

A Veteran's New Hope

“I can't tell you what it means to this veteran to know I'm not forgotten, that I don't have to do this alone.”

Ronald LSS Faith Mission client

LSS FAITH MISSION

I didn't have the easiest childhood. I grew up poor and isolated, a long way from any kind of real community. Then my stepdad kicked me out of the house when I was 16. Two years later, I joined the Navy—just in time for 9/11 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I saw my share of combat. I didn't think much of it at the time. But when I left the military, I struggled. I haven't really been self-sufficient since then. I worked here and there, drifted around the country, never getting too close to

anyone. I jumped from house to house, living with acquaintances. A lot of times, I lived in shelters, cars, and even on the streets.

Then the nightmares began. I started waking up in the middle of the night, screaming and swinging. I guess it was a delayed reaction from my combat days. The worse it got, the more self-destructive I got. I've been hospitalized five times after trying to kill myself.

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A Message of Hope From Sue Villilo



“None of this is possible apart from caring people like you, who truly are the hands and feet of the Lord.”

It’s so heartbreaking when anyone falls into homelessness, or is devastated by hunger and abuse. But in some ways, it feels even more tragic today, when so many are now also coping with the dire threat and consequences of COVID-19 in Columbus.

That’s especially true when it’s a military veteran, like Ronald in this issue of *LSS Focus*, who put his life on the line for people like you and me. And now he must somehow navigate these new challenges. Yet, it’s men like Ronald who also remind me why I’m so grateful to be a part of LSS Faith Mission. Faith Mission offers shelter and long-term help specifically designed for both male and female veterans.

We are committed to serving all of our neighbors in need—no matter what challenges they may face. None of this is possible, however, apart from caring people like you, who truly are the hands and feet of the Lord.

This summer, in the midst of the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19, we need your help more than ever. LSS Faith Mission, LSS CHOICES, and the LSS Food Pantries are stretched to our limits, and our donations are falling like they do every summer. But together, we can step up to meet the need. Your support is crucial. May God bless you.

With gratitude,

Sue Villilo

Sue Villilo
Assistant Vice President of
Community-Based Services, LSS



RONALD'S STORY cont.

I’m suffering from PTSD, I’m chronically depressed, and every day I try to figure out some reason to get up. It’s been a long time since I had any hope for the future.

I just couldn’t seem to get my life together. So this year, I went to another organization for help, and they brought me here to LSS Faith Mission. Over the past six weeks, they’ve already helped me so much. It’s not just a bed and meals. They know I get overwhelmed easy, so they help me figure out everything I need to do, one step at a time.

Tomorrow, I’m looking at a new apartment. They’re helping me apply for disability, because of my PTSD and depression. But they’re also helping me look for employment. And I’m working with the VA to get the counseling and emotional help I need.

I can’t tell you what it means to this veteran to know I’m not forgotten, that I don’t have to do this alone. You’re giving me hope that maybe I do have a future after all.

Thank you.

“Greater love has
no one than this:
to lay down one’s life for one’s
friends.”

—John 15:13

LSS CHOICES

“I’m Alive— Thanks to You”

by Joanna

Seven years ago, I was in my mid-40s and single. In fact, I’d been single for several years since my first marriage. But I was working, content, and happy. I didn’t need a relationship to get in the way.

One day, however, this man friended me on Facebook. He was nice-looking, a hard worker, smart, oh-so-charming—and he lived around the corner from me. One thing led to another, and before long, we were married, starting a new life.

The honeymoon didn’t last long. At first it was just emotional and verbal abuse over little things, like something I cooked he didn’t like. We always tried to work things through, but the abuse soon escalated big time.

Crazy me, I probably tried to leave him seven or eight times over the past six years. For some reason, though, I always gave him another chance. But then, a couple of years ago, things got physical. Once, he tried to choke me in front of his



daughter. Another time, he threw a bag across a room and busted my head open. And about a month ago, he threatened to kill me with a screwdriver.

