

April 2024 – From Sheep to Shepherd: An LSI Early Childhood Services Story

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a mother, recently released from treatment, found herself in her new empty apartment with her son. She felt lost and needed a shepherd to guide her. So, Hali contacted LSI’s Early Childhood Services, and Gretchen O’Brien, a Family Support Worker, answered the call. Gretchen began virtual home visits using the Healthy Family America home-visiting model.

For the next three years, Gretchen connected Hali and her son to community resources, served as a support system and a shoulder to cry on, and celebrated Hali’s sobriety milestones with her. Even when Hali doubted herself, Gretchen guided and believed in her.

“I just remember sitting in that empty apartment crying, but I had Gretchen on the phone. You guys believed in me when nobody else did,” shared Hali.

Today, Hali serves on the Healthy Family America (HFA) National Parent Advisory Committee, the first of its kind. The group is composed of 10-12 parents from around the country who have graduated from their local HFA program, each participant with their own story to share.

Hali needed a shepherd in her time of trouble and self-doubt, and Gretchen answered that call. Now, Hali serves as a shepherd to thousands of parents through the National Parent Advisory Committee. The LSI Early Childhood team couldn’t be more proud of Hali and Gretchen.

For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI’s Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

