

Together We Make a Family ***Melissa and Tom's Story of Adoption***

We always wanted to be parents but for some reason it wasn't happening on its own. We tried different doctors, specialists and fertility treatments. In 2015 we became pregnant with twins only to have them called to Heaven. After losing our twins, we decided to hold off on our journey to become parents.

Through work connections we met Tabitha and Paul. They have adopted through LCFS and opened their hearts to us. They invited us over for dinner and told us to be completely open and honest. It was truly God intervening in our journey by introducing them to us. With their willingness to mentor us through adoption and seeing the joy their children brought to their lives we knew we were being called to adopt. We called Kate at LCFS and she was awesome. She guided us through the process and gave us the materials to start our journey.

We began the process in February 2016 and in June we learned of a birth mom that wanted to do adoption and meet us. Knowing we didn't have our paperwork done, Kate helped us to move along quickly in order to be done on time. We did everything in our power to get our stuff done so we could be the perfect match for the new addition.

Things were going well with the birth mom, we were texting often and making plans. But as the birth approached she started to get distant. Kate, Tabitha and Paul kept reminding us that the birth mom is not going to celebrate like other birth moms would. We never really thought about this part from her perspective. The baby boy was born in July and was perfect; however, the birth mom loved him just as much as we would and decided to parent. A devastating bump in our journey, but we understood her need to parent, wanting the same ourselves. We were sad, but with the support of our faith, family and friends we knew we would overcome.

Back to the drawing board. We waited which felt like an eternity and then in May our phone rang again! Kate told us there was a birth mom coming to meet with

her. Again God intervened as the expectant mom shared that she had been looking at the LCFS website of waiting families and had chosen a couple, which turned out to be us! We met with Kate and the expectant mom and she was wonderful! We exchanged numbers and she invited us to the twenty week ultrasound for the gender reveal. We were taken back, but were super excited!

Our relationship with the birth mom grew. There were times we felt as though it was too good to be true, letting our previous failed match memories take over and that she was going to change her mind. When those trying times came we were there for her even more and leaned on our faith even more. We knew like the first birth mom she was making the biggest decision of her life so we wanted to respect that as much as possible but also be there for her in the process.



Along the way Melissa was invited to the doctor's appointments, something she thought she may never experience. What a blessing! On October 8, 2017 we were in church and our phone rang. It was time!

We all arrived at the hospital at the same time and got checked into a room just in time for kickoff for the Packers/Cowboys game. We all celebrated a Packer victory. Now, it's time to have a baby!

When it was time to push, doctors, nurses, machines, an incubator, even lights from the ceiling arrived! It was an amazing process. Our perfect miracle son Ryken was born at 10:41. We couldn't believe how perfect he was and how emotional and amazing the whole process was. We were awestruck!

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The birth mom asked to spend some time with him and we wanted her to have that time and closure. We were not worried at all that she would change her mind.

We visited with the birth mom a couple of times between leaving the hospital and the termination of parental rights hearing in November. Our final adoption date was May 8, 2018, exactly 7 months from his birth!

We wouldn't be parents to our amazing son without God, our faith, the help of Kate, LCFS, and our family and friends. They helped us through the good times and bad times. They love Ryken just as much as we do.

Our advice to you is have faith, a strong support system, trust your hearts and never give up. Your time will come; it may be tomorrow, next month or next year. It will take time, tears and patience but in the long run, the journey is a part of the outcome and you will be



A Message from the CEO
Deb Rayburn, MS, LPC, CSAC, CSIT

Friends,
In this issue of Tempo, you'll read a story of adoption which is one of the greatest joys we experience here at LCFS. Nothing is as fulfilling as helping to create a family based on faith, commitment and love!



You'll also read of the passing of two men whose work with LCFS made incredible impacts on our agency and the people we serve. We were blessed to have had them both when we did to share their passion, knowledge and guidance. We are a better agency and better people because of their influences.

At LCFS we experience the thrill of new life through adoption, the stages of struggle and accomplishment through a mental health or addiction crisis, and the pain of loss. Through our work we witness the fragility of life but also the internal strength found within each of us. It reminds us to pause and appreciate those around us, the gifts they bring us and the blessings we've been granted.

Peace to you and yours,

Deb Rayburn, CEO

"Strengthening Families; Strengthening Lives"
Help Us Support Our Mission

Join us on **Saturday, October 26th** for a very special evening highlighting LCFS's work in mental health counseling, addiction treatment and adoption services.

"Strengthening Families; Strengthening Lives" will be a night of celebration, hope and inspiration.

Keynote speaker **Kimberly Galske, Mrs. Wisconsin 2019**, will speak on the importance of professional mental health counseling for returning troops and LCFS's role in that service. Kim is a former Marine, currently serving in the National Guard and Executive Director of Salute the Troops Wisconsin.

