

Running for a Cause

Join LMM's Benjamin Turney to Bolster Youth Resiliency

LMM is proud to announce our official partnership with the Cleveland Marathon, an exciting event that brings together athletes from all walks of life to support important causes. This year, LMM's own Benjamin Turney, Program Director of Youth Resiliency Services, is taking on the challenge of running the full marathon!

Ben, a 43-year-old Collinwood resident, is no stranger to fitness. Growing up, he competed in amateur boxing and, to this day, continues to fit boxing, as well as the art of jiu-jitsu, into his workout routine. Alongside boxing and jiu-jitsu, Ben incorporates running into his fitness regimen, which has been a staple exercise for him for as long as he can remember. Despite his longtime, dedicated running routine, Ben's participation in the Cleveland Marathon will mark his first-ever full marathon experience.

Leading up to the event, Ben's emotions are a mix of nervousness and excitement as he prepares to cross the finish line, knowing that each step of the race is also a step toward supporting LMM's Youth Resiliency Services program. "I'm equal parts nervous and excited," says Ben. "But I'm doing it for the youth we serve. Every time I run, I think about the young people in our program who are overcoming their own challenges. I'm running this race for them."

As the Program Director for Youth Resiliency Services, Ben's role involves guiding young people, many of whom come from backgrounds of abuse and neglect, through a transformative process of healing and growth. The program's



mission is to build resilience in young individuals, offering them the support and resources they need to rise above their circumstances and thrive. Ben finds deep satisfaction in seeing these young people grow stronger and more confident in their futures.

continued on page 2 >

Charles R. See Forum on Reentry

*Save the Date:
April 25, 2025*

This April officially marks the first-ever Reentry Month in Cuyahoga County!

Celebrated formerly as 'Reentry Week' during the last week of April, a growing number of effective and creative initiatives that support returning citizens have continued to grow each year, including reentry assemblies, job fairs, cook-off challenges, and more. In response, Cuyahoga County and local service providers have come together to acknowledge the entire month of April as Reentry Month, and LMM is looking forward to continuing to support and raise awareness around reentry.



CHARLES R. SEE

While we celebrate this exciting news, it's also important to acknowledge that the need to support returning citizens and address root causes of issues like recidivism, hiring barriers, collateral sanctions, and more have continued to remain. To put the need in perspective, according to the Prison Policy Initiative's *States of Incarceration: The Global Context 2024*, for every 100,000 individuals in Ohio, 621 of them are incarcerated in jails or prison; a rate that is even higher than the United States' national average.

LMM is proud to continue our advocacy around supporting returning citizens by partnering with **The City Club of Cleveland to host the 2025 Charles R. See Forum on Reentry on Friday, April 25, 2025.** We look forward to continuing this annual event and continuing the conversation around reforming the criminal legal system to create a more dignified, inclusive community for all.

For more information regarding the speaker and panel in the coming weeks, please visit www.lutheranmetro.org and scan the QR code to sign up for our weekly e-newsletter.



Running for a Cause

continued

LMM's partnership with the Cleveland Marathon offers an exciting opportunity to raise funds for programs like Youth Resiliency Services, which plays a crucial role in transforming the lives of vulnerable youth in Cleveland. We invite you to join us in this effort by participating in the marathon or supporting our runners through donations.

Get Involved

Are you interested in supporting LMM as an official partner of the Cleveland Marathon? Scan the QR code to register for the Cleveland Full Marathon, Half Marathon, 10K, or 5K and choose LMM as your fundraising beneficiary. Not ready to run this year? You can also make a donation directly on the page to support LMM runners.



For more information or to learn how you can help, please contact Brian Sturgeon, Director of Individual Giving, at bsturgeon@lutheranmetro.org.

**Together, let's make a difference —
one step at a time.**

Metro45 Mobile Kitchen and Catering Expands its Fleet and Impact!

An update on the Keep on Trucking 2 Campaign

In October 2023 we shared a story about LMM's Metro45 Mobile Kitchen and Catering food truck. At the time, the truck had been in operation for over two years and the travel across Northeast Ohio had started to take a toll.

Any time the truck had to go in for major repairs it was a double hit of repair costs plus the lost revenue from having to cancel event commitments. Thus came the announcement of the Keep on Trucking 2 fundraising campaign to assist with the purchase of a second truck and to make much needed repairs to the first truck.

By the summer of 2024 LMM's Executive Chef Scott Teaman found a truck that met all the requirements he was looking for in LMM's next food truck. Thanks to the support of our donors and corporate and foundation funders, by November of 2024 enough funds were raised to initiate the purchase.

On top of being nearly brand new inside and out, the truck also has some key improvements from the first one. An onboard generator, insulated walls, and a larger workspace that will expand Metro45's abilities to serve people in need. For example, Chef Scott said after a major storm or power outage the new food truck could be set up in an affected area and power an entire house from the generator. It is much more than a food truck; it is a *community response vehicle*.

Chef Scott and the Metro45 team are excited to debut the new truck so keep an eye on LMM newsletters and social media for future announcements about the new food truck's first public appearance. Interested in booking Metro45 Mobile Kitchen and Catering for your next corporate event, birthday party, or church outing? Visit www.Metro45.com or send them an email at metro45@lutheranmetro.org.



The new Metro45 Mobile Kitchen & Catering food truck



If you would still like to support the campaign, you can make a gift online by scanning the QR code. Checks can be sent in via the enclosed envelope. For any questions or more information, please contact Brian Sturgeon, Director of Individual Giving, at 216.696.0370 or bsturgeon@lutheranmetro.org.



