

# SHARING

## newsletter

## Sudanese with Disabilities Get a Helping Hand of Mercy

By Sarah Schafer

Five years ago, Deaconess Pat Nuffer was delivering a first aid kit during her deaconess internship in Sudan when she first met Naumbe. The twenty-something-year-old woman sat outside the home she shared with her sister working on a handcraft. Having an adult son, Carl, who has Down syndrome, Nuffer recognized immediately that Naumbe also showed signs of the genetic condition.

"The word *mental retardation* is not in their language," said Nuffer, who tried her best to describe Naumbe's condition to the young woman's sister.

In 2010, LCMS World Relief and Human Care (WR-HC) awarded a \$12,020 grant to Hands of Mercy, an independent Lutheran mission organization founded by Nuffer in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan (ELCS) to care for people with disabilities in Southern Sudan. The grant was funded by generous gifts from WR-HC donors, which allowed Hands of Mercy to purchase equipment and training materials, provide tuition assistance and develop self-sustaining projects.

"It basically put Hands of Mercy on the map in Southern Sudan. It makes a statement that people with disabilities are worthy of education and learning skills," said Nuffer, or "Mama Patricia," as she's called at the center.

The center serves as an adult learning center, a home for several people with disabilities and a shop where they sell crafts. The 20 or so participants attend English classes taught by a Lutheran pastor and a local person who happens to have a disability. They also learn God's Word and receive Bible catechesis. It's also where they get their only hot meal of the day.

"They have become a family in themselves," said Nuffer.

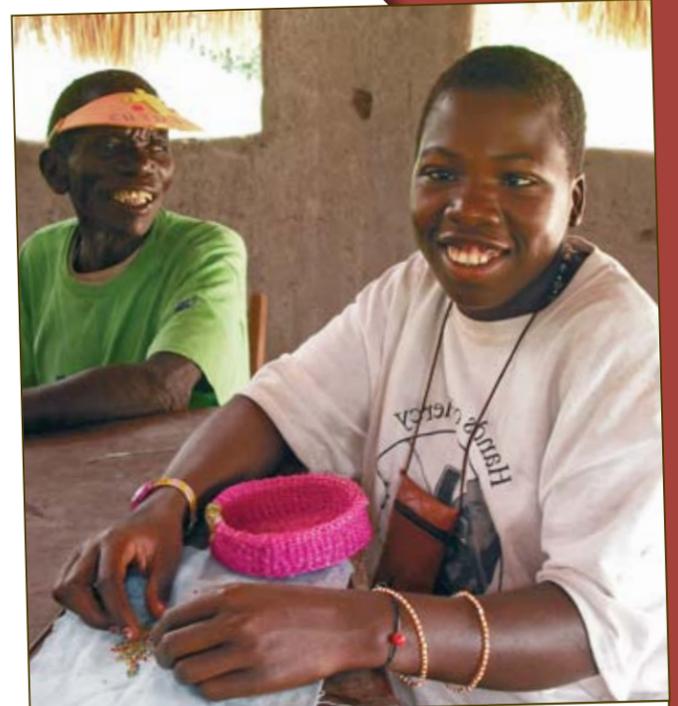
Part of the WR-HC grant provided start-up funds for a poultry-raising program to generate income to pay teachers and teach marketable skills to the participants. Nuffer planned to deliver the chickens on her most recent trip to Sudan in March, but because snowstorms delayed her arrival, she lost her "shopping day" and, instead, bought two goats.

Other self-sustaining programs through ELCS have included solar recharging services, a photography shop, a tailoring business and a bakery. Everyone participates in the work. As an able-bodied person, Naumbe helped clear the land for the bakery.

Hands of Mercy opened a special needs classroom in 2010, in which children with disabilities are taught skills and are able to see meaning in their lives through Jesus Christ. Because so many of the children have physical disabilities due to cerebral palsy or polio, Hands of Mercy, now, must find a way to transport the children to and from the classroom. "When we go back we plan to buy a three-wheeled motorcycle adapted to transport the children."

"They are learning that while they remain in bodies distorted in this fallen world, that someday, with Jesus Christ, they will be whole, in a world free from the heartache and struggle they experience," wrote Nuffer. "And more than that, they are given the hope . . . that their lives have meaning and purpose through a loving God who created and cares for them."

