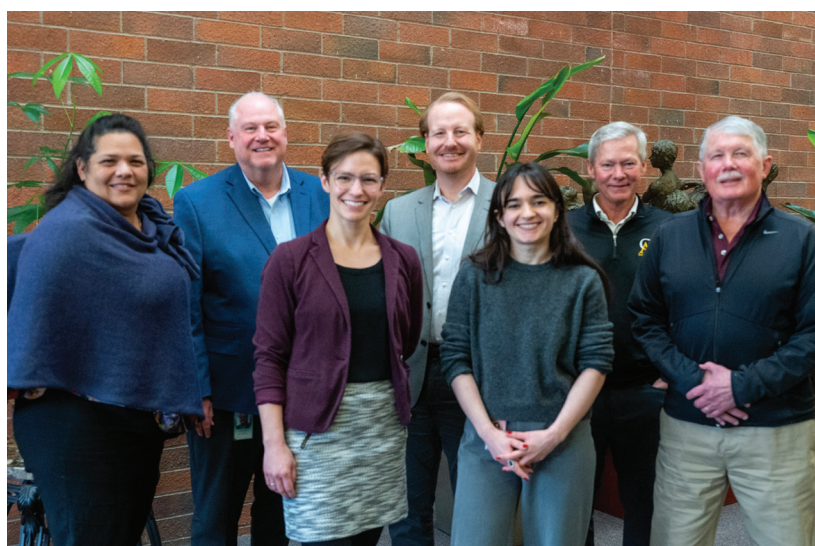


LSS Design Lab's Incubator Driving Service Innovation

The LSS Design Lab is kicking off the new year with momentum after celebrating a notable milestone in its pursuit to foster strategic growth and innovation at LSS. In December, the Design Lab announced the first pilot programs that will receive funding through its Incubator program, an initiative designed to foster grassroots innovation.

The Incubator offers LSS team members at all levels of the organization the opportunity to apply for seed funding and receive ongoing support from the Design Lab to pilot projects focused on service enhancements and business development. The comprehensive program, which is funded through the Empower What's Possible Campaign, was created to elevate the creativity, expertise and innovative ideas of LSS's talented team members. As Tika Khachatryan, Design Lab manager, expressed, "Oftentimes, our front-line team members are the first to see opportunities to improve how we deliver existing services or to introduce new ones. It is exciting to provide a tool that amplifies their incredible ideas."

Since launching its inaugural cycle in May, The Incubator has been enthusiastically embraced across the organization. An impressive 23 ideas for pilot projects were submitted for consideration. Nearly half of the submissions were from direct service providers, more than a third were from greater Minnesota and 40% were from team



From L-R: The Incubator Guidance Counsel, including LSS team members Alexis Oberdorfer, Patrick Thueson, Laura Blue, Jesse Stremcha, Tika Khachatryan, and volunteers Brad Baker and Mark Gorder.

members who identify as BIPOC, reflecting LSS' commitment to diversity and inclusion.

After a thorough review in July, seven ideas were selected for further development. Volunteers from the LSS donor network – with expertise in entrepreneurship, start-ups and corporate R&D – contributed mentorship support throughout the development and selection phases of The Incubator cycle.

A three-month period of additional research and feedback from volunteer mentors informed final project plans, which were presented to the program's Guidance Council in the fall. Council members, including LSS leaders, staff and community volunteers, provided input that shaped the final portfolio of projects, which were announced in December.

Turn to page 3 to learn more about The Incubator projects moving on to the pilot testing phase.





PROGRESSING TOWARDS POSSIBILITY:
A Message from Patrick Thueson
LSS President

One thing that is never in short supply at LSS are creative, mission-driven ideas from our team members. Regardless of the size, type or geographic location of our services, LSS employees at all levels of the organization and in every corner of the state continually seek opportunities to serve our neighbors in new and improved ways.

It's a part of the LSS culture that I admire deeply.

The initiatives selected during LSS' first Incubator cycle exemplify this aspect of our organization. It has been exciting to watch each of The Incubator's inaugural initiatives gain momentum, growing from ideas to business plans to pilot programs. Like so many of LSS' past service innovations, these new programs are grounded in our mission and aligned with our commitment to provide supportive resources that lead to greater self-sufficiency and resilience for our neighbors.

As we continue expanding our innovation infrastructure and discover new ways to support our neighbors, we are committed to sharing what we learn across Minnesota and beyond. The impact of our work is advanced exponentially when we can offer resources and support to others, helping to replicate and scale proven, effective service models that lead to better outcomes. We are grateful for the opportunity to be a looked-upon leader in this space.

