

Lutheran Social Services of Southern Calif. Receives First Ever Breakaway Grant from Samueli Foundation

The grants made to 138 Orange County-based nonprofit organizations recognized urgent community-based need and overall quality of the applications received.

ORANGE, CA, UNITED STATES, September 26, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Lutheran Social Services of Southern California (LSSSC) - a leading provider of social services programs in Southern California – was a grant recipient of the newly created \$11 million Breakaway Fund by the [Samueli Foundation](#). The grants made to 138 Orange County-based nonprofit organizations recognized urgent community-based need and overall quality of the applications received. A first-of-its-kind grantmaking initiative, the Breakaway Fund awarded between \$50 - \$100K grants to many nonprofits which have never received funding from the Samueli Foundation, including LSSSC.

Lutheran Social Services of Southern Calif. CEO Dr. LaSharnda Beckwith said, “We are deeply honored and grateful to the Samueli Foundation for selecting our organization as a recipient of the Breakaway Fund grant. This award is more than a financial contribution; it is a powerful affirmation of the work we do and the communities we serve. With this support, we will be able to expand our reach, deepen our impact, and accelerate innovative solutions that uplift individuals and families facing systemic barriers.”

Over the six-week open application process, the Samueli Foundation received 1,004 applications requesting a total of \$83 million dollars. Unique attributes of the Breakaway Fund program were that all Orange County-based nonprofits were eligible to apply, the grants have no restrictions, the application was designed to take no longer than 20 minutes to complete and the grants would be paid within a month of notification.

“Each application contained deeply human stories about our neighbors across Orange County



Dr. LaSharnda Beckwith, CEO of Lutheran Social Services of Southern Calif.

that compelled us to dig deeper and give more,” said Henry and Susan Samueli, co-founders of the Samueli Foundation. “Breakaways in hockey are always the most exciting moments in games, and we hope the Breakaway Fund generates an equal level of community excitement. Together, we can create so much impact for the betterment of Orange County”

Dr. Beckwith added, “The Breakaway Fund represents a bold commitment to equity, opportunity, and transformation. It aligns with our mission to create pathways to success for those who have been historically marginalized. Thanks to the Samueli Foundation’s vision and generosity, we are now equipped to break through limitations and build a future where every person has the tools and support they need to thrive. We look forward to stewarding this grant with integrity and purpose while honoring the trust placed in us by continuing to lead with compassion, excellence, and community-centered values.”

The Samueli Foundation launched the Breakaway Fund in response to its desire to more rapidly expand its local philanthropic commitment – which has

grown by tens of millions of dollars over the last three years; create an accessible “front door” to the organization through an open-application process; expose itself to the full range of nonprofit organizations that serve Orange County beyond those it was already familiar with; and model trust-based, responsive giving for others philanthropists.

Since 1944, the faith-based nonprofit Lutheran Social Services of Southern Calif. has focused on providing families and communities with emergency, social services and transitional services with a goal of helping them reach self-sufficiency. For more information visit, www.lsssc.org or call (714) 685-1800.

About Lutheran Social Services of Southern California

Lutheran Social Services of Southern California (LSSSC) has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to helping the most vulnerable families and individuals in Southern California for



LSSSC Volunteers Prepare Donations



A Volunteer at a LSSSC Food Pantry



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Dr. LaSharnda Beckwith

over 80 years. LSSSC is a social ministry organization with Lutheran Services of America, one of the largest health and human service networks in America. Partners and funders include the San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health, U.S. Departments of Education, Housing and Urban Development and Health and Human Services. LSSSC dates back to 1944 when a handful of congregants from Lutheran churches in San Diego began providing services and resources to veterans returning home. This

group joined with like-minded congregants in Los Angeles and formed Lutheran Social Services of Southern Calif. in 1946. Today, LSSSC employs close to 200 caring and dedicated staff delivering more than 30 programs across six counties that embrace, equip and empower vulnerable individuals in Southern California.

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