

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



**LSA FAMILY  
HEALTH SERVICE**



Dear Friends,

Each year, as we reflect on the work of LSA Family Health Service, we are reminded of the doors that we have opened—doors to safety, stability, and opportunity. This past year was no exception. In a rapidly changing world, our commitment to the families of East Harlem remains steadfast.

For over 66 years, LSA has been a place where neighbors turn in times of need. Families across East Harlem depend on LSA for resources as basic as food to eat, as urgent as advocating for the right to decent housing, and as ambitious as guiding parents and teens through the college application process. Every week at our community center you can see women work through trauma via art therapy, youth accomplish their academic goals, and immigrant parents gain tools to build a better future for their children. These accomplishments are a testament to the resilience of the families we serve and the generosity of those who support our mission.

None of this happens alone. Every meal shared, every home secured, and every child who dares to dream bigger is made possible by a community that believes in the power of opening doors.

We invite you to be part of this work. Give at whatever level you can, because every one of us has a role in building a stronger, healthier East Harlem.

With gratitude and hope,

**Jonah Gensler**

**Chief Executive Officer**  
**LSA Family Health Service**



**Ted Hopper**

**Chair, Board of Directors**  
**LSA Family Health Service**



We strengthen and empower vulnerable families and children by meeting their basic needs for food, healthcare, education, and a safe home, in the belief that affirming families in their dignity improves the entire community.

## 2X THE CHALLENGE

A child in East Harlem has great potential—but faces significant barriers from the start.

**Compared to the rest of Manhattan, in East Harlem...**

- **Mothers** are **2X as likely** to receive late or no prenatal care.
- **Elementary school children** are **2X as likely** to miss school.
- **Children** are **2X as likely** to visit the ER for an asthma emergency.
- **Parents** are **2X as likely** to be hospitalized.
- **Parents** are **2X as likely** to be unemployed.
- **Adults** are **2X as likely** to have diabetes.

The end result:  
**East Harlem residents die,**  
**on average,**  
**4 years earlier**  
**than their neighbors**  
**across Manhattan.**

This is why we work **2X as hard** to ensure East Harlem families have preventive supports.



From early support for children to a vision of food as medicine, we know we can have **2X** the impact.

We can all have the resources to build a better world when families don't have to endure challenges such as hospital stays, learning gaps, or lost economic opportunity.

At LSA Family Health Service, we work every day to change this reality—**building a stronger, healthier East Harlem.**







Maternal & Infant Support | K-5 Enrichment Program | Middle & High School Support



**Every 8 hours a child is born in East Harlem.**

Will they grow up to be healthy? Will they make it to college? Will they have the tools to express, learn, and grow? We have the shared power to influence these outcomes and, in turn, to build stronger communities we can all take pride in.



## Healthy Homes | Mental Health Services | Nutritional Health



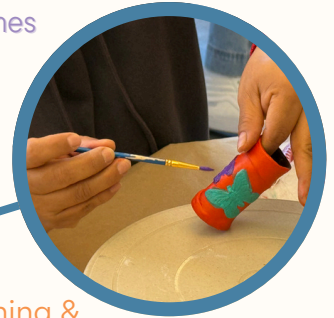
NYCHA tenants get needed repairs

Free vaccines & health screenings

Healthy cooking demos & fresh food

Mold removal for safer homes

Art therapy for trauma recovery



Mental health counseling

Nutrition workshops for families

Kids learning healthy eating habits

Access to fresh produce

Legal aid for housing issues

We help families build strong foundations for health and well-being. From ensuring safer living spaces to supporting emotional wellness and healthy eating, LSA gives families the tools they need to thrive at home and beyond.

Urban farming & gardening lessons

Tenant advocacy for fair housing

Rent strikes for housing justice



Removing hazards from the home

Mental health support groups

Music and art for healing

Lunch+Learn on hypertension

Asthma prevention & home air quality



**The well-being of a person is not centered on any one factor:** their housing, access to a doctor, or food in their kitchen. A caring response is as complex as the human experience—always evolving and specific to each individual. LSA's model meets people where they are at, as a responsive partner should.





