



*November 2014*

## MISSION GRANT STORY

**VOICE OF CARE MINISTRY TO THE  
DEVELOPMENTALLY CHALLENGED \$50,600**

Voice of Care (VOC) began in the Northern Illinois District (NID) of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). This district recognized the need to reach and serve the people who are developmentally challenged. Of the 300,000, over 90% of persons with disabilities have been raised without belonging to a church home and have a critical need to know their Savior and receive eternal salvation. With the help of a grant from the LWML NID in the late 1970s, VOC was able to call the first chaplain to this ministry.

In 2002, NID could no longer include VOC in their budget. In 2003, VOC became incorporated in the State of Illinois and was approved in February 2004. In May of 2005, VOC became a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) in the LCMS and a member organization of Lutheran Services in America. In September of 2005, Rev. Donald Kretzschmar was installed as the executive director and also served as a chaplain. Over the years, VOC has had many Deaconess field workers from Concordia University Chicago.

Currently, VOC provides the opportunity to share the love of God to over 600 people with developmental disabilities who reside and work in secular facilities designed for this

population. Chaplains and volunteers travel to 18 such facilities and share the Bible through lessons, singing, and prayer. Many residents then share this message to the staff in their own unique way.

Vision for the future ministry of VOC include:

- increase the number of volunteers from local congregations and establish a Volunteer Coordinator to monitor and recruit volunteers;
- increase the number attending the Special Needs Camps to 200;
- maintain a camp fee assistance program for those needing help to afford Special Needs Camps experiences;
- increase the number of individual donors by 10% each year;
- increase the staff;
- increase the number of congregations who will offer disability ministries as an outreach in their community;
- increase the number of facilities for people with disabilities to 25, up from 18;
- work to become a nationwide model for other districts of the LCMS and for the Church at Large.

Do you see a need within your own district? Begin with prayer.