Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

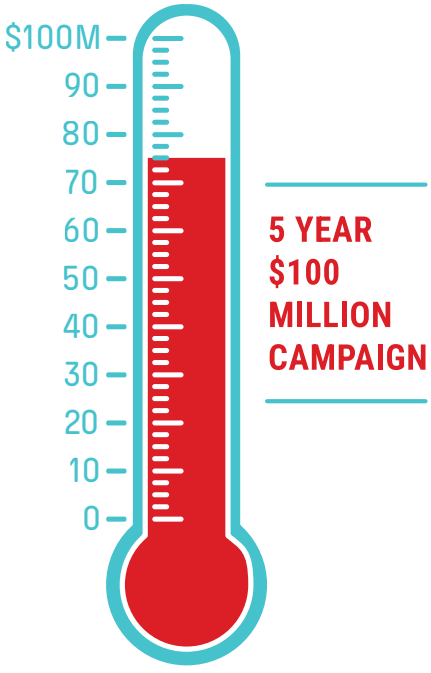
empower

REALIZING THE POWER OF LIVES TRANSFORMED

Fall 2026



Patrick Thueson, president of LSS, at the Center for Changing Lives – University grand opening



Building on a Legacy of Strength

This summer, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota celebrated the grand opening of our third Center for Changing Lives on University Avenue in Saint Paul.

The individuals we serve come to LSS seeking greater self-sufficiency and the opportunity to build the future they want for themselves and their families. With this in mind, we intentionally designed the space to connect children, youth and young families with the resources and support that help them move toward their goals.

The renovated facility improves our ability to deliver targeted, effective services that help more individuals and families create meaningful, lasting change in their lives. The expanded space includes four early learning classrooms and 18 transitional housing apartments. It also offers a host of LSS services – including a youth resource center, financial counseling, parent education, behavioral health and employment services – all under one roof.

This new chapter of a historic building was made possible by generous donations to the Empower What's Possible campaign, and we are deeply grateful for the confidence you place in our organization. Together, we have created a vital community resource where individuals and families can find stability, access opportunity, build connections and take meaningful steps toward greater independence. Thank you.

For more than 160 years, LSS has walked alongside our neighbors asking, *What are your dreams? Where do you want to go?* Looking ahead, we will continue deepening partnerships and co-creating solutions with the people we serve. By listening closely to what individuals and families want to accomplish and then helping remove obstacles to their dreams, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota will strengthen our communities for generations to come.

Thank you for all you make possible.

Patrick Thueson
President



(Front row, left to right): Patrick Thueson, Troy Wenck, Alexis Oberdorfer, Jesse Stremcha and Russ Michaletz cutting the ribbon at the newly renovated CFCL



Guests touring an LSS Early Learning Center classroom



Friends of LSS gathered in the welcoming Resource Center

Where Possibility Has a Home

On July 28, supporters, community partners, families and neighbors gathered at the corner of Saint Paul's University Avenue and Grotto Street to celebrate a milestone years in the making. They toured newly finished apartments, explored bright early childhood classrooms and gathered in spaces designed to bring families, youth and resources together under one roof.

While the grand opening marked the completion of building renovations, the real story is only beginning.

Fast forward a few months: The ribbon has been cut. The speeches are over. Services are in full swing at the Center For Changing Lives – University. Step inside and you'll find much more than offices and classrooms.

You'll find young parents meeting with financial counselors and family support specialists. You'll find youth preparing resumes, exploring career opportunities and connecting with housing resources. You'll find children learning and growing in nurturing early childhood classrooms. For families who may once have traveled to multiple locations for support, many of those resources can now be found in a single welcoming space.

The center is designed to bring services together in one easily accessed location, ensuring families spend less time navigating systems and more time focusing on what comes next. Located along the Metro Green Line, the building was intentionally designed to remove obstacles and make support easier to access.



