



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, **Suzy & Marissa*** *Leaving fear behind*

Suzy and Marissa were brought to our office by their aunt and uncle. They had been removed from their mother’s care as a result of her drug and alcohol abuse. The girls had moved frequently when their mother would be evicted for non-payment of the rent, or when their mother’s latest boyfriend would kick her out, or when Child Welfare would step in and remove the children. Up until the girls came to live with their aunt and uncle, they lived in squalor, many times with little or nothing to eat. Men and women were in and out of their home day and night.

The girls were experiencing severe night terrors, nightmares, and day and night wetting when they first came for counseling. They were seen by a therapist who specializes in play therapy, including art and sand tray therapy. We also worked with the aunt and uncle to help them deal with the girls’ behavior.

Many children do not respond well to “talk” therapy but can, instead, tell their stories through artwork or playing in the sand tray. Suzy and Marissa progressed, although at times it was very difficult for them to

accept their mother’s drug and alcohol problem. They became very angry when, after a year with their aunt and uncle, they realized they were never going home to their mother. They were able to express their anger at their mother in therapy. Marissa said, “It’s safe here because I can say what I really feel and not worry that my mom will know what I said.” Suzy added, “I was able to understand where my night terrors were coming from when I drew a picture.” Suzy drew a picture of a house she lived in with her mother - the house was colorful except her bedroom, which was black. Through play therapy, she was eventually able to express what happened in that room.

Today, Suzy and Marissa are two happy, healthy girls. The behavior issues have disappeared as well as the wetting. They no longer have night terrors or nightmares, and can enter a dark room without fear. Their aunt and uncle have learned positive skills for dealing with the girls’ behaviors. They are all thriving as a family.

***Client names have been changed to protect their confidentiality.**

LCS’ Clatsop County Office in Astoria, Oregon provides a variety of counseling services for children, adults and families, including the Hope House children’s grief counseling program.

“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