For more information about Hands of Mercy, visit [www.handsofmercymission.org](http://www.handsofmercymission.org). For more information about LCMS World Relief and Human Care, visit [www.lcms.org/worldrelief](http://www.lcms.org/worldrelief).



Naumbe works on a craft at Hands of Mercy in Southern Sudan. The sale of handcrafts like these help support ministry at the center for people with disabilities.



Pat Nuffer (in orange shirt) worships with others from Hands of Mercy, which offers education and skills training for people with disabilities in Sudan.

## Give God Glory...

...for members of Grace Lutheran Church in Huntsville, Ala., who gave "above and beyond" offerings this Christmas to benefit the Building Homes and Hope in Haiti (BHHH) program! To celebrate Jesus' world-changing birth and make a real difference in the lives of people in need, "the congregation was challenged to consider giving just one less Christmas gift for each member of their family and donate the money to the first 'Grace Family Christmas Offering,'" said the church's pastor, Rev. Blair Clark. The church exceeded their initial goal and donated \$6,515.50 to BHHH to sponsor a home.

The BHHH program, coordinated by LCMS World Relief and Human Care in co-operation with Lutheran partners in Haiti, is helping construct hundreds of permanent homes in Haiti, where thousands of people are still struggling to recover from last year's earthquake.



### How Your Gifts Support LCMS World Relief and Human Care

You can help make projects like these possible with your continuing or new gifts to "Where Needed Most." Please use the envelope provided in this issue to send your gift to help LCMS World Relief and Human Care continue to reach out with Christ's mercy around the world. (Note: Thanks to your generous gifts, this publication may occasionally feature projects that have been fully funded.)

The mission of the church through LCMS World Relief and Human Care is to reach out in mercy and compassion to those in need, motivated by Christ and His Gospel, according to the Lutheran confession of the faith.

SHARING is the bi-monthly newsletter of the disaster response and self-help development ministries of LCMS World Relief and Human Care. It is available free to individuals and in quantities to congregations and other groups. Published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; 314-965-9000 or 800-248-1930. Website: [www.lcms.org/worldrelief](http://www.lcms.org/worldrelief)

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# Lutheran Housing Support Committed to Struggling Neighborhood

By Kim Krull

“Other groups came in, did little stuff and left. But you Lutherans are still here.”

That’s how longtime College Hill resident Carol Crenshaw sums up the difference between organizations that made a stab at revitalization in her struggling North St. Louis, Mo., community and the long-term commitment made by Lutheran Housing Support (LHS).

This year marks a decade since work by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod began in College Hill. Since LHS was established in 2004, the faith-based housing program has helped connect more than 50 congregations and 2,000 volunteers to the neighborhood’s renewal efforts and developed key partnerships with government leaders, the police, civic groups and businesses.

Monthly meetings bring homeowners and other stakeholders together to address community needs. Improvements include the introduction of police foot patrols and surveillance cameras. St. Paul Lutheran Church, located in College Hill and a primary LHS partner, hosted a citywide police summit.

Efforts have helped contribute to a more than 45 percent drop in crime over the past four years according to statistics provided by the St. Louis City Police, said Deborah Rutt, vice president for Advancement with LHS.

“Lutheran Housing Support has helped improve relationships with the local police and with more than 29 agencies that provide services to help residents make positive changes,” Rutt said. “When Lutheran Housing Support began working here, we were the only organization offering assistance.”

Other improvements are a popular community vegetable garden, four new roofs and repairs to more than 46 houses, including the

home where Crenshaw raised five children, including four who suffered with seizures.

Crenshaw says College Hill was beautiful when she moved there in 1970. “But one day I looked around and couldn’t believe the change.”

Over the years, many neighbors have moved away. Abandoned property and safety issues have caused concern. But positive steps continue, guided by LHS and in ministry with St. Paul, a College Hill fixture since 1862.

“Our end goal is for College Hill to be a Nehemiah neighborhood,” said Don Strohmeier, lead organizer for the Campaign for College Hill. The Nehemiah program is the pioneering, church-based effort that dramatically transformed neighborhoods in Brooklyn, N.Y., in the 1980s.