## Family Support Services | Immigrant Support Services



SNAP benefits

Free consultations with  
immigration lawyers

Backpacks & school  
supplies for students

Family  
advocacy &  
resource  
navigation



Strollers for new parents

Holiday gifts for  
kids

Support for  
immigrant students

Emergency food  
& essential  
supplies



Free Broadway tickets

Legal aid for  
immigration

Childcare referrals  
& parenting support

Diapers, formula,  
& baby essentials

Citizenship  
application  
support



Translation &  
language  
support

A free outfit  
for job  
interviews

Holiday meals

Thanksgiving  
turkeys

'Know Your  
Rights' workshops

Public benefits  
help for seniors &  
families

We're here when families  
need us most. Whether  
facing a crisis, navigating  
complex systems, or  
adjusting to life in a new  
country, LSA provides  
compassionate support to  
help families regain  
stability and move forward  
with strength.

LSA's approach is grounded in mutual support, dignity, and celebration as inherent to human existence. An interlaced structure of engagement with families equips them with the tools to not just survive but to *thrive*.





**The weekly food pantry is one of LSA's core services,**

and the way many families first come through our doors. As our staff and volunteers get to know them, this service becomes a gateway to our other services such as public benefits counseling, housing support, early childhood & maternal care, and more.

## **Last summer, the pantry faced its greatest test yet.**

As lines grew longer, our shelves emptied faster than we could replenish them. For the first time, we faced the heartbreaking reality of running out of food.

## **In true LSA spirit, our staff and volunteers refused to stand by.**

We reached out to the community for support and found people willing to help.

The Hunts Point Food Distribution Center donated surplus produce. Move for Hunger organized local movers who generously provided trucks and drivers to help us secure food. Volunteers worked tirelessly to organize and distribute supplies, while donors rallied to make sure we could continue serving families in need.

Thanks to this incredible collective effort, we sustained our pantry through the summer until new resources arrived in the fall. It was a powerful reminder that, in times of crisis, a community's strength is found in its ability to come together.

**LSA is more than a service provider—we are a family and, in 2024, that family proved its resilience once again.**



## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Every month, **2,153** people receive food from LSA's pantry.



In 2024, we provided **639,975** meals to our community.



**Gold and gemstones,  
reimagined as a force  
for good**—reminding us  
that the next gift may  
come from where we  
least expect.



Mary Belle O'Brien has always believed in the power of giving. She has been dedicated to East Harlem families and a supporter of LSA since her college friend, Sr. Judy Garson, led the organization. Last year, Mary Belle chose to donate valuable jewelry to support the mission she holds dear.

At LSA's Spirit of East Harlem gala, **her extraordinary gifts turned into a meaningful fundraiser.** With the help of DOYLE Auctioneers, who provided their services entirely free of charge, Mary Belle's treasures raised an astounding \$32,000 to support LSA's vital programs.

This generosity was made even more special by the connection between LSA and DOYLE. Bill Doyle, founder of DOYLE, was also a founding member of LSA's Board of Directors, making this collaboration **a full-circle moment of giving and impact.**

**DOYLE**

**This story  
doesn't end  
here.**



If you have high-value fine jewelry, you too can transform it into hope for children and families. Contact [development@lsafhs.org](mailto:development@lsafhs.org) to make a secure, confidential, tax-deductible donation, and give your family's treasures a new purpose.





After a week of working as a partner in a global professional services firm, **DARREN WILSON** doesn't just go home and relax.

Instead, he brings his financial expertise to LSA, where he has been a dedicated donor and board member for 11 years and currently serves as board treasurer. Every Friday, he conducts a detailed review of LSA's cash flow and financial strategies, using his professional acumen to ensure LSA's strength and sustainability for the benefit of East Harlem families.

"Darren audits and advises major global corporations with billions in market capitalization," said Jonah Gensler, CEO of LSA. "But no matter what, he always comes to LSA and gives the same quality as he would to any of his international financial clients. He treats our thousands just like their billions."



## Darren is not alone.

On any given day, over 100 volunteers come to LSA to supplement the work performed by our 27 staff members.

Our volunteers are food pantry packers. They are graphic designers, lawyers, architects, and filmmakers. They help our students with homework. They write and edit publications, like this one.

