



“Together With Impact”

Initiative Summary

The *“Together With Impact”* initiative was initially proposed and launched at the 100th Regular Convention of the Michigan District LCMS. On July 26th, 2012, Lutheran Homes of Michigan (LHM) and Lutheran Child & Family Services of Michigan (LCFS) initiated their official organizational partnership under the leadership of President and CEO David Gehm. This collaborative partnership, now known as Wellspring Lutheran Services, along with support of the Michigan District, is designed to systematically enroll, train and deploy congregations to develop human care ministries within their own congregations and their surrounding communities. In May of 2013 The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) approved a Domestic Development Grant to assist in the design and implementation of *“Together With Impact”*.

Initiative Goals

The *“Together With Impact”* initiative has three key areas of focus.

1. Enhance Congregational Relevance in the Community: Wellspring Lutheran Services will intentionally connect and collaborate with congregations to enhance mission effectiveness and connect congregations with needs in their community.
2. Integration of Congregations with Partner Ministries: Increased emphasis on unification and coordination of efforts between Wellspring, the LCMS Michigan District, RSO's and congregations within Michigan.
3. Focus on Human Care for the Whole Person: Human care is about meeting people where they are at – physically, relationally, emotionally and spiritually.

Initiative Outcomes

The *“Together With Impact”* initiative has three measurable goals within a 3 year timeline. The initial project goal is to report initiative outcomes at the next LCMS Michigan District Convention which will take place in the summer of 2015.

- Identify, train and develop 25 congregations of the Michigan District LCMS to become intentional partners and support communities for human care ministries.
- Recruit, train and license 50 new foster families per year (project goal 150+ foster families)
- Recruit, train and license 10 new adoptive families per year (project goal 30+ adoptive families)



Congregational Readiness Assessment Checklist

Our work over the years in both the child welfare and senior service arena has informed our approach to this new era as we work to identify the “early adopter” congregations to participate in year one of the program. Too often in the past, we have worked diligently with well-meaning pastors, only to find that the laity was not supportive of any given initiative; we’ve also spent time working with enthused laity only to learn later that the pastor/leaders did not share the same goals.

As a result, we’ve developed this checklist to serve as a guide – not a “test” – to help us all understand expectations for a successful launch. Congregations who are considering joining this effort should meet or commit to meeting the following criteria prior to completing the Covenant Agreement.

- Personal commitments on the part of the pastor/pastoral team/ministry team to lead, support, and encourage the program.
- Identified lay leaders committed to the success of the program.
- Internal structure to support the initiative(s) such as standing committees, boards, or task forces who have responsibility and authority to lead a successful program.
- Commitment to integrate the program/initiatives “intergenerational” into the entire congregation including senior groups, the school community (children and parents), VBS, Bible study groups, MOPS, etc.
- The ability to create private space for certain initiatives such as an office, repurposed classroom, etc.
- The willingness to collaborate with other congregations in the area from time to time or with other community organizations as needed.
- Willingness to work through a budget process to assure resources are available for the sustainability of the program(s) into the future.
- Agree to develop “success metrics” that allow regular program evaluation and assessment.