



Established 1987  
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Touching lives,  
Healing hearts,  
Giving hope

# Sharing MAGAZINE

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# Bringing Comfort and Hope During Times of Loss and Grief



By: Debra Baran, LCC Director of Communications

When life brings unexpected or difficult circumstances, it's easy to feel helpless and hopeless. During these times, even the smallest gesture can bring the greatest comfort. Family, friends, and even our pets share tears, hugs, and furry snuggles that give us loving moments to help us process what we are going through.

As a ministry of presence, Lutheran Church Charities (LCC) shares the mercy, compassion, presence and proclamation of Jesus Christ to those who are suffering and in need. One of the unique ways

that we do that is through our LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs – AKC purebred Golden Retrievers who serve as a bridge to connect our teams with people of all ages and circumstances. Their calming nature and extensive training help them serve others every day in the communities in which they are placed.

LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs and their handlers are good listeners, non-judgmental, and confidential. They provide a safe place for others to share what they are going through.

**Many times, people will open up and talk, or shed a few tears, with one of our comfort dogs before talking to people.**

Simply petting, sitting with, or hugging a comfort dog helps them process the stress or grief that they are experiencing. This calming effect often contributes to lowering blood pressure or heart rates and aids in the healing process. LCC K-9 Ministry handlers are present and ready to offer compassion, friendship,

and prayer.

Recently, LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs Esther (Holy Cross Lutheran Church – Collinsville, Illinois), Noah (Timothy Lutheran Church – St. Louis, Missouri), and Zillah (Immanuel Lutheran Church – St. Charles, Missouri) and their handlers were invited to a Share Walk to offer love, compassion, hugs, and support to families as they remember the babies who have passed on this year and prior years. Parents, siblings, family members, and friends stopped by to get some golden hugs and a warm embrace, and the opportunity to share the grief they are going through.

A ministry of presence doesn't mean you have to know what to say. It just means you are willing to be there, no matter what. The LCC K-9 Ministry teams were honored and blessed to be present with families during the Share Walk.

About Lutheran Church Charities:

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit ministry, Lutheran Church Charities (LCC) is a Recognized Service Organization of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. LCC works through churches to help individuals and families. LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs are permanently placed with churches, schools and other ministries involved in Christian outreach. Headquartered in Northbrook, Illinois, LCC serves nationally and internationally. LCC never charges those we serve!

When invited, the LCC K-9 Ministry teams are also deployed in times of disaster and crisis to bring comfort to all those affected, including first responders and the volunteers who serve them.

Launched in August 2008, LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs are a bridge for compassionate ministry. They receive at least 2,000 hours of training and participate in scheduled and special events. LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs are permanently placed with churches, schools and other ministries involved in Christian human care by LCC. Permanent placement includes full training for handlers and caregivers along with ongoing support, coaching and training. LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs live in the homes of assigned caregivers.

The LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry teams participate in such events as: church and school events; school and library reading programs; hospital visits; nursing home visits; community special events and more.

The LCC Kare 9 Military Ministry, as well as The LCC K-9 Police Ministry are additional programs that have been established over the last several years. Each program focuses on caring for those who's life's work is to serve and care for others.

Lutheran Church Charities currently has over 130 LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs serving in 27 states. LCC operates training facilities in Illinois and in Nebraska.

