

Volunteer Organization Profile: Lutheran Family Services, Omaha, NE

Volunteering in America 2011

Military deployment is hard on all members of a family. When a loved one serves abroad, families back home often struggle to get by without him or her. Upon returning home, it is difficult for service men and women to fall back into their roles in the home and community. Often, these men and women need assistance to help them regain a normal routine.

To help military families through this difficult time, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska's At Ease program provides mental health services and counseling to active military personnel, veterans, and loved ones, regardless of their ability to pay. Therapists, peer support specialists, and volunteers offer confidential counseling, individualized treatment, and support to those who may be suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or are simply struggling to rebuild their lives.

Amelia Rivera, a U.S. Air Force veteran, began volunteering with At Ease in March of 2011. As a graduate student studying clinical counseling and a veteran herself, working with other veterans allows her to put her efforts toward something she is truly passionate about. As an AmeriCorps volunteer, she assisted At Ease staff in establishing and facilitating a peer-to-peer veteran support group. The group provides an opportunity for veterans to encourage and talk with other veterans who may be experiencing similar challenges in their lives.

"I have a heart for veterans," Rivera said. "The peer-to-peer group offers veterans support and encouragement from someone who can relate to their experiences and helps them take the next steps in their lives. It's so inspiring to see what the veterans can accomplish with support from the group, whether it's pursuing higher education or coping with PTSD."

In 1892, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska began as two small orphanages in Omaha and Fremont. The organization has grown and changed and today provides a variety of services to communities across Nebraska. In addition to the At Ease program, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska offers adoption, behavioral health, and refugee/immigration services, as well as many other child and community services. The organization works with more than 1,000 volunteers to provide these.

"At Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, volunteers play a vital role in the work we do," said Bev Carlson, director of public relations. "Volunteers are the heart of many of the services we provide and we depend on the work they do to continue supporting Nebraska communities."

Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska is a grantee of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) with 39 AmeriCorps volunteers serving in 13 different programs across the state and throughout the organization, including the At Ease program.

For more information about Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, visit their website at www.lfsneb.org. You can also like Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pages/Lutheran-Family-Services-of-Nebraska.

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs, and leads President Obama's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.