



# Echoes of Mercy

A PUBLICATION OF LUTHER HOME OF MERCY • WILLISTON, OHIO

SPRING 2025



Luther Home of Mercy is a Lutheran Ministries of Mercy Affiliate

# Lutheran Ministries of Mercy

## In This Easter Season

The Easter season, with its focus on renewal and new life, offers a powerful opportunity to reflect on how we can serve others. In the Gospels we see Jesus repeatedly serving others, whether it was healing the sick, comforting the brokenhearted, or offering forgiveness to those in need. His actions remind us that serving others is not merely an act of kindness, but a profound way to live out the love of God.

For many of the people served by our ministries, the Easter season may otherwise pass unnoticed, overshadowed by daily and sometimes overwhelming struggles. Yet, simple acts of kindness by staff, volunteers and donors, carry a profound message of love and compassion. These friends are driven by the knowledge that their contributions make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. They know that service to others is not a seasonal act, but an on-going commitment.

As we reflect on the joy and impact of this Easter season, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the volunteers, donors, and staff whose dedication and generosity make everything possible. Your unwavering support has touched countless lives, and your commitment to serving our community goes beyond the holiday season. Whether through your time, resources, or hard work, each of you has helped create meaningful moments of hope and connection, and for that, we are deeply thankful. Together, we've made a difference, and we look forward to continuing this journey of compassion and service in the months ahead. Thank you for being an essential part of our mission.

Sincerely,

*Terri Rodriguez*

*Remember that the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows generously will also reap generously.*

—2 Corinthians 9:6



Terri Rodriguez  
President and CEO

## Foundation Strategy

Under the leadership of volunteers, each of our affiliates has an independent Foundation that promotes the programs and services of that agency. Using investment strategies, these volunteers manage and distribute funds for our affiliates to use to fulfill mission goals. We would like to thank these dedicated Luther Home of Mercy leaders. To share your interest in serving in a leadership role, please contact Terri Rodriguez at 419-972-4364.

## Luther Home of Mercy Foundation

Arlyn Bensch, *President*  
John Zechman, *Vice President*  
Anthony Mifsud, *Treasurer*  
Lowell Hartman • Jed Osborn • Terri Rodriguez  
Rev. Donald Wukotich, *President-Emeritus*

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Karen Shaffer, *Executive Assistant*  
Joseph Beagle, *Senior Accounting Manager*

**LMM Staff** Jeanette Hrovatich, *Director of Planned Giving*  
Ken Richmond, *Director of Finance*



Filling Homes, Luther Home of Mercy and Lutheran Social Services of NWO are working together under the Lutheran Ministries of Mercy umbrella to share resources. These combined efforts allow us to foster hope, create change and meet the needs of individuals and families in our care. Visit our website at [lutheranministriesofmercy.org](http://lutheranministriesofmercy.org) to learn more.





## Our Very Best Friends by Megan O'Brien, Vice President

Over the past few months, our Williston campus has mourned the loss of several longtime residents including Marsha and Nadine.

Marsha lived at Luther Home for most of her adult life...nearly 54 years! Though Marsha was nonverbal, she was able to express her likes and dislikes and make her opinions known. Marcia taught us the value of patience. She taught us how to listen with more than just our ears and the delight that comes with indulging a sweet tooth.



*Nadine built relationships that inspired countless volunteers and friends to be part of our ministry.*

If you have visited our campus sometime in the last 36 years, you probably met Nadine. She was part of every Luther Home party and a friend to everyone. Nadine worked closely with our Mission Advancement Department; frequently welcoming visitors and sharing what it was like to be part of our ministry. She was dedicated to writing her 40+ pen pals and would thank recipients for being her very best friends.

One of the greatest joys of providing long-term care is that those we serve really do become our "very best friends." They are often the first to know about our major life events and share in our joys and sorrows. They are the hands that hold ours and our motivation to be our best.

As we walk alongside those entrusted to us, we learn that they are not people we do this ministry FOR...but rather, people we do this ministry WITH. While our hearts are heavy with the loss of two of our very best friends, we also celebrate these two special people who were part of our lives for 90 combined years.



*Marsha dazzled at the LHM Spring Promenade.*

## Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month



Celebrated every March, Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month raises awareness about inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all aspects of community life. Luther Home joined in wearing orange, the official color for the month, to celebrate inclusion and individuals living to their full potential!