Reducing Recidivism and Shifting Perception

Chopping for Change

Beginning in 2016 as a pilot initiative providing women who were incarcerated with basic workforce culinary training and trauma-informed therapy, Chopping for Change (C4C) has since evolved into a nationally recognized model program proven to reduce recidivism and land returning citizens with living wage employment.

Boasting a recidivism rate of less than 3% amongst all graduates, the Chopping for Change program now serves both men and women incarcerated at the Grafton Reintegration Center and Northeast Reintegration Center, offering state-certified culinary and hospitality certificates, internship experiences, trauma-informed behavioral health and counseling services, and even family reunification opportunities. In partnership with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC), C4C is one of few programs in Ohio that takes inmates out of prison and into civilian custody for employment training. The innovative services and proven impact of Chopping for Change are shifting the perception of reentry in the community for the better.

Each quarter, LMM and community partners honor graduating C4C students as they receive their culinary and hospitality certificates. These graduations are an opportunity to celebrate program participants and reflect upon the power of what workforce training support can do to change lives. In recent months, LMM has welcomed a variety of elected officials to meet with our Workforce Development staff, have lunch with C4C students, and attend graduation ceremonies, offering a firsthand look into the impact of the program.



2024 Grafton Reintegration Center graduates



2024 Northeast Reintegration Center graduates



Are you a donor or elected official who would like to learn more about or get involved with LMM's Chopping for Change program? Visit www.lutheranmetro.org/contact-us to get in touch with our Workforce Development team and plan a site visit.

CAC family reunification



Elected officials visit LMM for C4C graduation

Guardianship

Making a Lasting Impact: How You Can Help as a Volunteer Guardian



LMM guardianship Services has a corps of dedicated volunteers who serve as volunteer guardians to some of the most vulnerable adults in Northeast Ohio.

Volunteer Guardians are devoted to helping those who need assistance with making life decisions, by reaching out with a caring heart, to advocate for individuals who are without family or close friends. Volunteering as a guardian provides people who believe in protecting vulnerable adults with the opportunity to advocate on their behalf.

As a volunteer guardian, primary tasks include health-related decision making, placement-related decision making, managing personal relationship issues, and advocating for wards.

Interested in volunteering as a guardian?
Contact Brian Stevens, Volunteer Coordinator, at gsvolunteer@lutheranmetro.org to get involved.

Volunteer Guardian Requirements:

18+

18 years of age
or older



6 hrs
of volunteer
training



Attend
quarterly care
conferences

Provide
decision-
making input
for medical
care, living
arrangements,
and more

Monthly ward
visitation



Document all
services on
behalf of ward



Affordable Housing Creates Second Chances: LMM's Transition in Place Program

Launched in early 2021, LMM's Transition in Place (TIP) program is helping create second chances for individuals who face significant barriers to housing. Based on a successful model from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, LMM has adapted the TIP approach to meet the needs of those most at risk of homelessness in Northeast Ohio.

Through TIP, individuals staying in the shelter who qualify for vouchers move into privately owned apartments leased by LMM, with the opportunity to stay in the same unit once they transition into the lease. This innovative model ensures that individuals facing homelessness gain a sense of stability and independence while leasing from landlords who they know and trust.

In 2024 alone, LMM served 27 families, a total of 90 people, through TIP, a testament to the program's impact.

This increase in housing placements and people served could not be done without the village of people and organizations supporting TIP. Thanks to support from, but not limited to, Cuyahoga County, United Way of Greater Cleveland, the Reinberger Foundation, and the Community West Foundation, LMM is able to lead the TIP program and offer a Flex Fund, an emergency pool of cash for residents utilizing our housing programs. In addition, dedicated LMM staff are able to guide individuals in navigating the process of finding housing and introduce them to the option of the TIP program, a process that can often feel daunting to take on by oneself. "My motivation is to just see people grow and to see people win," said Ronieta Lee, LMM Case Manager, in a recent interview with Signal Cleveland highlighting the impact of TIP housing.

The success of LMM's Transition in Place program is a testament to the power of community collaboration and innovative solutions to address homelessness. By providing individuals with the stability and support they need, TIP not only helps people find housing but also creates pathways to long-term success and self-sufficiency. As the program continues to grow and evolve, it stands as a model for how targeted, compassionate interventions can transform lives and offer second chances to those who need them most.



Signal Cleveland Ronieta Lee coverage





lutheran metropolitan ministry
seeds of change
4515 superior avenue
cleveland, ohio 44103

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cleveland, OH
Permit No. 3849


Link with LMM


 @LMMCleveland


 @LMMCleveland

 Facebook.com/LMMCleveland

 LinkedIn
Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry

 YouTube.com

 E-newsletter sign-up at
www.lutheranmetro.org

 Latest news at
www.lutheranmetro.org

Living the LMM Values

Throughout 2024, you may have gotten used to seeing the LMM 55th anniversary logo paired with the phrase “Impact Amplified”; an ode to the launch of the agency’s 2024-2026 Strategic Plan and the celebration of 55 years of service.



As LMM enters the next year of its Strategic Plan, we invite you to join us in embracing the transition to the LMM circle logo, pictured here, as well as leaning into the use of “LMM” in reference to the organization. This updated messaging is taking place to create an elevated and engaged presence of LMM and to build better recognition of and understanding of the agency in the community.

Above all, this shift is just one of many strategies for living the LMM Values of Dignity, Respect, Inclusiveness, Justice, and Excellence.

To view LMM’s 2024-2026
Strategic Plan, scan here.