We invite you to volunteer with us. We'll match your talent and energy with a need that LSA is addressing.





*Names have been changed for privacy.*

## **Carmen and Gabriel are two of the hundreds of volunteers who help fulfill LSA's mission.**

They are familiar faces at our food pantry helping families gain access to fresh, nutritious groceries every week. Their involvement with LSA began two decades ago when they came to East Harlem as immigrants and sought resources to give their son Mateo, then three, the best possible start in life.

After years of early intervention, family support, and educational programs, LSA's immigration clinic helped Gabriel apply for a U-visa after he became the victim of a workplace crime. **Today, they both have their green cards and are paving the way to American citizenship.** Mateo will graduate from college in 2026. Gabriel and Carmen's younger child Sofia is also flourishing as a junior at The Spence School.

## **LSA helps immigrant families navigate legal and social systems with dignity and hope.**

Through partnerships with CUNY Legal Aid and Catholic Charities, we provide legal support for U-Visas, DACA renewals, green cards, citizenship, and more. Beyond legal aid, we offer case management, language access support, and assistance with benefits like health insurance and housing. Through advocacy, workshops, and referrals, we help families build stability and thrive.





## BRINGING HEART & EXPERTISE FROM MEXICO TO LSA



**Two mental health interns from Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City** completed a professional residency at LSA. As emerging professionals from Mexico, their fresh perspective and commitment to the immigrant community provided unique individual and family counseling to LSA clients. When asked to reflect on their experience, intern Sofia Fantino said, “I learned it doesn’t matter where you come from, but rather being present in a genuine way, giving your heart to those who need it.” Drawing from universities locally and internationally, LSA is both incubator and beneficiary of top-tier rising talent.

**“We recognize the strength of the Latin American community, both within our neighborhood and across the continent, when we draw from Mexico’s talent pool in a way that has deep meaning for women in East Harlem.”** –Monica Sanchez, Director of Mental Health Services



## COMBATING DISPARITIES IN HEALTH & SOCIAL JUSTICE



**Health disparities are real. Solutions need to be, too.**

Dr. Cappy Collins was tired of seeing low-income neighbors in East Harlem getting sick, so he started to think about solutions. Already a committed LSA board member, he opened **Camp Cada Paso, an immersive three-week program that addresses health and environmental disparities by connecting young students and their parents with vital community resources.** Children explore their neighborhood, gather environmental data, and learn about health justice. Parents gain the tools to navigate local resources like credit unions and engage with elected officials. These programs empower families to build strong networks and become advocates, ultimately turning neighbors into powerful allies.



In 2024, **Dr. Brenna Moore** and **Dr. Carey Kasten**, theology and Spanish professors from Fordham University, published *Mutuality in El Barrio*, a remarkable story of the powerful women that formed LSA over the decades.

Brenna's commitment as an LSA board member and Carey's role in building an internship pipeline continues to grow our work, but it all started with simple conversations with local women allowing them to tell their meaningful stories. CEO Jonah Gensler spoke with them about the book and our work.

## MUTUALITY IN EL BARRIO



## STORIES OF THE LITTLE SISTERS OF THE ASSUMPTION FAMILY HEALTH SERVICE

CAREY KASTEN AND BRENNA MOORE  
FOREWORD BY NORMA BENITEZ SANCHEZ

**Jonah Gensler:** *What surprises did you have while writing this book?*

**Brenna Moore:** Sr. Margaret and Sr. Susanne's stories were incredible. LSA was ahead of its time in addressing social determinants of health in the 1960s.

**Carey Kasten:** I was surprised by their bravery, too, but also by how people stay connected to LSA. So many of the staff today started as clients themselves or as volunteers. It's a testament to the entire community.

**Jonah:** *Can you give an example of mutuality at LSA?*

**Brenna:** In the 1980s, LSA hired Puerto Rican grandmothers as surrogate abuelas for young immigrant mothers. It was a mutual relationship—the mothers had support, while the grandmothers felt valued and connected. One abuela said, "It's better than sitting in our rockers!" It was a win-win—both groups benefited.