Other speakers will include those whose lives have been positively changed through LCFS's support.

Strengthening Families
Strengthening Lives
A fundraiser benefitting LCFS

Saturday, October 26th, 2019
5:30-9:30 pm
Luptak Terrace Room
Concordia University

Space is limited! For more information or to reserve a spot, please call us at 414-536-8333 or visit <https://lcfsevent2019.wordpress.com>.



Contact LCFS at 414-536-8333, FAX—414-536-8348 or EMAIL at lcfs@lcfswi.org

Hearts Touched Lives Remembered Legacies Living On

It is with great gratitude that we remember two amazing men who entered eternal life. Both impacted LCFS in so many ways by sharing their gifts of compassion and kindness. Their legacies will never be forgotten.

Rev. Theodore E. Krueger, Jr.

Rev. Krueger, 91, passed away July 4, 2018. As a long LCFS supporter and Board Member, his service to the agency helped to strengthen its mission and expand essential services throughout the state.

Rev. Krueger was named to LCFS's Board in 1978. Throughout his 3+ decades of service, he helped guide the agency through some of its most trying times, when the Board was tasked to make hard strategic and economic decisions. Their steadfast guidance ensured LCFS could continue its mission for years to come.

Economic challenges in the 1980's forced the Board to close its long standing residential treatment center in Wauwatosa, a facility serving boys with emotional and developmental issues. While it was a heart wrenching decision, there was a vision to better serve the overall community. Rev. Krueger was key in successfully negotiating the sale of the property and establishing a new outpatient counseling facility for all ages, genders and concerns. Programs were expanded to include family/parent/teen workshops, divorce support groups and addiction services.

As the Adoption Committee Chair, Rev. Krueger's strategic planning boosted domestic and step-parent adoptions and established support groups for adoptive parents, single parents and unwed mothers. In 1984, he helped oversee the name change from Lutheran Children's Friend Society to Lutheran Counseling and Family Services, more accurately depicting the agency's ministry of healing and service to all. In 1996, he helped plan LCFS' Centennial Anniversary, highlighting the agency's impact on countless families and individuals, helping them to achieve growth and stability.



Rev. Krueger's commitment and oversight in helping LCFS grow from a simple Children's Home in Wauwatosa to satellite locations throughout Wisconsin has made a profound and lasting impact. We are forever indebted to him for his service and guidance.

Douglas H. Fleischfresser

Douglas Fleischfresser, an LCFS therapist serving the Fox Valley population, passed away unexpectedly on Saturday July 13, 2019.

It was nearly ten years ago that Doug first blessed LCFS with his services, spending a few years as Director of Development for the agency. That was between stints as a chaplain for the Lutheran Home and Hardwood Place in Wauwatosa, as the senior pastor at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Oconomowoc and as St. Paul's youth and family life pastor.

Doug held both a Masters of Science in Trauma and Marriage & Family Counseling and a Master of Divinity Degree. He served in a parish setting for 24 years and as a Chaplain in the Army National Guard for 27 years. He was active in the Wisconsin Army National Guard as the State Command Chaplain, working with Airmen and Soldiers of the Army & Air Guard, having been mobilized for Operation Noble Eagle, and deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

When he returned to LCFS in 2019, it was to help those in the Fox Valley area with compassionate mental health and spiritual counseling.

Doug's special connection with clients allowed him to touch people of all ages, helping families through challenging relationships and individuals weighed down by depression, grief, anxiety or trauma.

Doug's approach was to never judge his clients' thoughts, understandings or behaviors. Instead he chose to listen to each individual to fully understand what was standing in their way of stability and wholeness. Seeing each individual, couple or family as unique and special, he worked emphatically to help all find the peace they sought.

His sudden loss sent reverberations through the agency and the communities he served. He will be greatly missed.



Thank you to the following organizations which have generously helped to support LCFS

Supporting In School Counseling Services

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The RD and Linda Peters Foundation
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Supporting Special and General Needs

The Bluemke Foundation
The Martin Club

We gratefully acknowledge the following churches that provide LCFS office space for our counselors:

St. John's Lutheran—Berlin
Mount Calvary Lutheran—Janesville
Zion Lutheran—Oshkosh
Calvary Lutheran—Waupaca
Bethlehem Lutheran—Sun Prairie
St. James Lutheran—Shawano
First Lutheran—Rice Lake
St. Peter's Lutheran—Reedsburg
St. John's Lutheran—Portage
Redeemer Lutheran—Green Bay
Christ Memorial Lutheran—Fitchburg
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And the hundreds of individuals who support our mission through generous private donations. THANK YOU! We are making a difference!



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