

## Support Youth to Become Empowered Adults

LMM understands the complex challenges many youth across Cuyahoga County face and is committed to offering a safe place of respite and revitalization for youth facing adversity and housing insecurity. LMM's Youth Resiliency Services (YRS) program takes a holistic approach to meeting the basic needs of youth facing homelessness, providing critical shelter and independent living services through a trauma-informed lens, alongside behavioral health, physical health and case management services.

According to an article from Signal Cleveland, 'How often do 18- to 24-year-olds experience homelessness in Cleveland?', it's estimated that 10% of Cuyahoga County's homeless shelters fall into the 18- to 24-year-old age group. This article also cites a University of Maryland School of Social Work study stating that 32% of youth in Cuyahoga County foster care identify as LGBTQ+.

With giving season among us, LMM encourages you to join us in making a difference in the lives of the youth that we serve. Our Amazon Wish List is a great way to support our youth directly through purchasing daily essentials like hygiene items, phone chargers, gift cards and more.

Support LMM's Amazon Wish List by scanning the QR code.



## Inform Systems Change with Us

Putting boots on the ground and empowering program participants each and every day is at the core of LMM's mission. Through our four program areas, LMM is able to uplift the people we serve and support them through the day-to-day barriers they face in securing housing, finding employment, navigating difficult legal guardianship situations and more. While it's critical that we provide direct service on the ground, LMM also recognizes the need to address the root causes of the issues that plague the people we serve, including racism, discrimination and systemic inequities.

LMM's Office of Advocacy informs systems change at the local, state and federal levels by leveraging the expertise of staff and the experiences of program participants to advocate on behalf of those who are hurting to be empowered, valued and healed. Advancing racial equity, ending homelessness and reforming the criminal legal system are guiding principles in carrying out our advocacy work. LMM is able to carry out these principles through building relationships with elected officials, educating them on our mission and working with them to influence public policy to best support the people we serve.

LMM would like to thank our amazing elected officials who have taken time to visit our various sites and support our mission this year! If you're an elected official that would like to plan a site visit or engage with LMM's advocacy agenda, please contact Director of Advocacy, William Tarter, at wtarter@lutheranmetro.org.



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# Seeds of Change

lutheran metropolitan ministry 2024 Volume XXXII Issue 3

## Thank You for Celebrating 55 Years of LMM!

### Thank you.

These two words feel inadequate to describe the deep sense of appreciation, compassion, and humility that we feel at LMM, for your partnership and support in making 2024 an amazing year.

Whether you served on the LMM Board or on an advisory committee, volunteered with one of our programs or at the Men's Shelter, or gave generously of your treasure — **you made an impact!**

We are so grateful to you for all that the agency was able to accomplish in this 55th year of serving the people of Northeast Ohio who feel lost, hurt, and forgotten.

An exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, and an anniversary celebration that was just as remarkable. A fun night at Progressive Field in commemoration of 35 years of Guardianship Services. The awarding of a \$500K grant from the City of Cleveland to pilot 3D printed housing. LMM's leadership in answering the call to address youth homelessness. And the launch of our Workforce Training Center Capital Project.



We invite you to end the year celebrating with us, knowing that you played an important part in LMM's commitment to seeking justice, showing kindness, and serving with humility.

We wish you a joyous holiday season and look forward to serving with you in the new year!

Warm holiday blessings,

Maria A. Foschia  
President & CEO  
LMM

### LAST CALL!

## A PLACE Meant at moCa Cleveland

How can Cleveland use emerging design solutions to address displacement and affordable housing challenges in our city?

Co-organized by LMM, the Cleveland Museum of Contemporary Art (moCa) and Founding Principal of I\_You Design Lab, Sai Sinbondit, the A PLACE Meant art exhibit explores the potential for Cleveland to bring an end to homelessness by embracing bold innovations in housing development. The exhibit uniquely ties together inventive strategies and concepts like 3D printing, mushroom and clothing bricks, and solar power for energy efficiency, while reflecting and sharing data on Cleveland's housing history to encourage shifts that could make the city a center of design innovation in the future.

The A PLACE Meant exhibit is on display at the Cleveland Museum of Contemporary Art now through December 29. Free entry for all attendees. Learn more about the exhibit at [www.lutheranmetro.org/55th](http://www.lutheranmetro.org/55th) or [www.mocacleveland.org/exhibitions/a-place-meant](http://www.mocacleveland.org/exhibitions/a-place-meant).



## SAVE THE DATE: FOUNDER'S DAY 2025

In 1969, Rev. Sering and dozens of community, civic and faith leaders came together to speak out against racism, injustice and inequality. Over the years, LMM's mission has become more relevant by an unwavering commitment to advocating for justice and advancing innovative programs. From that founding meeting in a church, to countless days of service and being a voice for the voiceless — we remain committed to justice, mercy and humility.



SUSAN AND REV. RICHARD SERING

LMM cordially invites you to join us on February 4, 2025 for the annual Founder's Day, celebrating the life and legacy of the agency's founder, Rev. Richard Sering. This exciting event will feature an induction ceremony for our newest members of our Founder's Circle, as well as the unveiling of three new Founder's Circle Portraits commissioned by local artists. The 2025 Founders' Portraits subjects include Susan Sering, Rev. George Hrbek and Harllel Jones.