## Gifts

**Mrs. Mary Anson**  
Baldwinsville, NY  
**Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Bacon**  
Toledo, OH  
**Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Baum**  
Sylvania, OH  
**Mrs. Mary Billow**  
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**Ms. Kaye Boss**  
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*Charlie had fun exploring  
Imagination Station*

**Mr. & Mrs. David Rinderknecht**  
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Lists in this issue acknowledge gifts from January 1 - March 31, 2025. While we strive to acknowledge all gifts accurately, it is possible that errors have been made. If any are discovered, please accept our apologies and notify Melissa Gregg at 419-972-4338, [mgregg@lutherhome.org](mailto:mgregg@lutherhome.org).







## Honor Roll

### **Jim Bockbrader**

Ms. Mary Ann Bockbrader  
Pemberville, OH

### **Deborah Craze**

Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Craze  
Sterling Heights, MI

### **Mr. and Mrs. Ron Krieger**

St. John Lutheran Church Women  
Oak Harbor, OH

### **Norma Reif**

Mrs. Delores Buhrow  
Oak Harbor, OH

### **Robert Young**

Mr. and Mrs. Lowell L. Hartman  
Williston, OH

## Estate, Trust & Planned Giving

### **The Kathleen and F. Lee Lichtenfels Foundation**

Lima, OH

### **Mrs. Beverly A. Pangle Trust**

Rossford, OH

### **Christine Siefert Trust**

Cleveland, OH

### **Mrs. Velma L. Sundermeyer Trust**

Sylvania, OH

## Charitable Gift Annuity

### **Monthly gift in memory of Rev. Don Wukotich**

Terry Bossert  
Maumee, OH

## Corporate Gifts

### **ConocoPhillips Company**

Bartlesville, OK

### **Ecolab**

TX

### **Manulife Financial**

Brooklyn, NY

### **National Financial Services**

Albuquerque, NM

### **Northeastern Ohio Synod**

Cuyahoga Falls, OH

### **PayPal Giving Fund**

Centennial, CO

## Friends Support Each Other



Bradenn played in the D1 Special Olympics state championship basketball game at OSU in March, showcasing incredible determination and skill. His roommates Nino and Matt, along with his close friend Beth, traveled to The Ohio State University to cheer him on.



## Good Gifts Come Only From God

We can look to the marketplace; we can look to one another; we can look to the Government, but we will find no perfect gifts except from God.

These gifts are seen daily and into the evening hours at Luther Home of Mercy. They are seen in the lives of those who live and work here. They are seen in the response of those who visit here.

A recent visitor took the time to carefully listen to a man who had great difficulty speaking. With motions and gestures, expressions and hugs, they conversed. Although they were challenged by the problem of speech, they were both determined to have understanding before sundown. There was love between them and though their sentences may have seemed rather simple to the average standards, each word was received as a gift from above.

Disability, weariness, temptation and even legislation may work to obscure our vision of God's gifts, but no earthly shadow can overcome the light that beams from the Father of Lights.

*Pastor Don L. Wukotich  
Summer 1986*

*\*written shortly after Pastor Don became the Executive Director and still relevant today*





## Memorials

**Randy Abke**

Mr. Dale Avers  
Luckey, OH

**Jimmy Baron**

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Baron  
Indianapolis, IN

**M. Earline Buehler**

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**Patricia J. Buehler**

Mr. Robert Buehler  
Carleton, MI

**Todd H. Buehler**

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Carleton, MI

**Sandy Cutchall**

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Oregon, OH

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Pickerington, OH

**Arthur and Valarie McHaney**

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**Jean Shugert**

Mrs. Judith Pflieger  
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**Louis Snyder**

Mrs. Cheryl Maas  
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Mr. & Mrs. William Staib  
Walbridge, OH

**Robert, Irene and Betty Staib**

Mr. & Mrs. William Staib  
Walbridge, OH

**Harold & Carol Tewers**

Ms. Elaine Money  
Plano, TX

**Norman and Clara Tewers**

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Trout  
Fremont, OH

**Marsha Vandemark**

Ms. Kathleen Larimore  
Cincinnati, OH

**Richard Villagomez**

Mr. and Mrs. Tom O'Leary  
Ms. Mary Pilcher

Toledo, OH

**Donald and Elnora Vorwerk**

Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Storm  
Dundee, IL

**Ronald Walters**

Mrs. Cheryl Maas  
Pike Road, AL

**David Young**

Mr. and Mrs. Giles Molyet  
Fremont, OH



Mary Pat & Jeff have great smiles! They attend Genesis Day Program In Northwood.





