

“I was sleeping in the dark. Now I’m awake.”

YOU LED NORMA TO A PLACE OF LIGHT AND HOPE

“This is not the life for my kids or me,” Norma told herself. After 12 years of marriage and almost as many years of verbal and physical abuse, she was desperate to take any steps necessary to get free. But with no job and no money of her own, she saw only one option. It was a long shot, but she was willing to take it.

Norma started taking videos of her husband’s abuse, posting them on TikTok. Soon, she received enough donations on her Cash App account to make her escape. With her five children, she drove from Arizona to Ohio, where the family stayed with Norma’s grown son.

Then her husband tracked her down through the van’s GPS system.

Norma feared her husband would take her back to Arizona and resume the cycle of abuse, which could be even worse than before. With just \$20 left to her name, she needed to find a place where he would be unable to reach her. She called a hotline for homeless shelters and was referred to LSS CHOICES.

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LSS CHOICES



“I want to do something to help other women.”

Norma
LSS CHOICES Client

A MESSAGE FROM RACHEL LUSTIG, PRESIDENT AND CEO

Domestic violence affects more people than many of us realize. In fact, one in three women and one in four men will experience domestic violence at some point in their lives.

That means a friend, family member, co-worker or neighbor could be in this situation right now. Maybe they've opened up to you or sought other help. However, many hide it because they feel embarrassed or afraid to talk about it.

As our community's sole resource for safe shelter from domestic violence for nearly five decades, LSS CHOICES is here for victims and their children looking for a way out and a path forward. It's not easy to leave a life you've built with someone, but we will do everything we can to help.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, but the time to bring this issue to light is right now. A gift from you today will provide essential services and help raise awareness. Thank you for your compassion and generosity.



Rachel Lustig
LSS President
and CEO



Be a Faithful Friend

HELP HOMELESS, ABUSED AND HUNGRY NEIGHBORS YEAR-ROUND

Our Faithful Friends monthly giving program is an easy way to ensure men, women and families in need can receive help to overcome hunger, homelessness, trauma and other crises.



YOUR MONTHLY SUPPORT WILL PROVIDE STEADY, YEAR-ROUND FUNDING FOR:

- Hot Meals
- Groceries
- Shelter
- Case Management
- Job Readiness
- Health Care
- Veteran Services



Please consider becoming a Faithful Friend today. Your commitment will bring real help and hope to your neighbors in need every day, all year round.

Scan this QR code to become a Faithful Friend today.



RACHEL LUSTIG HONORED AS WOMAN OF INFLUENCE

Columbus Business First recognized an inspirational class of female business and community leaders in their fourth-annual Women of Influence Awards. Among the 31 honorees was Lutheran Social Services President and CEO Rachel Lustig.

You Helped Norma Find Life After Abuse

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Knowing they were among people who cared made all the difference to Norma and her children. They had no worries about food, shelter or security. *"Nobody can come here. It's private. I feel safety, relief and peace,"* she says.

Counseling helped the family recover from years of trauma. The children started school, where they are excelling academically. Norma was referred to legal help through LSS CHOICES. Then she launched a housecleaning business to make money of her own. *"The first month I opened, I got three customers,"* she says proudly.

Now Norma looks toward a future filled with hope instead of fear. *"We're all happy now. The kids feel good. Nobody screams at us,"* she says. *"I see myself in my own house, working in my business, the kids at school and doing sports, all of us eating dinner at a big table."*

More than anything, Norma hopes to be a source of encouragement for those living with domestic violence. *"I want to do something to help other women. There is life after abuse. I would tell them, 'You're not alone,*



“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

– John 1:5

even when your family is judging you or telling you this is just a simple fight. Ask for help. Go and don't look back. We deserve peace.”

The changes in Norma's own life and outlook are a testament to the possibilities open to those who seek help. *"I feel awake. I was sleeping in the dark. I see my videos from before and my face is dark. Now I'm here in the light."*

Thank you for providing a place where victims of domestic violence and their children can heal from trauma and break the cycle for good.



JOIN TEAM CHOICES

Help break the cycle of domestic violence! As a Team CHOICES volunteer fundraiser, you can rally your friends and family to raise critical funds for victims of domestic violence and their children. Create your own CHOICES fundraising page, organize a car wash, hold a garage sale or host your own creative event to inspire donations. Your help and support will save lives! For more information or to sign up, visit lssnetworkofhope.org/teamchoices.

Thank You for Helping a Retiree Make Ends Meet

Spend just one day at the LSS Food Pantries and you'll meet a very diverse group of people: men and women, families, young and old. Most of them work but have little money left for food after paying for rent, utilities and transportation. Some are senior citizens struggling to get by each month on social security or pensions.

Joann, 77, worked as a food service manager for the public school system. Now retired, she lives on a small fixed income that doesn't stretch as far as it used to. For the past several years, she has counted on the LSS Food Pantry near her home to help make ends meet.

"It helps a whole lot," Joann says. She appreciates being able to come to the pantry once a month and choosing only the items she can use. "I like that they have variety. Anything I don't need, I won't take."

Joann also appreciates the kindness of staff and volunteers at the pantry.

"They're all really nice people," she says. "They treat everybody right. They talk to you with respect."



She is grateful for generous friends like you who help keep the pantries open and the shelves stocked. Ultimately, Joann says, *"It's all up to God. I put it all in His hands, and I leave it alone."*

Thank you for providing nourishment and hope to our neighbors like Joann who experience food insecurity. You make a positive impact on their lives and in our communities!

**Photo changed to protect privacy*

Hunger Action Month® FEEDING AMERICA

TIME TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST HUNGER

September is Hunger Action Month, and our hungry and hurting neighbors in Central Ohio need your help!

For those living on limited means, a trip to the grocery store can take a huge bite out of a paycheck. LSS Food Pantries continue to serve hundreds of people experiencing food insecurity every day. These men, women and children depend on our pantries to make it through lean times.

Your support is even more critical now. Federal and state funding cuts impact many in our community. With our busiest season right around the corner, we also face the strain of rising food costs, skyrocketing demand and dwindling resources.

Please take action against hunger by making a generous donation at lssnetworkofhope.org/ThanksgivingNews.

Your gift offers healing and hope to people in need across Lutheran Social Services. That includes:



Meals and shelter to homeless and hungry neighbors at LSS Faith Mission in both Franklin and Fairfield counties.



Nutritious food for families struggling with hunger at the LSS Food Pantries.



Safe refuge and healing for domestic violence victims and their children at LSS CHOICES.

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THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

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Franklin County
Where Government Works

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