

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LSS ANNOUNCES NEW PRESIDENT — Rebecca Kiesow-Knudsen

SIoux FALLS—The Board of Directors of Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota is proud to announce the appointment of Rebecca Kiesow-Knudsen as the new President/CEO of the agency. After a thorough search for the position, the Board determined Kiesow-Knudsen was the right person to lead LSS into its second century of service.

“It was a unanimous decision by the board to appoint Rebecca as the next President and CEO for LSS of South Dakota,” says Paul Bruflat, LSS Board Chair. “Lutheran Social Services has an impactful and far-reaching presence in South Dakota. We are excited to have Rebecca lead us into our next 100 years of service. She has demonstrated extreme passion for the mission of LSS, deep knowledge of our programs, and a vision for our future.”

Kiesow-Knudsen will begin serving as LSS President/CEO on December 17, 2021. Betty Oldenkamp will continue to serve as President/CEO until her retirement at that time.

“I feel blessed and humbled by the opportunity to help guide the strategic direction of the agency as the new President/CEO. LSS has 100 years of history delivering high quality, essential services to meet the changing needs of the people of South Dakota, and I hope to help steward that tradition into the next 100 years,” says Kiesow-Knudsen.

Kiesow-Knudsen recently celebrated 20 years of service with LSS. She has been serving as the Chief Operating Officer in the last year, and has served effectively as Vice-President of Community Services for ten years prior to COO. Although Kiesow-Knudsen has held multiple leadership roles at LSS over the years, she began her career at LSS as the first director of Mentoring Services.

Originally from Sioux Falls, S.D., Kiesow-Knudsen graduated from Lincoln High School. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, and a master's in public administration with an emphasis in nonprofit administration from the University of South Dakota.

She has developed professional relationships in local, state and national settings. Some of her many honors and accomplishments include:

- Lutheran Services of America 2021 Beacon Award recipient
- Sioux Empire United Way Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Workgroup Member, 2021
- South Dakota Department of Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health Data and Outcomes Workgroup
- South Dakota Department of Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health Criminal Justice Initiative/Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Initiative Rate Review Workgroup
- Lutheran Services in America Results Innovation Lab Facilitator and Peer Leader
- Chair, Midwest Results Network 2019-2021
- Mountain Plains ATTC Frontier Treatment Providers Workgroup Member
- SD Legislative Interim Committee on Leveraging Telehealth and Telemedicine
- Georgetown Certificate for Racial & Ethnic Disparities, Capstone Author & Workgroup Participant
- Leadership Sioux Falls 2005 participant

Kiesow-Knudsen's professional vision, work ethic and commitment have led to providing health, safety and acceptance of all people and communities across South Dakota. This commitment is also reflected in her personal involvement throughout the community. Rebecca and her family are active members of First Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls. She has been a mentor in the Sioux Falls School District for more than 20 years, and has been a soccer coach in the Dakota Alliance Soccer Club for six years.

As a private non-profit social service agency, LSS is proud to welcome and support Kiesow-Knudson as incoming President/CEO as we enter into our next century of serving the people of South Dakota. Last year alone, more than 38,000 lives were transformed through a variety of services offered through LSS statewide.

Core services offered by LSS include adoption, pregnancy counseling, foster care, kinship services, childcare and education, disaster response, behavioral health services, re-entry services, Center for Financial Resources, residential services for children and youth, alternatives to detention, independent living services for young adults, mentoring, Better Together, Center for New Americans, and Resource Family Services. LSS serves people of all ages, races, faiths and economic levels with professional, confidential and affordable services.

LSS services are licensed by the State of South Dakota and accredited by the Council on Accreditation. LSS is a United Way agency.

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