At times, he had me on my knees, begging God to get me out. Other times, I was ready to kill myself to end the pain. I think the only reason I never did was LSS CHOICES. When I first came here for counseling in 2017, I was a hot mess. They let me cry, helped me think through what was going on, helped me set boundaries,

encouraged me, and strengthened me every step of the way. And when I finally left him for good last month, they helped me start over again in my own place. I pray for my husband, but I can never go back.

I hate to think where I’d be without LSS CHOICES. They kept me sane for more than two years. But as a donor, so did you. In fact, I believe that your support for LSS CHOICES saved my life. I never would have made it without you.

Thank you!

LSS FOOD PANTRIES

“It’s Not Just the Food, It’s the People” by Gary

I was a truck driver most of my life, and I worked hard—until I had a motorcycle accident in 2016. I’ve been disabled ever since with back issues and permanent nerve and muscle damage. With no work or income, I went from having everything—house, family, good income, savings, security—to having nothing.

I get food stamps, but they don’t get me very far. So I’ve relied on the LSS Food Pantries for about two years. Thanks to this place, I always have food in my cabinet and refrigerator. It makes

sure my stomach ain’t touching my back. I order everything online, so it’s real easy. And when I walk through these doors, everything is ready for me.

I was so independent for so long, this isn’t easy for me. Sometimes I get depressed. But every time I come in here, I feel a little better. It’s not just the food, it’s the people. They’re so nice and always treat me with dignity and respect. Thanks to people like you who support the LSS Food Pantries, I know I’ll get through this. **Thank you.**



Your compassion in action. Your support helps provide meals and shelter to homeless and hungry neighbors who come to LSS Faith Mission in both Franklin and Fairfield counties. You ensure families struggling with hunger have access to nutritious food at the LSS Food Pantries. And you bless women and men facing domestic violence with a safe, secure place to stay and heal through LSS CHOICES. If you’re able, please use the enclosed form to give another kind donation today.

LSS FAITH MISSION



Please Help Neighbors Who Need You Most This Summer

For many of our hungry, hurting neighbors in Ohio, summer can be a particularly challenging season—hot, humid temperatures, rising utility bills, children home from school, more mouths to feed. Families have a hard time keeping up. And women and men living on the streets struggle to find fresh food and water, and face many heat-related illnesses.

But thanks to caring, generous people like you, they have hope. Your gift today of any amount will make a big difference for everyone who needs our help at LSS Faith Mission, LSS CHOICES, and the LSS Food Pantries. You'll help provide meals, shelter, comfort, hope, and the long-term care they need to get back on their feet.

Your gift is especially important right now because every summer our donations drop significantly. Your support means we can continue being the hands and feet of the Lord all summer long.

Thank you for helping us bring vital services to those who need them most in our community. Your generosity is a true blessing to struggling neighbors across Ohio.

At LSS, we are hopeful we can meet the physical and emotional needs of every single person who comes through our doors. Please consider giving a gift today by going online to Issnetworkofhope.org/donate or send the enclosed reply slip with your gift. Thank you!

Our COVID-19 Emergency Response

We are committed to continuing to serve our neighbors in need—no matter what challenges we face. We are proud of the way our organization has come together to keep people safe and still provide critical services to those who rely on our LSS Network of Hope for food, shelter and safety.

Circumstances continue to evolve, but we are doing everything possible to ensure our programs are able to safely provide assistance.

We are also bracing for increased expenses as we serve the community and a potential loss in revenue in the months ahead. If you are able to help with a special financial gift, it would help continue our vital services.

Faith Mission Serves Veterans

At Faith Mission in 2019, 206 veterans were served at our 24-bed emergency shelter and 119 were served in our Supportive Services for Veterans Families program.

So far in 2020, there have been 125 in shelter and 83 in the Supportive Services for Veterans Families program.

Thank you to our funders



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