Tour groups admiring the second floor's vibrant community spaces



LSS team members and supporters enjoyed sweet treats and live music

Upstairs, the building is home to LSS' Youth Transitional Housing Program – Rezek. Eighteen fully-furnished apartments provide youth and young families experiencing homelessness with a safe place to live while receiving coaching, life skills support and personalized guidance. The goal is simple: to give residents a chance to have independence, a fresh start and a path to self-sufficiency. Shared community spaces, on-site staff and access to wraparound support help create an environment where young people can focus on building stability rather than simply responding to life challenges.

Each year, more than 1,100 people will come through these doors seeking support, opportunity and stability. Some will arrive looking for housing. Others will seek guidance, educational opportunities or resources for their family. All will be welcomed into a space intentionally designed around connection, belonging and possibility.

As guests toured the building during the grand opening, they saw what we've achieved together. We hope they also caught a glimpse of what our young neighbors will accomplish here in the months and years ahead.

Piloting Pathways to Independence

*The Center for Changing Lives – University will also serve as the launch site for LSS' new **Youth Employment and Financial Stability Pilot**, an initiative designed to help young people build the skills, confidence and financial foundation for long-term success. By combining employment support and financial coaching, the pilot will help participants move toward greater stability, self-sufficiency and opportunity. Thanks to donor support, this innovative program will equip young people to build the futures they envision.*



Thank you to the 177 guests who helped us celebrate this milestone



Marcia Page & Kristen Eason

YOU empower what's possible

Marcia Page & Kristen Eason

Hometown:

Marcia: Olivia, MN

Kristen: Edina, MN

Education:

Marcia: Gustavus Adolphus College; University of Minnesota – Carlson School of Management (MBA)

Kristen: Depauw University; Hazelden Betty Ford Graduate School of Addiction Studies (Master's)

Career:

Marcia: Founder and CEO, Mpowered Capital; Co-Founder and Chair Emerita, Varde Partners

Kristen: Executive Director, Family Foundation; Founder and Consultant, Harbor House Sober Living for Women

Home Congregation:

Marcia: Lutheran Church of the Good Shephard

Family:

Marcia: Husband (John Huepenbecker), daughters Sarah, Kristen and Laura

Kristen: Husband (Jordan Eason), daughter Willa

When Kristen Eason talks about philanthropy, one childhood memory comes immediately to mind. Growing up, her allowance was divided into three equal categories: save, spend and give. "It was always very clear that giving was part of how we lived," she says.

That lesson wasn't really about money. It was about responsibility, compassion and contributing to something larger than yourself. For both Kristen and her mother, Marcia Page, generosity was shaped by family, faith and community. Marcia grew up watching her parents lead through service, showing that success carries a responsibility to help others. Today, those values continue to guide their conversations about giving.

The two bring distinct perspectives to philanthropy. Marcia built a career in finance and investing where data drives decision-making. Kristen's path led to counseling, housing initiatives and philanthropy, where listening and empathy are essential.

Yet despite their different professional lenses, they often arrive at the same place. "We come to decisions from a place of collaboration and complementary skill sets," Marcia says.

Together, they believe philanthropy is most powerful when it creates opportunity and lasting change.

That conviction inspired their $625,000 matching challenge gift supporting data intelligence, service design and innovation through the Empower What's Possible campaign.

While data and design may seem removed from direct service, Marcia and Kristen see them as tools for understanding needs, improving outcomes and responding to emerging challenges.

"LSS is uniquely positioned because of its breadth of programming," Marcia says. "To pair that breadth with data-driven decision-making focused on improving client outcomes is incredibly powerful."

For Kristen, innovation helps organizations adapt to people's evolving needs. "New and different challenges are consistently arising in our communities," she says. "The ability to innovate to meet those needs isn't optional. It's essential."

For both women, the goal isn't better data for its own sake. It's creating stronger pathways to opportunity for the people and communities LSS serves. The matching challenge reflects a core belief of Empower What's Possible: tomorrow's impact requires investing in better solutions today.

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Learn more and join us: **empowerwhatspossible.org**

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