**Jonah:** *How do the 65 years of LSA's history, which your book covers, guide us in the present and future?*

**Carey:** LSA has been through tough times before, and it's always survived thanks to its ability to adjust and by relying on personal relationships and cooperation. Small, incremental changes yield big, positive results.

**Brenna:** We don't need to start from scratch. We can build on decades of solidarity, care, and real change. The early staff's creativity and dedication laid the foundation we continue to build on.



L to R: Norma Flores, Brenna Moore,  
Melina Gonzalez, Carey Kasten





## A Stranger and You Welcomed Me: Art Reception

LSA hosted *A Stranger and You Welcomed Me* in partnership with Church of the Heavenly Rest at their Undercroft Gallery. The event showcased works by artist Kelly Latimore depicting the Holy Family as modern-day immigrants struggling to find safety, shelter, and security. The reception raised funds for LSA's immigration supports, which have been stretched and tested far beyond our expectations. **A standout moment was the unveiling of La Sagrada Familia NYC, featuring the Uribe family—Sandra, a mother from Latin America, and her children—who shared their story of seeking refuge in East Harlem with LSA's support.**



## A YEAR OF CELEBRATIONS

- Children's Valentine's Day Celebration
- Children's Easter Party
- Associate Board Spring Fundraiser
- Mother's Day Brunch
- Building Bridges of Hope: Art Therapy Graduation
- *Mutuality in El Barrio* Book Launch
- Volunteer Appreciation Event
- Father's Day Celebration
- Parenting & Child Development Graduation
- LSA & Urban Farm Community Day
- Children's Halloween Party
- Children's Holiday Party

## Spirit of East Harlem Gala

On October 24, LSA hosted our annual gala at The Pierre Hotel, raising a remarkable \$640,000 to help families in need. Surrounded by supporters both longtime and new, the night was truly unforgettable. The historic venue full of vibrance and elegance set the scene for creative fundraising. Volunteers provided the video, centerpieces, design, performances, and more. **All so that resources went to families who need them the most.**







**A quarter-century ago, LSA was spread out across several crumbling buildings** until brave leadership and generous donors bought a plot of empty land and built what is today a symbol of community connection, shared pride, and welcoming services—our five-story community center in the heart of East Harlem.

**"We don't take our community center for granted. Investing in our future means being environmental stewards, expanding our programs to welcome more families, and ensuring our space remains a source of pride for the community."**

– Ralph Siciliano, LSA Board Secretary

**Today, new changes are underway. We have identified \$3.8 million out of a \$9.3 million goal to not only transform our building, but ensure it continues to shine over the next two decades. Changes started and coming soon include:**

1. Creation of a new Pre-K space with an outdoor playground.
2. A full renovation of the first and lower levels to provide a nutritional and wellness center and new ways to welcome families to all of our services.
3. A complete greening of the building including: an eco-friendly heat exchange system transforming our building's heating and cooling; a solar rooftop; new insulation; and LED lighting.



**LSA FAMILY HEALTH SERVICE**  
**333 EAST 115TH STREET**  
**NEW YORK, NY 10029**

**\$9.3M  
GOAL**

**\$5.5M  
TO GO**

**\$3.8M  
IDENTIFIED**





# 4,320

individuals and family members served by LSA

## 405

new arrivals  
served in 2024

## 785

one-to-one  
health visits

## 528

educational and  
support group  
sessions

### Food Pantry and Nutritional Health



**636,975** meals  
provided by our food pantry



**2,153** individuals served  
**monthly** in the food pantry

**15** nutritional health  
workshops

**16** healthy cooking  
demonstrations

**100%** of food pantry  
bags contained fresh  
fruits and vegetables

### Immigrant Services

**44** legal clinics



**280** individuals received  
one-to-one consultations  
with an immigration lawyer

**838** individuals trained in  
Know Your Rights sessions

### Mental Health & Art Therapy

**77** mental health  
participants

**147** individual  
counseling sessions



**53** individuals participated in  
5-week art therapy groups

**13** individuals participated in  
the 15-week Building Bridges of  
Hope series

### Youth Development (0-18)



**126** children  
participated  
in youth  
development programs

**30** K-5 students participated in **490** hours of educational and enrichment activities through afterschool & summer programs