This spring, Crenshaw said she was looking forward to another College Hill cleanup day, scheduled for April 16. More than 300 young people are expected to clear debris, paint, weed and plant in a return service event coordinated by LHS in collaboration with 1 By Youth, a Colorado-based nonprofit.

“Those kids come in and get a lot done in one day,” said Crenshaw, whose home has benefited from improvements made possible by LHS, including new windows, electrical wiring and tuck pointing.

Construction also is on tap. LHS has worked with St. Louis City Alderwoman Dionne Flowers to designate an area for the building and rehab of homes, perhaps within the next two years. “These are big challenges that take a lot of patience,” Rutt said. “We’re working with a great bunch of people in College Hill, and we’ve made them a promise that we’re not going to walk away.”



Lutheran Housing Support’s Deborah Rutt, left, Don Strohmeier and Nicole Ridley visit College Hill, the focus of a neighborhood revitalization project.



Rev. Randy Wilken, left, and young people with the Acts 1:8 Ministry help a homeowner with repairs last summer as part of a servant event in the College Hill neighborhood of North St. Louis, Mo., sponsored in partnership with Lutheran Housing Support.

LCMS World Relief and Human Care established LHS to assist communities near LCMS churches. To learn more, visit [www.lcms.org/lhs](http://www.lcms.org/lhs) or contact Rutt at [deborah.rutt@lcms.org](mailto:deborah.rutt@lcms.org) or Nicole Ridley, LHS project director, at [nicole.ridley@lcms.org](mailto:nicole.ridley@lcms.org).

## From the President of the Synod

I love the way that Jude begins his pastoral letter to some of the church’s first believers: “mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.” What better way to remind Christians what they possess through faith in Jesus. These gifts of God’s grace know no bounds. The psalmist wrote, “Your mercy, O Lord, reaches to the heavens” (Ps. 36). Jesus gave peace through His Holy Spirit to His apostles that “overflowed” their hearts. And Paul reminds the Christians in Rome that the love of God was demonstrated that while we were dead in sin, Christ died for us.

The unlimited mercy, peace and love of God are sealed for us in the resurrection of Jesus. They are not given to us only once, but continuously and in hyper-abundance. Each and every time you receive the Gospel through the reading of Scripture, recalling the promises of your Baptism, receiving absolution, hearing the preaching of your pastor, and eating and drinking the body and blood of Jesus, you receive these gifts of God.

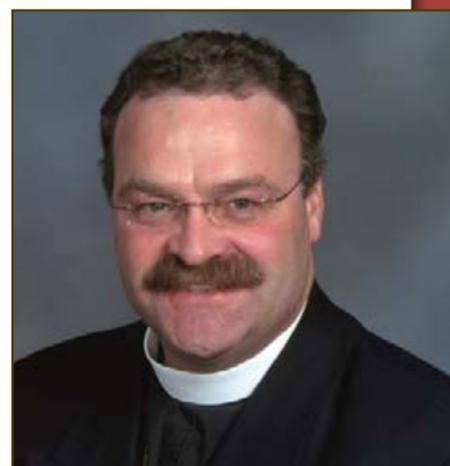
What a joyful response the gifts of God elicit in us! Like those who witnessed the resurrected Jesus and those whom Jude addressed in his pastoral letter, we live in joyful hope and confidence, knowing that all the gifts of God belong to us and are intended by Him to be shared with others. His mercy, peace and love cause us to search for ways to share the gifts of Jesus with others.

You will find in this issue of *Sharing*, two very touching examples of how we, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, share the mercy, peace and love of God in local neighborhoods and across the world. This is our life together: serving under the Risen Savior as the Good News of the resurrection is proclaimed as we care for people. It is what He has called us to do. It is what He does through us, the body of Christ, the holy Christian church.

Thank you for your continued and generous support. In the midst of the pressing needs caused by the recent earthquake in Japan and devastating storms here in the U.S., we are also keeping our eye on the many other needs in the world that never end. For that, we give thanks to God for allowing us these opportunities to serve.

Please continue to pray for those whom we serve, the pastors and members of the local congregations where we work, and for the International Center staff who serve in your behalf.

Pastor Matt Harrison  
President of the Synod



Mercy forever.