

# Expanded LSS Program and a New Book Just Published for Military Service Members and Families

by Amy Blumenshine

The new expanded Lutheran Social Services (LSS) program for military service members and their families is called Minnesota Service C.O.R.E. The acronym refers to the services offered: case management, outreach, referral to other services, and education. The scope of services includes individual and family counseling, financial counseling, debt management, addiction assessments and referral, disability services and in-home counseling. This new program will be the subject of the Veteran's Ministry Roundtable lunch, noon to 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 12. The event will take place at the new Center for Changing Lives at 2400 Park Avenue, Minneapolis. All are invited who are interested in this ministry. Please RSVP to facilitate planning for the simple lunch to ListenToVets@comcast.net or phone 612-871-2967.

The May 12 gathering will also be one of the first opportunities to obtain the new book *Welcome Them Home – Help Them Heal: Pastoral Care and Ministry with Service Members Returning from War*. Rev. John Sippola, former Minnesota National Guard chaplain; Rev. Don Tubesing, wellness trainer and publisher; Dr. Valerie Yancey, nursing professor with a specialty in parish nursing; and Amy Blumenshine, diaconal minister, wrote this guide for churches on how to accompany returned veterans and their families.

The book addresses church leaders and pastoral care providers who have the opportunity to improve the re-integration experiences of military service members returning from war. The re-entry challenges faced by our troops are explored. It features explanations of the common deployment-related symptoms and reactions, including combat operational stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, traumatic brain injury, and moral and spiritual distress. A significant section provides guidance on pastoral care tips related to working individually with veterans.

In the spirit of holistic care, the moral and spiritual wounds suffered by many veterans are described along with the physical and psychological injuries. The church has a unique and special role in helping people heal from their moral and spiritual injuries, and the book explores these opportunities. Outreach and pastoral care are clearly important areas that are emphasized. Additionally, the book explains how a church can create a healing environment. One chapter suggests healing rituals throughout the church year.

More information is available at [www.welcomethemhomebook.com](http://www.welcomethemhomebook.com) or by e-mail: ListenToVets@comcast.net.

*Blumenshine heads up The Coming Home Collaborative.*



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In February 2008, he moved to the University of Minnesota Hospital, where he would later receive a bone marrow transplant from his sister on March 10. After many complications, he was able to go home on June 18, cancer free. He was informed then that his four friends passed away between the time he left Mercy and the time he was released from the University of Minnesota. He is dedicating his fundraising efforts in honor of those four individuals and their families.

He hopes to raise \$50,000, so he can have an LLS research grant named in honor of the four friends he lost: Walt Day, Bill Dignan, Mike Larson and Bonnie Stjern. "My personal goal for this campaign is to honor them and their families in any way that I can. Every dollar that I raise is a tribute to them," stated Nocton. "This has nothing to do with me winning an award, but everything to do with honoring them and helping others. Awards are forgotten; love and service shown to others are never forgotten."

The ten-week campaign will culminate at the Black Tie Grand Finale Gala on June 12 at The Metropolitan, with the announcement of the top fundraising man and woman, who will be named Man & Woman of the Year. Until then, the nine candidates will stay busy pulling together their resources as they write letters, solicit corporate sponsorships, host fundraising events and collect auction items throughout the process. The Man & Women of the Year will be rewarded with their picture on the side of 20 Metro Transit bus advertisements come September.

If you would like to contribute to Rev. Nocton's campaign or find out about how you can get involved, visit his donation page at [www.mn.lsevent.org/scott](http://www.mn.lsevent.org/scott). For general information, visit [www.LLS.org/mnmwoy](http://www.LLS.org/mnmwoy) or contact Cathy Swanson Girsch at 763-852-3014.