**74** families of children from birth to age 3 received twice weekly programming to ensure developmental milestones are met and foster parent-child engagement

**55** families of  
high school  
students received  
college readiness  
support

**14** middle  
schoolers received  
tutoring twice  
weekly

**186** individuals  
participated in  
parenting and  
health workshops



### Family Support Services

**1,523** community  
members engaged  
in outreach efforts

**2,868** individuals  
connected to resources



**251** households received a  
Social Determinants of Health  
Screening and Assessment, and  
we provided **991** instances of  
referral and navigation services

### Healthy Homes



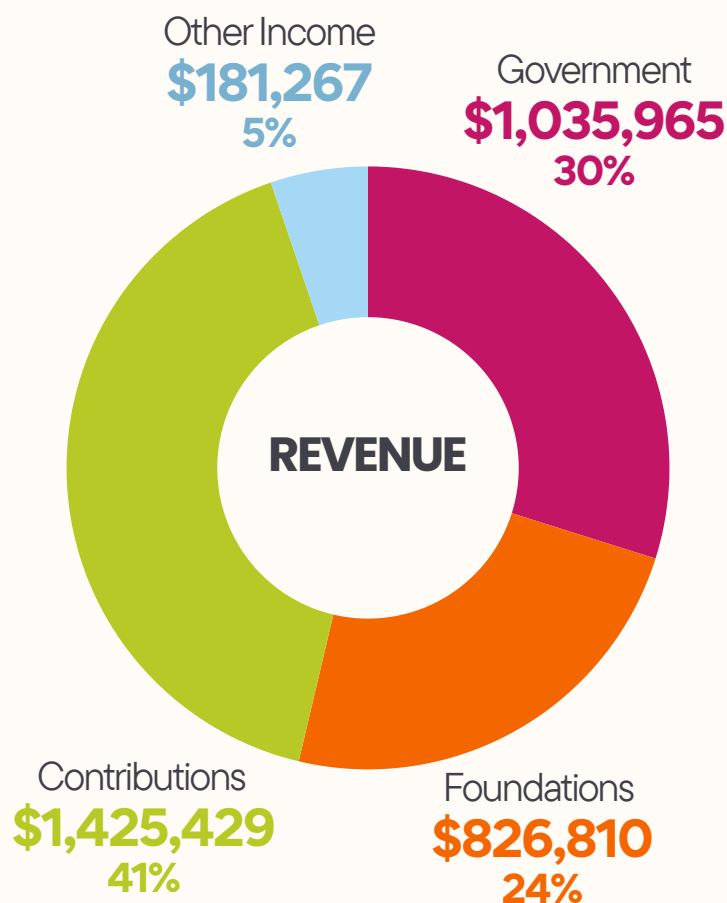
**126** NYCHA residents  
connected to the  
Ombudsman Call Center

**179** home visits to assess  
environmental concerns

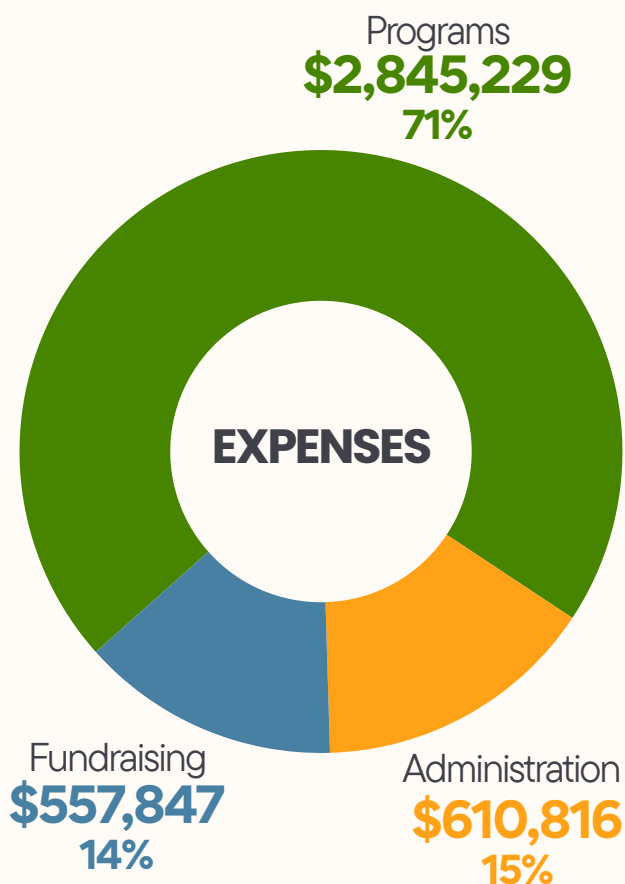
**45** individuals received one-  
to-one consultations with a  
housing lawyer

