

## Caregiver Support

Lutheran Social Service (LSS) of Minnesota is dedicated to ensuring older adults have choice in their services and opportunities to contribute to the community. The long-term services and supports LSS offers, which include caregiver support programs, are designed to promote independence, well-being, and relationships. Below are two stories showing how LSS of Minnesota's Group and In-Home Respite Care Programs address the specific needs of seniors and their families, helping them stay healthy in their homes and communities.

The first story is of Joe and Mary. Joe was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and his wife Mary is his primary caregiver. He is unable to be left alone, and Mary says their friends and family have disappeared because they are uncomfortable with Joe's memory loss. "We have become very isolated in our own home." Concerned about Joe's lack of socialization, Mary signed him up to attend LSS's Group Respite Program in Moorhead, Minnesota. Now every Monday morning, Joe goes to Our Savior's Lutheran Church along with five other men for a day of cards, music, crafts, conversation, and gentle exercise. Mary says Joe is very excited about the program; that he doesn't remember much of anything, but always knows when it is Monday morning and time to go to group respite. He even starts asking about it Sunday night. "We usually have to leave an hour early because he can't wait and we end up driving around the block until it is time to go. The volunteers are angels and they have become like members of our family." In addition, Joe and Mary utilize LSS's In-Home Respite Care services so Mary can go to her weekly doctor's appointments. "We are so grateful to LSS. It has made life so much better for both of us. It gives us both something to look forward to each week and we all need that in life."

The other story is of Peter and Margie, who just celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. Peter is very frail and Margie is his primary caregiver. She doesn't want to leave him alone, as she is afraid he will fall. She is worried he will try to go into the basement, even though she tells him he shouldn't do that. She smiles and says, "Even after 70 years of marriage I still can't get him to listen all the time." Yet, Margie has heart trouble that requires her to attend frequent medical appointments. So that Margie is able to go to the doctor and run errands, LSS provides respite care for Peter each Monday and Friday. Peter and his respite caregiver play cards and have a wonderful time. They also both love music and listen to Peter's records. Margie says she and Peter are able to stay in their own home because they take care of each other. She told LSS, "It is great to have this help. He is happy to have someone to come as it gives him something to look forward to. We are grateful!"

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### Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

Lutheran Social Service (LSS) of Minnesota expresses the love of Christ for all people through service that inspires hope, changes lives, and builds community. They believe that all people should have the opportunity to live and work in community with dignity, safety, and hope.

To find out more, visit:  
<http://www.lssmn.org/>

### LSS Services for Older Adult

LSS of Minnesota provides many services for older adults and their families, including caregiver support, food and fellowship, in-home help, financial counseling, legal and advocacy services, and volunteer and job opportunities. To find out more, visit:

<http://www.lssmn.org/oa/services/>

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota is a member of the LSA network, and an [LSA 20-500 Fund](#) supporter.