# Remembering Pastor Don

**Pastor Donald L. Wukotich, Executive Director Emeritus**

*August 30, 1942 - April 14, 2025*

Pastor Don, Executive Director Emeritus of Lutheran Ministries of Mercy, passed away just several weeks ago, leaving behind a legacy that will resonate for many years to come. His career in ministry was marked by a steadfast commitment to service, shepherding communities with compassion, wisdom and unwavering faith.



In his early career, Don served in various churches, in hospital and jail settings and in social service organizations. He came to Luther Home of Mercy in 1986, as Executive Director, and was the catalyst in forming Lutheran Ministries of Mercy, which he led until his retirement in 2017. Upon retirement, Pastor Don continued to serve as President of the Luther Home of Mercy Foundation.

During his time leading our agencies, Pastor Don brought a deep sense of mission to every decision, always guided by humility and integrity. His quiet wisdom and servant leadership inspired all who worked beside him. Under his guidance, the organization grew both in reach and in heart, never losing sight of its core purpose - to uplift and support those in need. Pastor Don led by example, reminding us daily that our work is a calling and that every person served, and every person employed, matter deeply.



As a gifted speaker and writer, Pastor Don had a unique way of reaching hearts... he spoke with compassion, conviction and humor, turning ordinary moments into meaningful reflections. His voice was always one of encouragement and his presence was an anchor in times of uncertainty and a light in moments of challenge.

As we say farewell to our dear friend, he remains ever-present in the mission he helped shape. His words continue to guide our path and his values live on in the work we do each day. We mourn his loss deeply, but also celebrate a life lived with purpose, grace and unwavering devotion.

*Terri Rodriguez*  
LMM President and CEO



## Donald L. Wukotich Scholarship

The Donald L. Wukotich Scholarship was created by the Lutheran Ministries of Mercy Board of Directors in 2017 to commemorate Pastor Don's 31 years of service to our ministries upon his retirement.

Semi-annually, part-time and full-time staff (*Luther Home of Mercy, Filling Homes and Lutheran Social Services*), pursuing higher education in fields related to our ministries, may apply. Since it was established, 46 scholarships have been awarded, totaling over \$21,000.

*Gifts in memory of Pastor Don will support the Scholarship Fund.*



## Pinewood Derby



*Sheri, Larry & Doug watch closely*

Luther Home of Mercy's Cub Scout Pack has 24 members and continues to grow. The Scouts invited their friends and family to "race" with them for the annual Pinewood Derby. It was an exciting night with a lot of races, including friends simply racing for fun.

Congratulations to Barbie, our grand champion and Jason F., our runner-up!

Thank you to our volunteers Cheryl Smarkel, *Scout Leader*, Colleen, Larry & Charlie for making the night a success!

## Join Us Memorial Day, May 26 at 10:15 am Genoa High School Marching Band Performs



## Volunteer Opportunities

Individuals, groups and businesses are invited to volunteer at Luther Home of Mercy.

Contact Melissa for more details:  
[mgregg@lutherhome.org](mailto:mgregg@lutherhome.org) or 419-972-4338

## Fun Around Campus



*Sarah checking out the  
Easter Bunny's basket*



*Brian having fun trying a  
science experiment*



*Janell having fun with Amelia during game night*





## Dollywood Adventures

The months leading up to vacation for the ladies from Oak Harbor were busy with planning their trip with staff's assistance! There was talk of Dollywood all of the time. This charming destination, nestled

in the heart of the Smoky Mountains, brought non-stop smiles. The ladies enjoyed shows, attractions, indulging in delicious Southern food and taking in the breathtaking mountain views. They agree, Dollywood is a place where Dolly Parton's spirit of joy and creativity shines brightly!

## Sunday Funday Luau

Sunday Funday was a day full of games, prizes, friends, family, characters and food! Thank you to the St. John Williston Scouts and the Genoa High School students who volunteered!



## Now Hiring Nurses \$3,000 Sign-On Bonus

LPNs & RNs - start a rewarding career with Luther Home of Mercy! Compassionate individuals wanted to assist adults with disabilities and administer medications.

- Part-time & full-time positions on 2<sup>nd</sup> shift
- Shifts overlap
- Ohio license required
- LPN starting pay \$27/hour
- RN starting pay \$32/hour
- Ask about shift differentials

Employee benefits include health, dental & vision insurance; paid time off; and, premium pay for holidays worked.

For more details, contact Darlene Schimming, Director of Nursing at 419-972-4445 or [dschimming@lutherhome.org](mailto:dschimming@lutherhome.org).

**Apply Today!**  
[lutherhome.org](http://lutherhome.org)

Lutheran Ministries of Mercy is Rejoicing in Hope... scan the code to see why!





