

Critical Programs Meet Important Community Needs But Lack Secure Funding

GLSS' Clinical and Protective Services programs advocate for some 400 people every year. They serve some of the most vulnerable in our communities—people experiencing abuse and neglect, mental health challenges, homelessness, substance use disorders, and more.

Elder Protective Services has continued to play a vital role in keeping people safe during the pandemic. "Many people are living in questionable, many times transient, situations," says Dottie Davies, LICSW, Director of Clinical and Protective Services. "Unfortunately, the COVID-19 outbreak has put these people much more at risk and in need of more support than ever."



"We are seeing an increase in people feeling the debilitating effects of ongoing isolation."
Meredith Anderton, LICSW

She cites GLSS' Homeless Elders/Housing Advocacy program as an example. This program is currently unstaffed owing to a lack of funding. "With the wave of evictions we will no doubt face as a result of COVID-19, we will be unable to support these individuals moving forward without private support."

And while Elder Protective Services itself is funded by the state, several other programs developed by GLSS rely on grants and other private funding sources as well. "These programs were developed to fill important gaps in the system—needs that we saw all around us but had no ability to address through regular funding channels," Dottie notes. They include the Mobile Mental Health and the Women's and Family Abuse programs.

Mobile Mental Health Transitions to Tele-Health Model

GLSS' award-winning Mobile Mental Health Program offers a "wrap-around" service approach, providing counseling and connecting vulnerable, already isolated elders to other services to meet basic needs. "We work with elders already managing many mental health challenges,

continued on page 2



A Letter from GLSS CEO Kathryn Burns

Dear Friends,
Every day at Greater Lynn Senior Services, our staff make a difference, and today during the COVID-19 pandemic that has never

been more true. Many programs—like Mobile Mental Health, Meals on Wheels, caregiver supports, and other nutrition resources—are seeing a significant uptick in need with limited funding sources to support them. Some of these programs are featured here in this newsletter. Many GLSS programs meet critical needs but receive

little or no state or federal funding, which means they rely on foundation grants and private donations. And in these times, the need to make such programs flexible and adaptable to the demands of factors like social distancing means investing resources.

That's where you—our friends and donors—come in. That's where you make a difference. We can't do it without your support, and I am heartened by the outpouring of assistance we have seen, both from individuals in the community and organizations like AARP, Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation, Essex County Community Foundation, Meals on Wheels America, and state and

continued on page 3

including depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, and grief and loss issues,” reports Meredith Anderton, LICSW, one of the program’s counselors. “The fear caused by the pandemic has really exacerbated these emotional challenges, and we are seeing an increase in people feeling the debilitating effects of ongoing isolation.” The program has transitioned to a telehealth approach and continues to provide support, assessment, and counseling to some of the community’s most vulnerable, as people already living in tenuous, unstable situations are facing even greater risk of displacement, abuse, neglect, and drug and alcohol use.

Many consumers have requested increased contact during this time, so staff report they are working harder than ever to meet the need. “In one case, a client who requires a special diet found herself without any resources for obtaining food, and I was able to help her problem-solve the situation, bringing in GLSS’ Nutrition Department to help,” says Lynn O’Neal, LMHC, another counselor in the Mobile Mental Health Program. The client has since described the intervention as ‘life saving.’ For many, interaction with their counselor is their only contact with another human being and life outside of their homes.

The Mobile Mental Health program was initiated and made possible through a combination of grants from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and donations from private foundations and individuals and now relies on private support. The program recently received a generous grant from the Essex County Community Foundation in recognition of its increased need and important role during the pandemic.

Women’s and Family Abuse Program: “You’re Not Alone,” Even in a Pandemic

For nearly 25 years, GLSS has offered this program to address the unique needs of older people who are living in abusive relationships. “Originally, the program served women age 50 and older who were victims of spousal abuse in the Greater Lynn area,” says Katie Galenius, LICSW, who has overseen the program since its inception. Over the years, the program has evolved and expanded and is now serving women and men who are victims of intimate partner and/or family abuse throughout the North Shore, Cape Ann, and Merrimack Valley. It is the only program of its kind in Massachusetts and has served as a model for others across the country to emulate. It provides confidential counseling, support groups, information, and legal counsel (in conjunction with Northeast Legal Aid).

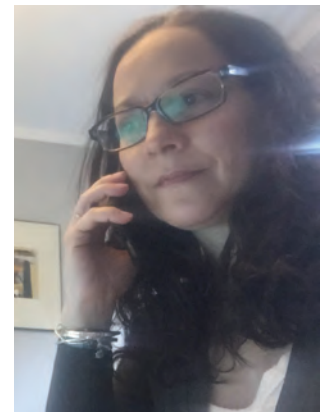
During the pandemic, advocates worry that victims

are being forced to isolate at home with their abusers. “I want to remind everyone that we are still here and able to provide the support and counseling people need to get through this already difficult time,” Katie says. “We find creative ways to safely meet with people where and when they are comfortable.”

The Women’s and Family Abuse Program is partially funded by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) with matching support provided by GLSS raised through a combination of sources, including private donations. The program has won numerous awards, including an Achievement Award from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), and has taken Katie across the country presenting at conferences and assisting other agencies to begin their own programs. 🧡

“Another client told me... ‘You’re the only human contact I’ve had in weeks.’”

Lynn O’Neal, LMHC



“Many GLSS programs—especially some of our unique, innovative ones—meet a critical need but receive little or no state or federal funding, which essentially means they rely on foundation grants and private donations,” Kathryn C. Burns, MHA, says. She cites two of the agency’s award-winning counseling programs as examples, one addressing domestic and family violence issues and a counseling program that provides counseling and support to isolated people who are not currently in treatment. “These programs are needed more than ever right now,” she adds.

