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CONTACT: Janet Panning, Refugee Resettlement Program Director
Katie M. Corrado, Marketing and Public Relations Coordinator
PHONE: 215-747-7500, x. 209 / janetp@lcfsinpa.org
215-283-2404 / kcorrado@libertylutheran.org

PUTTING AN END TO NEWCOMER EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

PHILADELPHIA, PA (AUGUST 15, 2008) – Rich Gitlen, Executive Director of Lutheran Children and Family Service (LCFS), an affiliate of Liberty Lutheran Services (LLS) is pleased to announce a funding award from the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) Office of Special Council to disseminate information throughout Pennsylvania about fair employment practices under the US Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1952. Under this act, which prohibits employers from knowingly hiring undocumented workers, employers may not discriminate against work-eligible newcomers based on ethnicity or national origin. The DOJ’s Office of Special Council for Immigration Related Unfair Employment Practices was established by Congress to educate the public about immigration-related employment discrimination.

LCFS Newcomer employment programs currently assist refugees and asylees in obtaining the necessary documents to prove work eligibility. Employers sometimes are skeptical or discriminatory of this eligibility, and this grant will enable LCFS to better communicate the following information to newcomer communities, service providers and employers regarding:

- National origin discrimination;
- Citizenship or immigration status discrimination;
- Unfair documentary practices related to verifying the employment eligibility of employees;
- Retaliation against individuals who contest action that may constitute unfair documentary practices or discrimination based upon citizenship status or national origin;

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LCFS has served thousands of refugees and immigrants over the past three decades through federally-funded refugee Reception and Placement, Match Grant and Preferred Community programs under contract with the national Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services. LCFS also works through federally-funded Refugee Social Services and Refugee Mental Health programs and Refugee Employment Services provided by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Employment and Training Program (BETP), and provides programs funded by private foundations, including behavioral health outreach for refugee and immigrant children and youth. LCFS is also funded by the Fair Housing Council of Delaware County to provide trainings to newcomers about their rights and responsibilities as tenants under the fair housing act.

LCFS Adult Education Program Coordinator Todd Miller will be the Project Manager for this program and will be responsible for trainings, presentations, technical assistance and information dissemination. Mr. Miller has managed the Adult Education programs at LCFS since 2002, both teaching and designing ESL curriculum for specialized topics such as the PA Drivers License exam, Certified Nursing Assistant training and Fair Housing Education programs. He has trained over 400 refugees and other newcomers in Housing Discrimination Law through an agreement with the Fair Housing Council of Suburban Pennsylvania. Mr. Miller has an MA in Teaching English as a Second Language from West Chester University and speaks Mandarin Chinese.

In the last decade, LCFS has provided initial resettlement service to over three thousand Liberian refugees, two hundred Dinka from South Sudan, one thousand Sierra Leonians, one hundred Mesketian Turkish, as well as smaller populations from China, Somalia, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Camaroon, Cuba, Bosnia, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Ukraine, Moldova and other countries of the Former Soviet Union. New populations currently arriving through LCFS include Burmese of Karen, Chin and Burmese ethnicity and Iraqis, with anticipated arrivals in the next few months of Bhutanese.

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Lutheran Children and Family Service (LCFS) of Eastern Pennsylvania, an affiliate of Liberty Lutheran Services, has been bringing hope and opportunity to children and families in need since 1922. LCFS offers an array of services to vulnerable children and families including foster care, group care, adoption, in-home services, after-school programs, parenting education, immigrant services and resettlement of refugees. By strengthening thousands of families, LCFS builds stronger, more caring communities throughout the Delaware Valley.

Liberty Lutheran Services is a broad array of faith-based services delivered by a team of world-class employees. Comprised of the non-profit organizations of Artman Lutheran Home, Paul's Run Retirement Community, Lutheran Children and Family Service, and Liberty at Home, LLS serves approximately eighteen thousand individuals annually throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania. The organizations of LLS have a combined 200 years of service for children, families, and older adults. Caring communities are built by Lutheran congregations to serve all people, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, country of origin, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation. For more information about Liberty Lutheran Services and their mission, please visit www.libertylutheran.org.