoming atmosphere. The information in this report was derived from previous reports as well as the Early Childhood Director for 30 Iowa counties Nancy Krause.

The Following services within the Family Life Education Program that benefit from ASSET funds are as follows:

Parents as Teachers. This program serves families with children from the ages of 0-5 years and utilizes volunteers, which are trained, to provide in home visits to assist families with their children's health and/or planning for the families future. The participants have been identified as at risk, have a special needs child or are dealing with poverty or issues related to poverty. 25 to 30 families are served each year with growth coming from International families and younger families. Many families become aware of this service by word of mouth from families which have benefitted from the program and by referral from social services agencies.

Crisis Child Care. This program serves families with children ages 0-12 years. The service is provided outside of the home and is utilized for parents that have a crisis including sickness, mental health needs or other issues which prevent parents from providing a safe environment for a child or children. This program serves parents who have no other support or options in the community and works with the family to find long term solutions for future needs/crises. Services are provided by licensed child care providers. The program has seen a drop in utilization of services over the past 18 months but there is no known cause for this decline which the agency will research to determine why.

Parent Development. Parenting classes are provided at the People Place 2 to 3 times a week. The Family Life Education program provides training on child development, parenting strategies, health and nutrition, positive discipline, special needs, early literacy, communication, sibling rivalry, stress, grief and other behaviors. The atmosphere allows for socialization and fellowship with others and is especially attractive to an ethnically diverse population due to the location of Iowa State University. On- site child care is offered during the classes as well as a meal.

Supportive Community Living. Provides services to adults with disabilities and was first funded by ASSET in 2006. Supportive community living serves those who do not qualify for waiver services and provides case management which seeks to assist those with disabilities in becoming self-sufficient. Services range from developing communication skills, homemaking skills personal cares, checkbook balancing and acquiring /keeping employment.

The strengths of the above LSI programs and LSI in general is that they have strong committed leaders and a belief in collaborating with other community agencies without duplicating services. The People Place is dependent on ASSET funding for its primary source of income but they have been creative in the

use of other community resources and agencies and private donors to stretch what is already a tight budget.

New to LSI and their request for funds is School Based Mental Health. LSI will contract with DCAT to provide services to students while in school utilizing a Licensed Therapist. The intent is to focus on upper grade youth. At this time the current funding is unstable.

A challenge for LSI is understanding the insurance/payment aspects within the Affordable Care Act. A second challenge will be the complexity of the new Labor Laws which have been enacted by the U.S. Department of Labor. Effective December 1st changes in overtime and reclassification of jobs will impact 90% of the 1,000 statewide employees within LSI.

LSI has a Local Advisory Council and a statewide board which provides direction to all LSI programs. LSI's financial condition appears to be stable as it is a well-established organization which reaches statewide and nationally. The need remains for more services as the number of clients increase annually and state funding becomes less certain.