What's New?

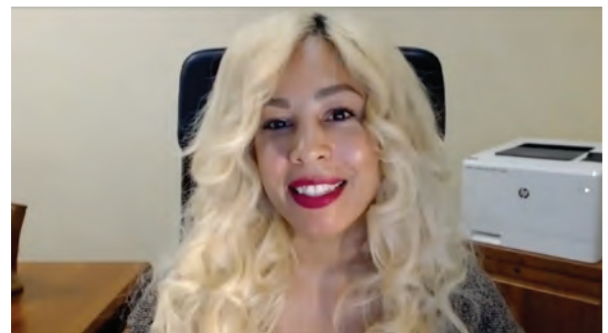
Introducing GLSS TV

For an agency that has built its reputation over nearly 45 years on developing personal, trusting relationships with consumers and their families, a global pandemic required pivoting quickly to new ways of doing things. Within days, most programming shifted to a telehealth model, while nutrition programs, like Meals on Wheels, implemented new measures to ensure the safety of both delivery drivers and consumers. “The COVID-19 outbreak required that we approach our work with fresh eyes and flexibility,” says Kathy Burns. “Once we had our core programs re-oriented, we—like everyone in the community—wondered what more could we do to support and improve people’s lives at a time when being physically together was not possible.”

The result is new programming airing on local cable stations aimed at communicating information to consumers and reducing isolation. Called “GLSS TV,” it is an entertaining, half-hour program featuring nutrition advice through a cooking segment, chair exercise, and information about programs and services, as well as upcoming events. “I will even be appearing in some segments,” Kathy laughs. “But seriously, the pandemic has challenged all of us to learn new skills and ways of thinking about our work and our role.”

Prior to GLSS TV, the agency developed a series of short videos, called “Kelly’s Corner,” providing tips and strategies for dealing with the ongoing isolation and anxiety brought on by the pandemic. Other telephonic programming is also being developed to fill the void left by the closing of local senior centers. “We hope the result is that people see that GLSS is still here for them, just as we always have been, even if it is by telephone or in a virtual way,” Kathy says.

Residents can watch GLSS TV on some local cable channels, but anyone can watch the program on their computer by visiting www.glss.net/glss-tv. Stay tuned for more! 🍌



Letter from K. Burns, continued from page 1

federal agencies. Our COVID-19 Emergency Fund has provided critical support for things like food and nutrition resources, as well as personal protective equipment, so our front-line employees can continue to do the important work we undertake every day.

We are especially mindful during this extraordinary time of our important mission to ensure that those among us—people of all ages—who are most vulnerable, those who are at risk of unfair social and economic challenges, have equal opportunities for—and equal access to—a safe, dignified, and healthy lifestyle. GLSS as an organization has recommitted to making social changes that fully remove

the structures perpetuating prejudice of any kind.

I continue to be amazed at the resilience, creativity, and diligence of our staff, and I truly thank them for all they are doing to help alleviate the stress and worry of our consumers and their families. Likewise, I am uplifted by the care and concern expressed by so many of you. Please know how grateful we are for your support.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn C. Burns".

Kathryn C. Burns, MHA

Announcing... "Project Phoenix"

PROJECT PHOENIX

"As human beings, the pain of hunger is something we can all understand, and Project Phoenix will give us the opportunity to come together as a community to do something about it."

Kathy Burns, GLSS CEO

We have learned many things during this pandemic, but one of the most important takeaways is the stark reminder of the food insecurity that exists all around us. From a nutrition perspective, this crisis has affected so many, and not just in Lynn, but in every community we serve.

To meet this need, GLSS has teamed up with the Lynn Food Security Task Force to bring an exciting new initiative to life: Project Phoenix. The program will fall under the Lique Living Legacy Fund, which offers emergency support to low-income consumers whose needs fall outside of the agency's state and federal mandate and resources. The Lique Fund was initiated by and later renamed in memory of Vince Lique, who served as Executive Director for nearly 25 years. "Vince's vision was that all people be treated with dignity and respect," says Kathryn C. Burns, GLSS' CEO. "Project Phoenix will increase the reach and extend Vince's vision further into the community, helping people in need in a way that respects their dignity."

"The idea for Project Phoenix grew out of the pandemic, but it will meet an ever increasing need that we have always known was there but had limited resources to address," says Valerie Parker Callahan, Director of Planning and Development at GLSS. She notes that one of the most important tenets of the Older Americans Act, signed into law in 1965 by President Lyndon B. Johnson, mandated that a healthy daily meal be offered through local senior centers. "With senior centers, public schools, and other community gathering places shuttered for the foreseeable future, food insecurity has become an ever more pressing need." Project Phoenix will specifically address the community livability issue of food insecurity for all residents—as an urgent population health issue—through the multiple facets of food distribution, access, nutrition counseling and education, and critically related "wrap-around" services. 🍷



Vince Lique served as Executive Director of GLSS for nearly 25 years. The Emergency Fund begun by he and his wife Kathy was renamed in his memory.

Yes! I want to support critical programs for seniors and people of all ages living with disabilities.

Please accept my gift of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 Other: \$ _____

Enclosed is my **check** payable to *Greater Lynn Senior Services*

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

You can also give
online at
www.glss.net/give

**Thank you for your
generosity!**



Greater Lynn Senior Services
8 Silsbee Street
Lynn, MA 01901