This work would not be possible without the confidence and commitment of donor investors like you. Thank you for partnering with us as we dream of bigger and better ways to empower what's possible.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Thueson'.

Patrick Thueson
LSS President



BUILDING



COMMUNITY



LSS leaders celebrate with the finalists of the Design Lab's inaugural Incubator cycle.



"What organization says to staff, 'We know you have great ideas and we want to hear them,' and then backs that up by funding those ideas? I have been blown away by the whole process, start to finish."

~ Joyce Lehman, program coordinator for Senior Companion Services and Incubator Finalist

Inaugural LSS Incubator Awardees

1. Share a Home Companion Services

Idea developed by Janel Heinen and Joyce Lehman

Share a Home Companion Services offers an innovative solution to older adult isolation through trusted matching services that allow older adults to remain in their homes while providing volunteer companions with affordable housing. This program empowers the people LSS serves to live vibrant, connected lives, fostering relationships that enrich their well-being.

2. Representative Payee Services

Idea developed by Nathan Danielson and Andy Morcomb

LSS is uniquely positioned to offer financial support that helps community members to live full and abundant lives. By establishing Representative Payee Services, LSS would help manage benefit payments for those unable to do so on their own. This mission-driven financial management service would help guide individuals toward financial security and independence through empowering, less restrictive care.

3. Credit Where It's Due

Idea developed by Kim Miller

The Credit Where It's Due program would provide individuals with no or poor credit access to a secure credit card product alongside monthly financial coaching meetings. This program would offer communities LSS serves a trustworthy mechanism for building credit along with their financial skills.

There is much excitement and anticipation as these projects enter the pilot testing phase of their development. During this phase, each project will be evaluated for scalability and impact while receiving continued support from the Design Lab. Thanks to the generosity of our donor community, LSS is transforming social service delivery into a more efficient and effective system for the future.



YOU

empower

what's possible

Top row, L-R: Scott, Brenda
Bottom row, L-R: Lily, Christina

Brenda's Hometown: Fisher, MN

Education:

B.A., Concordia College – Moorhead
Masters in Management, Northwestern
University, Kellogg School

Career:

President, Brenda Moore & Associates
(fundraising consulting)

Volunteer Service:

LSS Foundation Board Trustee,
Association for Christian
Fundraising Board member

Scott's Hometown: Cedartown, GA

Education:

B.A. and B.Ed., Jacksonville State
University
Doctor of Musical Arts, University of
Cincinnati Conservatory of Music
Professional Studies, The Juilliard
School

Career:

Professor in Music, Gustavus
Adolphus College

Volunteer Service:

Mount Olivet Lutheran Church
Confirmation Leader

Home Congregation:

Mount Olivet Lutheran Church

Family:

Two daughters, Christina and Lilly

Brenda & Scott Moore

LSS Foundation Board Trustee Brenda Moore has been acquainted with LSS since childhood. "My Grandpa Peterson's farm was located across the road from the orphanage that eventually became LSS of Illinois," shared Brenda. "As kids, his stories about his friends at the Andover Children's Home were examples of what it meant to love your neighbors."

Brenda and her husband, Scott, built their family through adoption with LSS of Minnesota. Adopting daughters Christina and Lilly showed the Moores just how life-changing LSS' services can be. Their appreciation of LSS' role in their adoption journey – and their ever-present gratitude for the beautiful family that resulted – was a key motivator for their Empower What's Possible campaign gift. "Now that I've experienced that kind of joy, how cool to be able to pass it on and help others experience it as well," reflected Scott.

Over the years, the Moores' understanding and appreciation of LSS' commitment to serving its neighbors has continued to grow.

"I appreciate the direct ministry LSS provides," shared Scott. "They remove layers of complexity to create more direct interactions that support people more efficiently."

"I don't know of any organization that represents love of neighbor as honorably and comprehensively as LSS," continued Brenda. "They honor individuals and their challenges with dignity and respect. LSS truly appreciates the complexities individuals and families may be experiencing."

Creating a hope-filled future for more Minnesotans inspired the Moores to incorporate a planned gift as well as a designation to the LSS Design Lab in their campaign commitment. "The nonprofits with staying power will embrace and invest in innovation," said Brenda, who has spent more than 35 years in nonprofit leadership and consulting. "LSS can be a flag bearer, creating momentum among the nonprofit sector so that our innovations can have an even bigger impact."

As philanthropists, the Moores share those same aspirations. "We want to set an example for our kids and extended family of how to be generous in life and at the end of life," shared Brenda. "And to build upon the family tradition of giving established by Brenda's parents and grandparents," added Scott. "We want others to experience the joy of joining in to make a difference."

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