**16** families participated in  
organized rent strikes against  
irresponsible landlords

Amount of rent escrowed:  
**\$400,000+**



Total Revenue: \$3,469,471



Total Expenses: \$4,013,892

“We take great pride in how far each dollar goes at LSA, but none of it would be possible without the volunteers who give their time and efforts, community members who give their support, and local businesses who give their resources. All of this helps us stretch every dollar while making sure the needs of our community are met.”

— *Jonah Gensler, CEO*



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# OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

We extend our sincere gratitude to the many donors whose contributions make our programs for children and families possible.

## INDIVIDUALS

### \$250-499

Tara Abell  
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Susanne Chiappa  
Elizabeth Clarke  
Shanaya Deboo  
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The Chu Family  
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Myers  
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Blake Fetterman & Jay Dunn  
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Brenna Moore  
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John & Laura deBoisblanc  
Nina DeMartini-Day & Jonathan Day  
Thomas J. Eich  
Rick & Beverly Fetterman  
Molly Hays & Roger Jette  
David L Kurfess  
Kyle & Tracey Mumford  
Robin & Michael Poulos  
Dolores & Terry Quinn  
Jeanine Salvatore  
Rebecca Smith  
Peter Stobely  
Cecilia & Mark Vonderheide  
Kate & Matthew Walsh  
Wai Man Wong

### \$10,000-19,999

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Arthur Bingham  
Alice Buedden  
Joelyn Cecere  
Lisa Chanel  
Margaret Duffy  
Elizabeth Eielson  
Allison Gault & Bruce Karpati  
Steven Gensler  
Kathryn George & William Tyree  
Melissa & Alec Gunn  
Ted & Jessica Hopper  
Ryan C McGlynn  
Mark Moran  
Yoko Ono Lennon  
Andrea Pincus  
Michael Z. Rabin  
Barbara Richert  
Patricia & David Rung  
Ralph A. Siciliano  
Christine & George Stobely  
Darren Wilson

### \$20,000+

Jessica Hu & Jon Eddy  
Susan Klarich  
Shelly & Tony Malkin  
Paula & Thomas McInerney  
Mary Belle O'Brien  
Alex & Jeffrey Price  
John Shapiro



## IN MEMORY OF

**Bill Bent**  
Anonymous

**Lou Ann Jenkins Berry**  
Anthony Andrew Berry

**A. Walker Bingham**  
Arthur Bingham

**Barbara Brenner**  
Andrea Rotherberg

**Sister Eleanor Caviston**  
Maureen Caviston

**Bernard James Cooney**  
Anonymous

Susan M. Casey

Tim & Joyce Cooney

Patricia & Richard Conley

Debra Duel

Michaela Finnegan

Ann & Paul Fretheim

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## SISTER MARGARET LEONARD'S BOARD RETIREMENT: A LEGACY OF MUTUALITY AND SERVICE




**Sister Margaret Leonard's leadership at Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service has left an indelible mark on the East Harlem community.** As a sister from the International Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Assumption and the **founding leader of LSA Family Health Service**, she built LSA on the principle of mutuality—the belief that the power of growth is in relationship; that those who serve and those who are served share a common humanity; and that learning and growing together strengthens this bond. This conviction shaped LSA's approach from its earliest days and remains at the heart of the organization's work today.

