

# WAYS TO GIVE

## Olmsted County Community Services

Ways to Give is a Lutheran Social Service (LSS) program contracted by the Olmsted County to act as a liaison between Olmsted County Social Workers and the community to meet the immediate, short-term needs of clients. Educating and engaging individuals, church members and community groups are the goals to gain support for meeting those needs by providing donations of goods or money to purchase items.

The program has completed its 12<sup>th</sup> year in Rochester.

*"You were so kind. We felt your love. I feel blessed beyond words for your generosity. I'll remember the kind, caring person that you are. My special needs son really needed the mittens you gave him. I can't even tell you the squeals of joy our boys had on Christmas morning."*



**Mission:** Partnering with community members for the safety, well-being, and stability of families and individuals served by Olmsted County Social Services.

### Service Highlights

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
Number of Volunteer hours donated	3,158	3,970	3,336
Number of Volunteers	909	675	596
Value of Volunteer hours (\$24.31/hour)	\$ 76,770	\$ 96,511	\$ 81,098
Value of product and money donated	\$120,770	\$120,799	\$121,008

\*\*\*Downturn in number of volunteer hours and upward turn in number of volunteers follows trend of volunteers engaging in one-time/short-term volunteer activities as opposed to long-term commitments.

### Core Programs

- **Adopt-A-Family** – Focuses on Christmas/holiday gifts matching community donors with client wish lists
- **Kids in Need** – Addresses basic needs of children (0-18) in their home/school environments
- **Adults in Need** – Similar to Kids in Need except population is 18+ years with requests originating in Adult Services

### Additional Programs

- **Back to School** – Donors provided school supplies, backpacks and tennis shoes
- **Easter Baskets** –Beta Sigma Phi sorority donated 120 baskets for children
- **Holiday Dinners** – Bethany United Methodist donates dinners four times yearly

### Ways to Give Strengths

- Has an established network that matches new ideas and opportunities with client needs.
- Volunteers have a long-term project relationship with the program, which constitutes the base for volunteer involvement.
- Lutheran Social Service (LSS) continues to have strong partnerships with local congregations.
- Has a physical presence in both Adult and Child and Family Service's divisions

### Challenges for 2016

- Increased visibility in community to provide needed furniture resources for clients, especially beds (resource used is gone).
- Provide leadership for Ambassadors as program direction is changing.
- Renew/refresh Ways To Give programming focusing on "neighboring"/caring for isolated community members, with a goal of 8 matches, either continuing or new.
- Cultivate additional Adopt-A-Family resources to meet growing needs such as winter outerwear, clothing, and tennis shoes for school.