Stay tuned via our weekly e-newsletter or at [www.lutheranmetro.org](http://www.lutheranmetro.org) for more details on the event in the coming months.



## Solar-Efficient Housing: Amplifying Our Impact

At LMM, we believe that housing is a human right, and we continually think outside of the box to create innovative solutions that empower the people we serve.

Through our solar-powered housing initiative, in partnership with Westlake-based housing enterprise PadSmart, LMM is transforming empty parcels on the east side of Cleveland into affordable, energy efficient homes for unhoused individuals in our city to rebuild their lives. The units are energy positive, producing at least as much energy as they consume, and will cost around \$425 per month, roughly one-third of the price of fair market rent rates in the area.

While the solar-powered housing units are currently being built at PadSmart, LMM is still finding ways to amplify our impact throughout the process. Pasha, a resident at the LMM-operated Men's Shelter on Lakeside Ave., was able to secure a job at PadSmart to assist with building homes for the solar-powered housing initiative. According to Nolan White, Men's Shelter Substance Use Disorder Coordinator, Pasha "saw in him a determination to get on with his life." Nolan added that "Pasha also regularly shares with me his progress: He is still working for PadSmart and also works for Area Temps. He opened a bank account and shared that he is saving to move into his own place."

LMM believes that past experiences should not dictate outcomes in housing and employment, and Pasha's story is a living example of that.



Learn more about solar-powered housing by scanning the QR code.

## Your Gift Transforms Lives and Builds Hope

LMM would like to thank all our funders, donors, and volunteers who have helped make this year a success. We appreciate your commitment to supporting our service and advocacy with people who are oppressed, forgotten and hurting. So far this year LMM has served over 2,700 individuals and engaged with nearly 1,000 volunteers across the organization.

In 2024, donor and volunteer support has enabled LMM to amplify our impact in the following ways:

- Housing and Shelter has had 250+ positive housing outcomes and helped over 60 individuals secure employment
- Workforce Development's Central Kitchen program has served 75,000+ meals
- Youth Resiliency Services has supported over 50 youth facing crisis with shelter and life skill training
- Guardianship Services has provided over 18,789 hours of support for vulnerable adults

As the year comes to a close, it's not too late to make a meaningful impact in 2024 and help us close out our 55th Anniversary on a high note by making a tax-deductible donation or signing up to volunteer. Your generosity helps us continue providing essential services, such as shelter, job training, guardianship for vulnerable adults, support for youth facing crisis, and advocacy. Every contribution, big or small, makes a difference in transforming lives and building hope.

Donate today by returning the enclosed envelope, call us at 216-696-1724 to discuss a stock or IRA minimum distribution, or visit [lutheranmetro.org/donate](http://lutheranmetro.org/donate) or scan the QR to volunteer!



## By the Numbers

### Guardianship Services 35th Anniversary Year

As this year comes to a close, LMM would like to thank you all for celebrating 35 years of advocacy, care and hope through Guardianship Services with us! Formed in 1989, LMM's Guardianship Services program provides critical care throughout Cuyahoga and Lorain counties as legal guardians to serve as concerned, caring advocates and surrogate decision-makers for indigent, incompetent adults who cannot care for themselves and have often encountered abuse or exploitation. Here's to 35 more years of life-changing service!

**86** # of Guardianship volunteers engaged this year

**612** # of wards served this year



**5,802** # of hours of decision-making provided

**18,789** # of hours of Guardianship provided

## Empowering Employment and Lowering Recidivism



According to the Prison Policy Initiative, an estimated 71,000 Ohio residents are currently serving time in prisons and jails, which reflects Ohio's incarceration rate of about 621 per 100,000 people. This is a rate that has grown dramatically over the past 40 years and is higher than the nation's average.

Additionally, a 2021 report from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Correction states that Ohio's recidivism rate is over 32%, meaning many individuals that were formerly incarcerated ended up re-offending. Between the challenges of collateral sanctions, finding stable, fair-wage employment, securing safe, affordable housing, reuniting with family and more after being released, a significant number of individuals will end up back behind bars.

This begs the question: **What can be done to support returning citizens and lower Ohio's recidivism rate?**

At LMM, we believe that if we provide individuals who are currently or were once incarcerated with the resources and skills that they need to succeed, these individuals will have a smaller chance of recidivism. After nearly a decade of operating the Chopping for Change culinary program serving currently incarcerated individuals — a program that boasts a recidivism rate of less than 3% — LMM is excited to expand our vocational training offerings with the launch of the Building Maintenance & Repair (BMR) program in early 2025. With a focus on light construction, building maintenance, home repair and remodeling, this program offers a high potential opportunity to change the trajectory of individuals with barriers to employment, quality of life, and upward mobility. Not only will workforce training be offered, but the BMR program will also include career and job readiness services, preparing students to feel empowered in securing employment.

Learn more about Building Maintenance & Repair (BMR) program by scanning the QR code.

