



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Jo Ann Dollard

847/390-1446

Carol VanderMey

847/635-4604

Lenz Retires, Hovde Takes Over as Director of LSSI's Suburban Counseling Services

Nancy Lenz, the former program director of the West Suburban Counseling & Educational Center in Villa Park, a program of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI), retired recently after a 23-year career at LSSI. Jackie Hovde has taken her place as program director. Lenz oversaw all of the eight counseling centers, with the Villa Park site operating as the primary hub.

Lenz started at LSSI while working on her master's degree in counseling psychology with an internship at the Downers Grove counseling office located at the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. Over the years, Lenz has supervised the therapists who staff the counseling centers, along with many graduate interns. In 2005 alone, 300 clients were served through the Villa Park office and seven satellite sites located in Berwyn, Des Plaines, Elmhurst, Geneva, Itasca, Prospect Heights and Wheaton. Lenz also has had a strong presence in the community, providing a variety of interesting presentations to churches and organizations on many relevant topics. She's also well known for the divorce support group she's been running every year since 1982.

"It's been extremely rewarding and interesting to meet so many kinds of different people, and help them in the process of change and growth," Lenz says of her career. "I have had a great run and worked with a great staff."

Jackie Hovde has a bachelor's in elementary education from Eastern Illinois University and a master's in human services counseling from National Louis University. She was hired in January 2002 as the clinical counselor. In June 2006, she became a clinical supervisor and is now the program director.

One of the things Hovde wants to do is to build a volunteer advisory council that consists of people from the churches and communities where LSSI offers counseling services. "We are really excited and optimistic about re-growing our program," she says, adding that she hoped that the advisory council could "help us meet our goals" of growth and outreach to the greater community.

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Previously, Hovde worked for eight years in social services, including three years as a clinical supervisor for Teen Parent Connections. She also has taught parenting classes and worked at the DuPage County Health Department.

“There is a comfort level in going to counseling in a neighborhood setting,” she says. “It’s like going to a neighbor to talk, and it’s convenient.

“Our offices aren’t in a big office building,” she adds, noting that all but the Villa Park counseling sites are located in neighborhood churches. In Villa Park, the counseling center is located in a home behind St. Paul Lutheran Church. “Some clients say it is comforting to go into our counseling centers,” she says. “They say it feels safe.”

In addition to counseling for adults and children, the center also offers education and support groups, and a speakers bureau, which can provide groups with speakers to address such topics as job stress, anxiety and/or depression, parenting problems, marital issues, children’s school performance and/or behavior problems. The center has a list of topics but can also customize a presentation for a specific group. In the past, topics discussed have included understanding eating disorders, anger management, co-parenting after a divorce, alcoholism and substance abuse, and helping children cope with stress.

For more information, contact Jackie Hovde, program director, at 630/993-0100 or Jackie.Hovde@LSSI.org.

Founded in 1867, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois is a statewide, not-for-profit social service agency of the three Illinois synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. For more information, visit www.LSSI.org.

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