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## **LutherCare Celebrates Its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

On March 7, 2009, LutherCare (initially known as “The Lutheran Service for Older People”) celebrates 60 years of service to the community.

The first home for the aged, located at 229 E. Orange Street, Lancaster, opened in 1953 and became known as the Luther Townhome. Over the next decade, the organization grew and joined forces with the Lutheran Service Society of Lebanon County, administrators of the Spang Crest Lutheran Home. When the two organizations merged in 1965, they became Lutheran Social Services – East Region. In 1996, the name changed to LutherCare.

In the past 60 years, older citizen’s services grew. When the Luther Townhome in Lancaster became too crowded, the organization purchased property in Lititz to develop Luther Acres. The Luther Acres campus, a continuous care retirement community, now includes 134 cottages, 281 apartments, 44 assisted living apartments, 26 assisted-living memory support apartments, 106 skilled nursing and rehabilitation residences of which 18 are for advanced dementia support. Seeing an every increasing need to help the older population, St. John’s Lutheran Church, Columbia donated 40 acres for the establishment of a senior retirement community. St. John’s Herr Estate, Columbia, was dedicated in 1991 and has 32 cottages, 100 apartments and 40 assisted living residences. In Lebanon County, Spang Crest Lutheran Home (now known as Spang Crest Manor) continued to develop and currently has 105 skilled nursing and rehabilitation residences, 18 assisted living apartments and offers adult day services, Monday through Friday.

However, taking care of the elderly was not the only social service LutherCare offered. The Family Day Care Homes program, created in 1979, started LutherCare’s Child Care Programs. The first center, Lebanon Valley Child Care and Learning Center began on the campus of Lebanon Valley College, Annville. LutherCare currently has five child care centers in Lancaster and Lebanon County. They are Emma C. Berger Child Care & Learning Center, Annville

(previously Lebanon Valley Child Care and Learning Center), St. James Child Care & Learning Center, Lebanon, Columbia Child Care and Learning Center, Columbia, Grace Place Child Care and Learning Center, Lancaster and Reamstown Child Care and Learning Center, Reamstown. The child care centers offer infant, toddlers and preschool care and most offer a before and after school program. There is also a summer program.

LutherCare also directs Child Care Information Services of Lebanon County, which helps families find and afford child care. Child Care Information Services is dedicated to helping families receive all of the services for which they are eligible and to aid families in accessing all the resources they need in a community.

LutherCare also developed and expanded congregational and community services in both counties. The organization initially oversaw the Meals-on-Wheels program in Lancaster County and assisted in the establishing of Ephrata Area Social Services and the Lancaster County Office of Aging. In 1974, they resettled more than 30 Ugandan refugees in both counties. The organization worked with Tressler Lutheran Service Associates and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services to relocate over 200 Southeast Asian families in the two counties in 1975. In 1976, they began sponsoring the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) in Lebanon County in 1981, in Lancaster County. The Volunteer Tax Assistance (VITA) program began in 1973. The Senior Insurance Assistance Program, administered by the organization for five years, became recognized as a model program. LutherCare administered an emergency shelter for children and youth for 10 years in Lancaster County. It also supervised the Family Preservation Program in Lancaster County for six years.

LutherCare's history is rich and full of opportunities taken to help the people living in Lancaster and Lebanon counties the past 60 years. During these 60 years, the people of LutherCare have sustained the ministry it began on March 7, 1949. The dream those group of people had so many years ago continues as a realization because of the diligence, compassion, faith and hard work of the administration, staff, volunteers, congregations and residents. In celebration of this diamond jubilee, the LutherCare campuses are holding special events. On Tuesday, March 3, 3:30 pm, Reamstown Child Care & Learning Center is holding a celebration for their children and parents. St. Johns' Herr Estate is having their celebration

on March 5, at 2:30 pm. Friday, March 6, Luther Acres is holding several events – at 9 am, in the Chapel of Good Samaritan, is a special anniversary service, at 10:30 am there are refreshments and music in the Hershey Activity Room; at 2 pm there are refreshments and music in the Muhlenberg Townhome and at 2:30 pm a celebration in Luther Acres Manor. Spang Crest Manor's festivity is on Wednesday, March 11, at 3 pm. St. James Child Care and Learning Center will hold their event on March 13 at 4 pm. Emma C. Berger Child Care and Learning Center is holding their celebration on March 20 at 3 pm.

Luthercare, a social ministry organization affiliated with the Lower Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Lutheran Services in America is a leading provider of residential, assisted living, and skilled care residences in Lancaster and Lebanon County. Luthercare operates Luther Acres, a Continuing Care Retirement Community in Lititz, PA, Spang Crest Manor, a skilled nursing, rehabilitation center, assisted living community and adult day services in Lebanon, PA and St. John's Herr Estate, a residential and assisted living community in Columbia, PA. In addition, Luthercare also operates five childcare centers in Lebanon, Annville, Reamstown, Lancaster and Columbia.

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