



Who is my neighbor?

In answer to the question “And who is my neighbor?” in Luke 10:25, Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan, an outcast traveler who stops along the road to give assistance and sustenance to a victim of violence. Every day, the staff of Lutheran Community Services Northwest reach out, reflecting the compassionate face of God, in service to our neighbors and our communities. Here is the story of some of the thousands of lives touched each year through our ministry.

Meet our neighbors, **The Jones Family** *A special Christmas present*

On Christmas a few years ago, Ann Jones remembers crying herself to sleep. Despite a wonderful husband, many friends, and a great career, the thing she wanted most continued to elude her. The Jones' had been unable to conceive for nearly three years. "I was so disappointed," Ann recalled. "I had waited all my life to be a mother." The couple began researching their options. "We read everything we could about assisted reproduction, international adoption, private agency adoption, public adoption, you name it!"

Ann's husband was drawn to the idea of foster parenting. "I was nervous about that," Ann admits; "because I'd heard so many stories." But they persevered, and eventually learned about a special type of foster parenting called Foster-Adopt. In this approach, parents commit to a foster child who may wind up needing a permanent home. The child's birth family is provided with various services and resources to help them meet their challenges, but, if after a certain period of time, the court determines that the family cannot provide a safe home for the child, the foster family becomes the child's permanent home through

adoption. In the end, the Jones' chose the foster-adopt route. They knew it would be hard to wait out the court proceedings, but in the end they decided to take the risk. Two months later, the phone rang.

Evan, then six months old, joined the Jones family "It certainly was scary to fall in love with the little guy and know there was a chance he might return home," Ann remembered. "But seeing him every day made it so clear to us - Evan couldn't wait for the courts to have a sense of family. He needed to have a family right away. And it feels good to give in that way, even when you don't know the future. Really, when you think about it, even ordinary life doesn't come with guarantees."

Life may not come with guarantees, but it certainly does bring blessings. Evan eventually became a permanent part of the Jones' family. "We've known more joy in the months and years with Evan than ever in our lives," Ann exclaimed. The next Christmas, the Jones' tied a big red bow around Evan and marveled at the greatest gift they've ever known.

Families for Kids is a network of current and former members of foster and adoptive families across Washington State. The program's goal is to help find and support other families who may be interested in helping abused and neglected children.

“Who is my neighbor?” presents the many faces of social outreach ministry, as carried out by our agency in communities across the Northwest.

For more information about the programs of Lutheran Community Services Northwest, and to learn how you can help support our ministry, contact your nearest LCS office or visit our web site at www.lcsnw.org