## Rejoicing in Hope 2025 Annual Meeting

The Lutheran Ministries of Mercy (LMM) 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting was held on March 10. It was a blessing to spend time with over 100 guests, including our affiliates, Filling Homes and Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio, congregations who support us and local leaders.



Thank you Bishop Daniel Beaudoin, Rev. Dr. Kevin Wilson and Bishop Chester Trail for sharing The Word with us! Our keynote speaker, Ohio Senator, Paula Hicks-Hudson, reminded us to love one another and give as God has given to us.

Together, in 2024, LMM agencies served over 30,000 individuals. This wouldn't be possible without our faithful donors, congregations and dedicated staff.

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." - Romans 15:13*



### Church Gifts

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church**  
Pemberville, OH

**Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
Bowling Green, OH

**Faith Lutheran Church**  
Toledo, OH

**Hope Lutheran Church**  
Fostoria, OH

**Lutheran Church of The Master**  
Perrysburg, OH

**Messiah Lutheran Church**  
Toledo, OH

**Olivet Lutheran Church**  
Sylvania, OH

**Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church**  
Perrysburg, OH

**Solomon Lutheran Church**  
Woodville, OH

**St. John Lutheran Church**  
Port Clinton, OH

**St. John Lutheran Church**  
Oak Harbor, OH

**St. John Lutheran Church**  
Williston, OH

**St. John's Lutheran Church**  
New Washington, OH

**St. John's Lutheran Church**  
Danforth, IL

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church**  
Lima, OH

**St. Paul Lutheran Church**  
Pemberville, OH

**St. Paul Lutheran Church**  
Prospect, OH

**St. Paul Lutheran Church**  
Sulphur Springs, OH

**St. Paul Lutheran Church**  
Maybee, MI

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church**  
Napoleon, OH

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church**  
Oak Harbor, OH

**Trinity Lutheran Church**  
Elmore, OH

**Trinity Lutheran Church**  
Sandusky, OH

**Zion Lutheran Church**  
Perrysburg, OH

**Zion Lutheran Church Men**  
Lima, OH

**Zoar Lutheran Church**  
Perrysburg, OH



Solomon Lutheran School students gathered items from our wish list and took a noisy collection during their *Spread the Love* campaign. Then during morning chapel in late February, they presented their gifts.

*Pictured: Pastor Alan Brown and students blessing the gifts*







Megan O'Brien, Vice President, Amanda Esquivel, Director of Community Habilitation Services, Terri Rodriguez, LMM President & CEO, and long-time donor, Mrs. Jennie Buckenberger

## New Beginnings

Sometimes people do the faithful, hard thing with great love and God uses their gifts to bring about something amazing. This is exactly what happened when Emmanuel Lutheran Church gifted their church to Luther Home of Mercy for a day program. In early April, church members joined staff, clients, family and friends for an open house.

The remodeled space brought a lot of smiles and joy to all in attendance! There's a lot of natural light and large indoor and outdoor gathering spaces at the new Emmanuel Lutheran Center in Lindsey. After touring, the former members shared they have peace and are thrilled that the Church will continue being a ministry to the community.



The individuals first day, April 14, was exciting and joy-filled! Here's what they said...

- *I like the big quiet space and being with my friends.* - Braylon
- *I LOVE all the room we have.* - January
- *It's calming here.* - Kait
- *This place is so much better.* - Ryan

**We are thankful for Emmanuel Lutheran Church allowing us to continue ministry in this beautiful place and all who have supported this new day program. God is With Us!**



LUTHER HOME OF MERCY  
5810 N MAIN ST  
PO BOX 187  
WILLISTON, OH 43468-0187  
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Lutheran  
Services  
in America



### Luther Home of Mercy

"Enriching Lives and Individual Abilities"

5810 N. Main Street, PO Box 187,  
Williston, OH 43468-0187  
419-836-7741 · Fax (419) 972-4357  
Office Hours: Monday-Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
[www.lutherhome.org](http://www.lutherhome.org)

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Jeffrey Schwartz, Becky Stewart, Bishop Chester Trail,  
Kathleen Winters

Luther Home of Mercy is an ICF/DD (Intermediate Care Facility for  
Developmentally Disabled) - the main campus is located in Williston  
and community ministry serves clients in four NW Ohio counties.



**Find us on Facebook!**

# Save the Date August 15, 2025

## 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Outing Maumee Bay State Park

8 a.m.  
Shotgun Start



[www.lutherhome.org](http://www.lutherhome.org)