Sister Margaret **championed a three-phase model that continues to guide LSA's programs:** first, addressing urgent crises, like food insecurity or unsafe housing; second, fostering stability through education and advocacy; and finally, empowering families to lead and shape their own futures. Under her leadership, LSA became a trusted presence in the neighborhood, offering not only services, but also a deep sense of community.

After stepping down as Executive Director, Sister Margaret remained deeply involved, serving on LSA's Board of Directors. She was a constant advocate for dignity and partnership, reminding all who worked with her that **"the families we serve have wisdom and strength; we are here to walk with them, not to lead them."** Her unwavering commitment inspired generations of staff, volunteers, and community members.

Now retired, Sister Margaret resides at Alliance at Marie Esther in Marlborough, Mass., a unique community where sisters from various religious orders come together after a lifetime of service and continue to engage in active prayer ministry for peace and justice in our world. **While her daily work at LSA has come to a close, her vision of mutuality lives on in the families, staff, and volunteers who continue the mission she helped to build.**



 **"Take Society  
at it's roots:  
the Family — and  
transform it."**







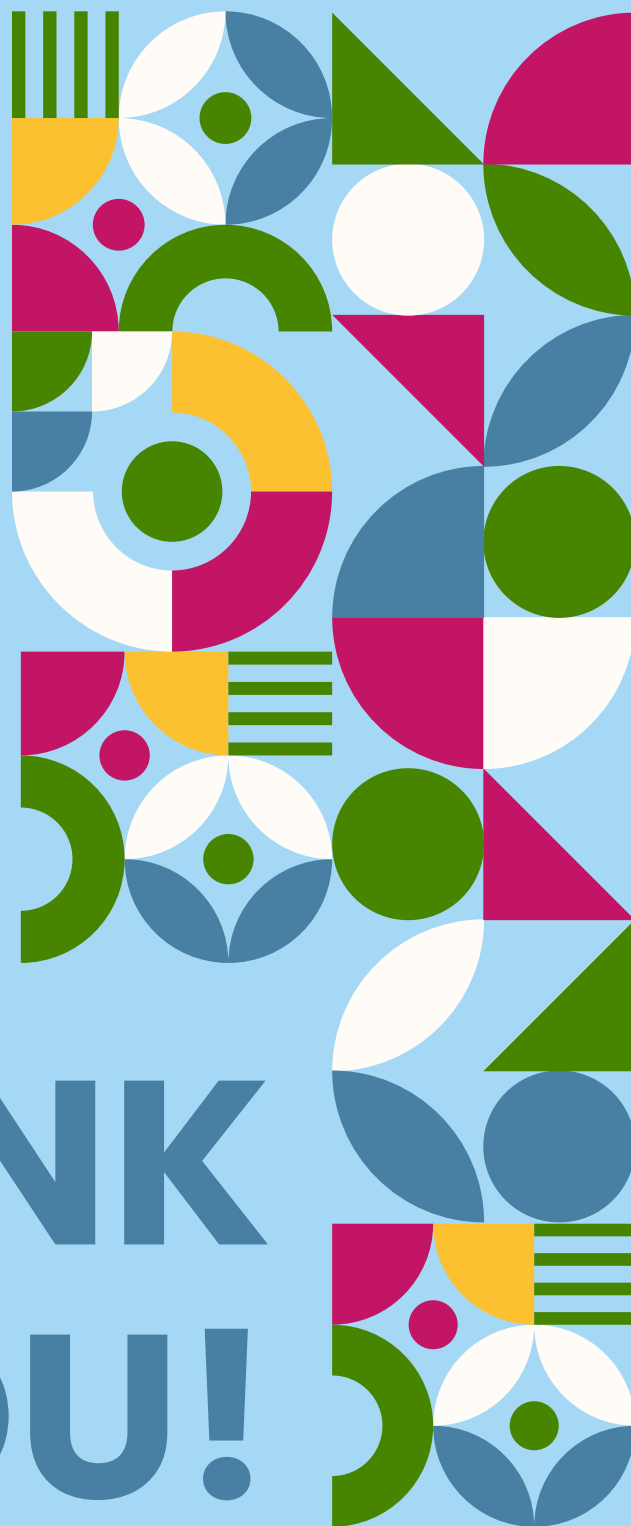
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